

Professional Leaders Conference Worship Bulletin

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Monday Opening Worship September 18, 2023

Congregational responses are in **bold**. *Congregation stands as they are able.

*GATHERING

We begin with our breath, thanking our bodies for bringing us here, for guiding us into community, for this presence in the body of Christ.

*OPENING PRAYER

Prayer for Busy Adults

We need Sabbath. It is not a suggestion, but rather the first of all commands, for God knew we would need this rhythm of rest in the beginning and every generation since.

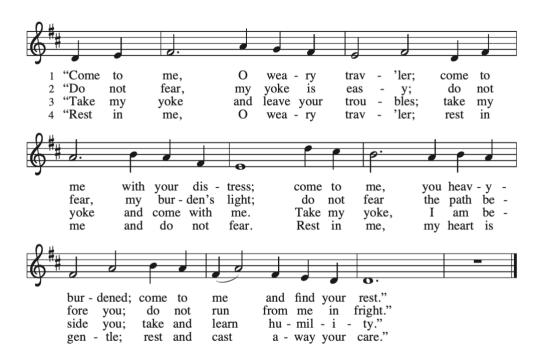
Even and especially in the middle of life, when we are called by so many names that belong to duty and performance, that call us away from our first and forever name: Beloved Child of God.

You are surrounded by generations and expectations that will never tire of asking more from you, filling your days with obligation that is both rich and weary, that tempts you to forget you are mortal.

Let us pray: God, grant us the courage to rest, to resist the idols of busy and best, to learn to stand ourselves long enough to hear you call our name, to notice what you are making, even without our help and hindrance.

Bless our deep breaths, our long sighs, and our fearful fidgets so that we trust your presence in our nothingness and learn to believe the world will keep spinning and it is enough to simply be your people.

Amen



READING Isaiah 43:1-5a

A reading from Isaiah, chapter 43.

¹But now, Leah and Rachel and Jacob,

hear the word of YHWH -

the One who created you,

the One who fashioned you, Israel:

Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you;

I have called you by name; you are mine.

²When you pass through the seas, I will be with you;

when you pass over the rivers, you will not drown.

Walk through fire, and you will not be singed;

walk through flames and you will not be burned.

³I am YHWH, your God,

the Holy One of Israel, your deliverer.

I give Egypt as ransom for you,

Nubia and Seba in exchange for you.

⁴You are more precious to me than Assyria;

you are honored, and I love you.

I will give people in exchange for you,

whole nations in exchange for your life.

^{5a}Have no fear, for I am with you.

Settle into your chair. Place your feet on the ground and your hands in your lap. Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths. As you breathe in, breathe in the Holy Spirit. As you breathe out, breathe out all of your tension and anxiety, the things that didn't go according to plan this morning. Be in this time, in this place. Become aware that you are in the presence of the Holy.

Silence is kept for reflection.

I invite you to find the movement of God in your life. Look back at the last year. Think of some major markers of your year within your professional or personal life. A new call, a staff transition, birthdays and anniversaries, etc.

As you review the past 12 months, what are you especially grateful for? An event that took place? Courage that you mustered? Love and support you received?

Silence is kept for reflection.

We ask for the light to know God and to know ourselves as God sees us.

Silence is kept for reflection after each question.

- ♦ Where have you felt true joy this year?
- ♦ What has troubled you this year?
- ♦ What has challenged you?
- ♦ Where and when did you find an opportunity for renewal and pause?
- ♦ Have you noticed God's presence in any of this?

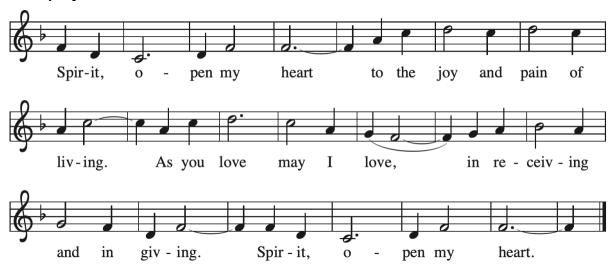
In light of your review, what is your response to the God of your life?

Silence is kept for reflection.

With what spirit do you want to enter the next few months? The next year?

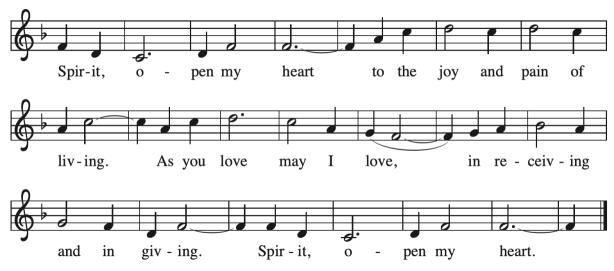
It is with this spirit that we prepare to pray for the ones gathered here, and the ones who replenish our well.

Let us pray.

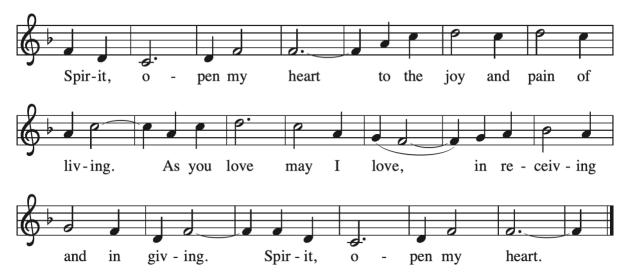


We hold before God the ones for whom we weep, and the ones who, in joy or sorrow, weep for us.

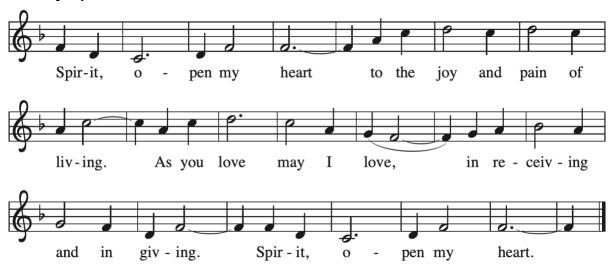
We hold before God the ones who worry that we may be lonely, and the ones who ensure that does not happen...



We hold before God the ones who feed our minds and bodies, and the ones with whom we share faith and break bread. We hold before God the ones who treat as precious all we confide in them...



And let us thank God for the one to whom we are summoned, by the one whom we are sent, whose image we are, whose flesh we share, whose love is all, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.



*BLESSING

May the weary weight you have carried here surrender to the power of connection and communion.

May the fullness of your actual self find warmth and recognition in the presence of Jesus, the risen One.

May the healing presence of God flow through you, soothing the cracks of your soul, anointing your whole life.

Amen.

*SENDING HYMN

"Love Has Brought Us Here Together"

ACS #1040



Worship Leaders for Monday Worship

Worship Leader Bishop Stacie Fidlar, Northern Illinois Synod

Prayer Leader Rev. Jonathan Black, First Plano

Reader Rev. Robin Luckey, Lord of Love Galena

Musician Mr. Erik Olson

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Tuesday Midday Devotion September 19, 2023

Congregational responses are in **bold**. *Congregation stands as they are able.

*GATHERING

Breath of God, breath of Life, breath of deepest yearning, Come, Holy Spirit!

Comforter, Disturber, Interpreter, Ethuser, Come, Holy Spirit!

Heavenly Friend, Lamplighter, Revealer of truth, Midwife of change, Come, Holy Spirit!

The Lord is walking this road with us. God's Spirit is with us!

*GATHERING HYMN "Creating God Your Fingers Trace" ELW #684 vs 1 & 2



*READING Luke 24:13-35

A reading from the Gospel of Luke.

¹³ Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, ¹⁴ and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, ¹⁶ but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And

he said to them, "What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?" They stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, "Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?" ¹⁹ He asked them, "What things?" They replied, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. ²¹ But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place. ²² Moreover, some women of our group astounded us. They were at the tomb early this morning, ²³ and when they did not find his body there they came back and told us that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see him." ²⁵ Then he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have declared! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.

²⁸ As they came near the village to which they were going, he walked ahead as if he were going on. ²⁹ But they urged him strongly, saying, "Stay with us, because it is almost evening and the day is now nearly over." So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he was at the table with them, he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us^[f] while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?" ³³ That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem, and they found the eleven and their companions gathered together. ³⁴ They were saying, "The Lord has risen indeed, and he has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ Then they told what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God!



SERMON Ms. Debie Thomas

*Prayer

Gracious God,

You carry us through our days.

You know every word on our tongue, every hair on our head.

You know the dreams in our hearts, and the weight of our bones.

You also know the weariness we bring with us.

So with honesty we come before you,

both with hearts full of gratitude and with prayer requests on our lips.

First, holy God, we thank you for the gifts of this life that give energy.

For birthday candles and sunrises, for handwritten cards and jobs that we are passionate about.

For stories that can make us laugh until we cry, and for friends that feel like family.

For the creation of this place, and the lunch that awaits us.

For all these gifts, thank you.

In addition to these prayers of gratitude, loving God,

we also bring you the things that weigh heavy on our hearts.

For gun violence, for family and friends in chemotherapy, for seasons of transition, and grief that won't let us go—we ask for your attention. We ask for your love and care.

Take this yoke from us.

Relieve some of the burden on our backs,

and wrap your arms around places where we feel most tender.

And as we journey on this road together,

we ask that you would remind us that our full humanity is welcome.

There is room for both joy and grief.

There is room for weariness and awe.

There is room for faith and doubt, for nothing is too big or too far gone for your love to reach it.

So with hope in our hearts, we unite our voices once more to pray the words your son taught us to pray, saying in the language and the wording most familiar to us:

Our Father...continue saying the Lord's Prayer in the language and wording more familiar to you.



*BENEDICTION

The God of all compassion,

☐ Jesus Christ, name above all names, and the Spirit who lives in you, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Worship Leaders for Tuesday Midday Devotion

Preacher Ms. Debie Thomas

Worship Leaders Rev. Bree Truax, Immanuel Rock Falls

Reader Rev. Rob James, Our Savior's Rockford

Musician Mr. Erik Olson

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Wednesday Closing Worship September 20, 2023

Congregational responses are in **bold**. *Congregation stands as they are able.

*GATHERING SONG

"How Sweet the Name"

ELW #620

Verse 1 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

in a believer's ear!

It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds,

and drives away all fear.

Verse 2 It makes the wounded spirit whole

and calms the heart's unrest; 'tis manna to the hungry soul and to the weary, rest.

and to the weary, rest.

Verse 6 How weak the effort of my heart,

how cold my warmest thought; but when I see thee as thou art, I'll praise thee as I ought.

*GATHERING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

*THIS IS THE FEAST

Refrain This is the feast of victory for our God. Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Verse 1 Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,

whose blook set us free to be people of God.

Refrain This is the feast of victory for our God.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Verse 2 Power, riches, wisdom and strength,

and honor, blessing and glory are his!

Refrain This is the feast of victory for our God.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Verse 3 Sing with all the people of God,

And join in the hymn of all creation: Blessing, honor, glory and might

be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

Refrain This is the feast of victory for our God.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

Verse 4 Power, riches, wisdom and strength,

and honor, blessing and glory are his!

Refrain This is the feast of victory for our God.

Hallelujah, Hallelujah!

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God our rock, your word brings life to the whole creation and salvation from sin and death. Nourish our faith in your promises, and ground us in your strength, through Jesus Christ, our savior and Lord.

Amen.

PSALM 91

based off of ELW #631 vs 1 & 3, arr. Olson

Verse 1 Love divine, all loves excelling,

Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!

Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown. Jesus, thou art all compassion,

pure, unbounded love thou art;

visit us with thy salvation, enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Verse 3 Come, Almighty, to deliver;

let us all thy life receive; suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave.

Thee we would be always blessing,

serve thee as thy hosts above,

pray, and praise thee without ceasing,

glory in thy perfect love.

READING Isaiah 49:8-16

A reading from the book of Isaiah the 49th chapter. Listen for the word of God.

Our hearts are open.

⁸Thus says the Lord:

In a time of favor I have answered you; on a day of salvation I have helped you;

I have kept you and given you

as a covenant to the people,

to establish the land,

to apportion the desolate heritages,

⁹ saying to the prisoners, "Come out," to those who are in darkness, "Show yourselves."

They shall feed along the ways;

on all the bare heights shall be their pasture;

they shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall strike them down,

for he who has pity on them will lead them and by springs of water will guide them.

- ¹¹ And I will turn all my mountains into a road, and my highways shall be raised up.
- ¹²Look, some shall come from far away, some from the north and from the west, and some from the land of Syene.
- ¹³ Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing!

For the Lord has comforted his people

and will have compassion on his suffering ones.

- ¹⁴ But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me."
- ¹⁵ Can a woman forget her nursing child or show no compassion for the child of her womb?

Even these might forget,

yet I will not forget you.

¹⁶ See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands; your walls are continually before me.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW #171 arr. Olson

Let your steadfast love come to us, O Lord. Save us as you promised; we will trust your word.

*GOSPEL Luke 6:46-49

The holy gospel according to Luke the 6th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

⁴⁶ "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷ I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. ⁴⁸ That one is like a man building a house who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not act is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the river burst against it, it quickly collapsed, and great was the ruin of that house."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Bishop Stacie Fidlar

*HYMN OF THE DAY "What a Wonderful World"

Due to copyright issues, the words for "What a Wonderful World" will only be projected.

*APOSTLE'S CREED

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

You're invited to a posture of listening, meditation, and prayer. There will be spaces within our petitions for you to lift up your own prayers. You are invited to speak those prayers aloud, or in silence.

Trusting in God's abundant mercy, let us be the body and offer our prayers.

After each petition

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Remember us according to your steadfast love as we offer these and the prayers of your heart, trusting in your compassion made known through Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

*PEACE

Not an easy peace, not an insignificant peace, not a half-hearted peace...The peace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share Christ's peace with one another.

*OFFERING RESPONSE

Doxology

Traditional, Arr. Olson

Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Praise Christ all people here below!

Praise Holy Spirit evermore!

Praise Triune God whom we adore.

Amen!

*OFFERING PRAYER

Wellspring of Life, Generous One of Justice, all things belong to you. We bring your gifts to the table, that all might be fed. Form us into the body of your Beloved, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

*GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Traditional, Arr. Olson

Holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee. Holy, holy, merciful and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

*WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Jesus was always the guest.

In the homes of Peter and Jairus, Martha and Mary, Joanna and Susanna, He was always the guest.

At the meal tables of the wealthy Where he pled the case of the poor, He was always the guest.

Upsetting polite company, Befriending isolated people, Welcoming the stranger; He was always the guest.

But here, at this table, He is the host.

Those who wish to serve him must first be served by him,
Those who want to follow him
Must first be fed by him,
Those who would wash his feet
Must first let him make them clean.

For this is the table Where the One who Gives Life intends for us to be nourished. This is the time when Christ can make us new.

So come, you who hunger and thirst For a deeper faith, For a better world, For a fairer world.

Jesus Christ, Who has sat at our tables, Now invites us to be guests at his.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

This cup is the new covenant in my blood,

shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

*THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us, in the language and wording most familiar to you.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.

*INVITATION TO THE TABLE

Jesus invites you to this table. Come, eat and live.

*LAMB OF GOD

Traditional, Arr. Olson

Lamb of God, you take away
The sin of the world;
Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away
The sin of the world;
Have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away
The sin of the world;
Grant us peace, grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

All bread is gluten-free. The outer rings of each tray hold wine, and the inner rings of each tray hold grape juice.

*TABLE BLESSING

May the body and blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

Amen.

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Sing: Amen! Amen! Amen! Amen!

In gratitude, in deep gratitude for this moment, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to you.

Sing: Amen! Amen! Amen! Amen, Amen!

You have filled us with love and life we cannot earn. Send us out to live as changed people because we have shared the Living Bread and cannot remain the same.

Sing: Amen! Amen! Amen! Amen!

Make us signs of your peace and abundance on earth, for we are the body of Christ, and the world is hungry for the wholeness and life we have in Jesus.

Sing: Amen! Amen! Amen! Amen, Amen! Amen!

*BENEDICTION

Dear Ones, as you leave this place, you go into a weary world—so speak tenderly and tend your hearts. Do the good that is yours to do. Choose connection. Hold onto hope. And remember you are beloved ones of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and forever.

Amen.

*SENDING SONG "Precious Lord" with "You've Got a Friend"

Dorsey/King, arr. Olson

Due to copyright issues, the words for "Precious Lord with You've Got a Friend" will only be projected.

*SENDING

Go in peace. God is at work in you.

Thanks be to God!

Worship Leaders for Closing Worship

Preacher Bishop Stacie Fidlar, Northern Illinois Synod

Presiding Minister Rev. Preston Fields, Salem Sycamore

Assisting Minister Ms. Donna Kelly, Shepherd of the Prairie Huntley

Reader Ms. Julie Lewis, Northern Illinois Synod

Musician Mr. Erik Olson and friends

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