

Finding Hope in a House Divided and a World on Fire

A Midweek Prayer Liturgy

based on writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer



Week 5 – April 9, 2025

Welcome to worship! Lent is a time of the church year when Christians are invited to enter a period of reflection on our faith and how faith can guide our journey through life. As Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, we hear the words of the prophet Joel encouraging us to “Return to God with all our hearts.” These words describe the theme of Lent and invite us to delve deeper into our life of faith.

During our time of worship each Wednesday, we will hear the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer penned during his faithful journey through life and death.

Candles are available to light at any point throughout the service as you feel moved to pray or to remember a loved one. Those who are joining worship from home are also invited to light candles.

**Bold indicates congregational responses.*

Opening Sentences - from Letters and Papers from Prison (528)

By powers of good so wondrously protected,
we wait with confidence, befall what may.
God is with us at night and in the morning
and oh, most certainly on each new day.

Hymn - By Gracious Powers.....ELW 626



1 By gra - cious pow'rs so won - der - ful - ly shel - tered,
2 Yet is this heart by its old foe tor - ment - ed,
3 And when this cup you give is filled to brim - ming
4 Yet when a - gain in this same world you give us
5 By gra - cious pow'rs so faith - ful - ly pro - tect - ed,



and con - fi - dent - ly wait - ing come what may,
still e - vil days bring bur - dens hard to bear;
with bit - ter suf - f'ring, hard to un - der - stand,
the joy we had, the bright - ness of your sun,
so qui - et - ly, so won - der - ful - ly near,



we know that God is with us night and morn - ing,
oh, give our fright - ened souls the sure sal - va - tion,
we take it thank - ful - ly and with - out trem - bling
we shall re - mem - ber all the days we lived through
we live each day in hope, with you be - side us,



and nev - er fails to greet us each new day.
for which, O Lord, you taught us to pre - pare.
out of so good and so be - loved a hand.
and our whole life shall then be yours a - lone.
and go with you through ev - 'ry com - ing year.

Text: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1906–1945; tr. Fred Pratt Green, 1903–2000
Music: TELOS, Robert Buckley Farlee, b. 1950
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Psalmody - from Prayer Book of the Bible (58-59)

Now we know that there is no longer any suffering on earth in which Christ will not be with us, suffering with us and praying with us—Christ the only helper. On this basis the great Psalms of trust develop...whoever knows that God has entered into our suffering in Jesus Christ himself may say with great confidence, “Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.”

Psalm 23 (*Read responsively.*)

¹The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.

²**He makes me lie down in green pastures;**

he leads me beside still waters;

³he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

⁴**Even though I walk through the darkest valley,**

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff —

they comfort me.

⁵You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me**

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD

my whole life long.

Hymn – Give Me Jesus.....ELW 770

1 In the morn-ing when I rise, in the morn-ing when I rise,
 2 Dark . . . mid-night was my cry, dark . . . mid-night was my cry,
 3 Just a - bout the break of day, just a - bout the break of day,
 4 Oh, . . . when I come to die, oh, . . . when I come to die,
 5 And . . . when I want to sing, and . . . when I want to sing,

in the morn-ing when I rise, give me Je - sus.
 dark . . . mid-night was my cry, give me Je - sus.
 just a - bout the break of day, give me Je - sus.
 oh, . . . when I come to die, give me Je - sus.
 and . . . when I want to sing, give me Je - sus.

Refrain

Give me Je - sus, give me Je - sus.

You may have all the rest, give me Je - sus.

Text: African American spiritual
 Music: GIVE ME JESUS, African American spiritual; arr. hymnal version
 Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

Reading - Matthew 25:31-46

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life.”

Reflection - from Letters and Papers from Prison (20)

It remains an experience of incomparable value that we have for once learned to see the great events of world history from the perspective of the outcasts, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed and reviled, in short from the perspective of the suffering.

Silence for reflection.

Who Am I? - from Letters and Papers from Prison (448-449)

Who am I? They often tell me,
I come out of my cell
Calm and cheerful and poised
Like a squire from his manor.

Who am I? They often tell me,
I speak with my guards
Freely and friendly and clear,
As though I were the one in charge.

Who am I? They also tell me,
I bear days of calamity
Serenely, smiling and proud,
like one accustomed to victory.

Am I really what others say of me?
Or am I only what I know of myself?

Restless, yearning, sick, like a caged
bird,
struggling for life breath, as if I were
being strangled,
starving for colors, for flowers, for
birdsong,
thirsting for kind words, human
closeness,

shaking with rage power lust and
pettiest insult,
helplessly fearing for friends so far
away,
too tired and empty to pray, to think,
to work,
weary and ready to take my leave of
it all?

Who am I? This one or the other?
Am I this one today and tomorrow
another?
Am I both at once? Before others, a
hypocrite
and in my own eyes a pitiful,
whimpering weakling?
Or is what remains in me like a
defeated army,
Fleeing in disarray from victory
already won?

Who am I? They mock me, these
lonely questions of mine.
Whoever I am, thou knowest me; O
God, I am thine!

Prayers - adapted from Letters and Papers from Prison (174-175)

God, be gracious and help us.
Give us strength to bear the pains of the world.
Do not let fear rule over us.
Give tender care to those we love,
Protect them from all evil and all danger.

Merciful God,
Forgive us everything in which we have sinned
Against you and others.
We trust in your grace
And commit our lives entirely into your hand.
We are with you, and you are with us, o God
We await your salvation and your kingdom.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

Blessing - from Letters and Papers from Prison (495)

Not always doing and daring what’s random, but seeking the right thing,
Hover not over the possible, but boldly reach for the real.
Not escaping to thought, in action alone is found freedom.
Dare to quit anxious faltering and enter the storm of events,
carried alone by your faith and by God’s good commandments,
then true freedom will come and embrace your spirit, rejoicing.
Amen.

Dismissal

Who is Christ for us, today?
The outcasts, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed and reviled, the suffering.
Go in peace to be with them.
Thanks be to God.

SERVING TODAY

Director of Music Ministries/Organist:Alan L. Hair
Reader:Ross Buettner
Livestream:..... Kirk Sponaugle

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Referenced Works:
Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s Works - Reader’s Edition, Fortress Press, 2015
Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible, Broadleaf Books, 2022
Scripture references are from the NRSVue.