



ST. MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY 21, 2024

LENTEN MIDWEEK SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER

7:00 PM

Holy Lament: God's Presence in Times of Distress

This year's midweek series theme is "Holy Lament: God's Presence in Times of Distress," remembering that in our laments of grief, regret and mourning, Jesus Christ strengthens us in our weakness. We live in a world that is not only divided and at war, increasingly humanity lives without a sense of optimism and hope for the future. Amid the doubts and fears of modern life - out of our laments - God's steadfast love unceasingly offers us hope and strength that we might boast in our weakness and in the power of Jesus' cross. God bless you on your Lenten journey.

Lenten offerings may be placed in the plate at the entrance to the sanctuary.

Bold responses are spoken by the congregation.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit gathers us into a community of prayer.

Prelude

"Prelude on 'How Long, O God'"

Traditional American Melody LAND OF REST

Organ setting by Richard Proulx

Opening Litany

The prophet Joel calls us to return to the Lord with all our hearts.

Lord, use this holy season of Lent to renew our lives in you.

As we raise our voices in lament,

comfort us and give us cause for hope.

Bless our worship, our work, and our play.

Guide us with your Spirit, that we may follow where you lead in confidence and trust.

Please stand as able.

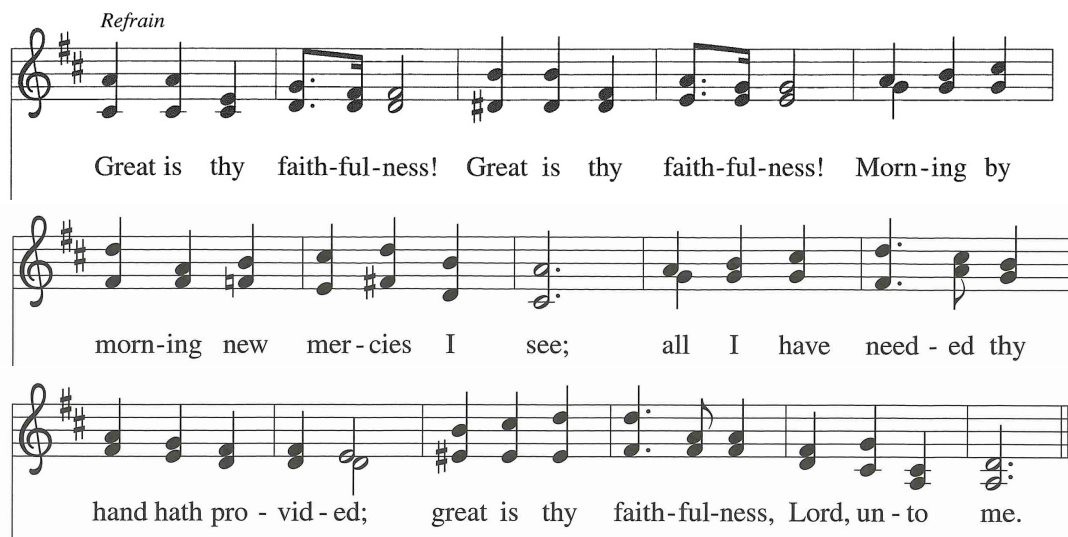
Gathering Song

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness" ELW 733 Stanza one

FAITHFULNESS

1 Great is thy faith - ful - ness, O God my Fa - ther; there is no
shad - ow of turn - ing with thee; thou chang - est not, thy com -
pas - sions they fail not; as thou hast been, thou for - ev - er wilt be.

Refrain



Great is thy faith-ful-ness! Great is thy faith-ful-ness! Morn-ing by
 morn-ing new mer-cies I see; all I have need-ed thy
 hand hath pro-vid-ed; great is thy faith-ful-ness, Lord, un-to me.

Text : Thomas O Chisholm, 1866-1960; Music: William M. Runyan, 1870-1957; T&M: © 1923, ren. 1951 Hope Publishing Co.

Greeting

The love of God poured into our hearts,
 the saving grace of Jesus Christ †,
 and the abundant life of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Opening Prayer

Let us pray. Loving God, the prophets, psalmwriters, and countless other people of faith have given us an example of how to hold our grief before you through songs of lament. Hear our cries this day. Give us the courage to name our deepest sorrow and to hand it over to you. Heal our wounded hearts and give us peace. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Please be seated.

WORD

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, silence, reflection and song.
 "What is lament?"*

Silence

During this time of silence we quiet ourselves, entering into the mystery of God's presence. The beginning and the end of this period of silence is marked with the sound of a bell.

Lamentations 3:19-26

(read responsively)

¹⁹The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall!

²⁰**My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me.**

²¹But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope:

²²**The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end;**

²³they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.

²⁴**"The Lord is my portion," says my soul, "therefore I will hope in him."**

²⁵The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.

²⁶**It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.**

Reading 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

⁹But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” So I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. ¹⁰Therefore I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities for the sake of Christ, for whenever I am weak, then I am strong.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Lenten Meditation

“Hope and strength in weakness”


Pastor Timothy McKenzie

Please stand as able.

Song

“How Long, O God” ELW 698

LAND OF REST



1 “How long, O God?” the psalm-ist cries, a cry we make our own,
2 The e - vil lurks with - in, with-out, it threat-ens to de - stroy
3 Your grace, O God, seems far a - way; will heal - ing ev - er come?
4 How can we hope? How can we sing? O God, set free our voice
5 “How long, O God?” the psalm-ist cries, a cry we make our own.



for we are lost, a - lone, a - fraid, and far a - way from home.
the frag - ile cords that make us one, that bind our hearts in joy.
Our bro - ken lives lie bro - ken still; will night give way to dawn?
to name the sor - rows, name the pain, that we might yet re - joice.
Though we are lost, a - lone, a - fraid, our God will lead us home.

Text: Ralph F. Smith, 1950-1994 © 2003 Augsburg Fortress; Music: North American traditional

PRAYER

The Holy Spirit prays with and through us.

Prayers of Intercession

(Pastor McKenzie, prayers)

The congregation may sit or kneel for the Prayers.

In Christ Jesus we meet the God who knows our weakness and bears the wounds of the world. Therefore, let us be bold as we pray, trusting that God draws near to those in any kind of need.

A brief silence.

“The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.” (Lamentations 3:24)

All: God of grace, your power is made perfect in weakness and your grace is sufficient. Bless your church in every place to proclaim Jesus and his cross, that the power of your weakness might overcome the world’s divisions, hatreds, and persecutions. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

P: Great is your faithfulness, O Lord.

All: Lord of hope, you are my portion and therefore I hope in you. Bless all who call upon you in sickness, grief, uncertainty, and despair. May all who lament and mourn know your faithfulness, healing, and hope, which is new every morning. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

P: Great is your faithfulness, O Lord.

All: God of grace, teach us to be content in weakness, hardships, and calamities, always knowing that whenever we are weak, we are made strong in Christ. Bless the leaders of the nations to work for peace, cause wars to cease, and end the persecution of the weak and vulnerable. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

P: Great is your faithfulness, O Lord.

All: Lord of hope, you are good to those who wait quietly for you. Speak to us out of silence as you have spoken to the prophets and saints of old, causing us to work for justice and peace in our community, that all in need might boast in you and know your salvation. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

P: Great is your faithfulness, O Lord.

"For whenever I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Corinthians 12:10b)

Into your wide embrace, O God, we place all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, trusting that you will receive them into your heart of mercy, Jesus Christ, your Son and our Savior.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

(musical setting by Michael Austin Miller)

Our Fa-ther in heav-en, hal-lowed be your name,
your king-dom come, your will be done on earth as in heav'n.
Give us to-day our dai-ly bread and for-give us of our sins
as we for-give those who sin a-gainst us.
Save us from the time of tri-al and de-liv-er us from e-vil.
For the king-dom, and the pow-er, and the glor-y are yours,
now and for-ev-er. A-men.

Please stand.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

The Lord watches over your going out and your coming in. The Lord shields your joys and holds your sorrows. God, the Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you this day and always.

Amen.

Sending Song

“Just a Close Walk with Thee” ELW 697, Stanzas 1 & 2

CLOSER WALK

Text & Music: Rolf Vegdahl, b. 1955, based on Romans 14:8, Psalm 103; T&M © 2009, 2016 Augsburg Fortress



Refrain Just a clos - er walk with thee, grant it, Je - sus, is my plea;
1 I am weak but thou art strong: Je - sus, keep me from all wrong;
2 Through this world of toil and snares, if I fal - ter, Lord, who cares?



dai - ly walk - ing close to thee, let it be, dear Lord, let it be.
I'll be sat - is - fied as long as I walk, let me walk close to thee. Ref.
Who with me my bur - den shares? None but thee, dear Lord, none but thee. Ref.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

+ + +

This service adapted/reprinted from *All Creation Sings*, copyright 2020 Augsburg Fortress and *Sundays and Seasons*, copyright 2020 Augsburg Fortress. CCLI Copyright Coverage License #11377824

Worship Leaders: Pastor Timothy McKenzie; live streaming camera: A. J. Pridgen; Musicians: Jack Richardson, Nick Matherly, cantors; Lester Ackerman, Director of Music Ministry and Organist

Lenten Mid-Week Worship series: “*Holy Lament: God’s Presence in Times of Distress*” During Lent, please join us online, Wednesdays (2/21-3/20), at 7 pm at St. Mark’s and live on Facebook, for the weekly worship series.

Lenten Schedule

Lenten Wednesday Supper 6 pm-6:45 pm Fellowship Hall February 21-March 20.

Lenten Midweek Worship 7 pm (in-person and online)

Lenten Devotional Booklets are available in the Gathering Place. Make Lent a time for prayer.

LENTEN BOX OFFERINGS: During Lent we focus on Jesus’ path to the cross and his sacrifice for us. One of our small sacrifices during this period is our donations into a small Lenten box. Boxes were passed out last Wednesday and will be available after the service again today. The letter with the boxes explains the recipient of this year’s donations - REFUGEE SUPPORT SERVICES. Infant care kits will be purchased for the little ones of our recently arrived refugees. Be sure to put your name on the box along with your envelope number if you have one. Donations can be made several ways - daily loose change, paper money, or simply write a check to St. Mark’s and put it in the box. Keep the box where you can see it as a constant reminder of Jesus’ sacrifice and the infants we will be helping. Please return to church before Easter. *Lenten Boxes are available in the Gathering Place.*

St. Mark's Prayer List

Angie Blackwelder Malone, Greg Bruce, Linda Carter, Drew Goodson, Norma Alexander, Laura Elliott, Gene Ellington, Ken Foust, Michael Frye, Tanner Grant, Christopher Shirley, Eileen Dunlap, Sarah Lindberg, Danyne Olin Bragdon, Mindy Curley, Louisa Coburn, Ben Watson, Tina Wiland, Martha Stackel, Ingrid Keiris, Shirley Larson, Jimmy Schwartz, Roxi Tolbert, Bill Schwartz, Sergei Kobiakov, Arlene Fielding, Oakley Coburn, David Kutscher, Carl Sepmeyer, Danielle Clausen, Rachel Fulp, Joseph Tolbert, Virginia Stackel, David Mathis, and Jay Harbinson.

Please feel free to email Pastor McKenzie with Prayer List and other prayer requests

(pastortimsmc@gmail.com)



Do you feel like you are in crisis? In Isaiah it is written, "Fear not, for I am with you; do not be dismayed for I am your God." Stephen ministers are here to show the Lord's love and comfort for you in times of trial. If you would like to confidentially speak to a Stephen Minister, please contact Pastor Tim (pastortimsmc@gmail.com)



Our Ministers

All the people of God at St. Mark's

Rev. Dr. Timothy McKenzie, Senior Pastor

pastortim@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Lester Ackerman,

Director of Music Ministry, Organist

les@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Sue Wadgymer, Parish Administrator

admin@saintmarkscharlotte.org

Jessie Craig, Financial Administrator

finance@saintmarkscharlotte.org