

Ascension Lutheran Church

Midweek Lenten Worship February 24, 2021

Welcome, All, In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

Light a candle.

CALL TO WORSHIP

God meets us in the night—

Before the sun rises,

Before the wound heals,

Before there are answers,

Before there is closure.

God meets us in the light—

Where joy is effervescent,

Where laughter is contagious,

Where flowers bloom from cracks in the sidewalk,

And where people gather around the table.

God meets us at the threshold—

At the edge of the water,

At the beginning of the wilderness,

At the start of something new,

On the edge of faith.

And if God meets us in all those places,

Then surely God meets us in between—

Staying with us through the wilderness.

We are not alone. God is all around.

Let us worship the God of the here and now.

HYMN OF LIGHT #561

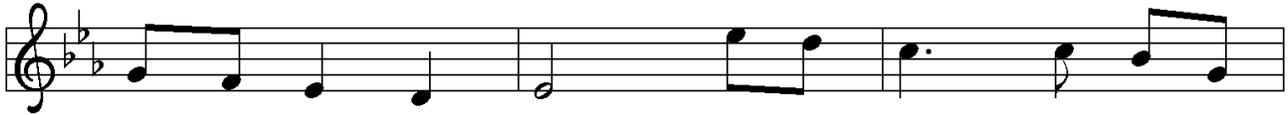
“Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory”



1 Joy - ous light of heav'n-ly glo - ry, lov-ing glow of God's own
2 In the stars that grace the dark - ness, in the blaz - ing sun of
3 You who made the heav-en's splen - dor, ev-'ry danc - ing star of



face, you who sing cre - a - tion's sto - ry, shine on
dawn, in the light of peace and wis - dom, we can
night, make us shine with gen - tle jus - tice, let us



ev - 'ry land and race. Now as eve - ning falls a -
hear your qui - et song. Love that fills the night with
each re - flect your light. Might - y God of all cre -



round us, we shall raise our songs to you. God of day - break,
won - der, love that warms the wea - ry soul, love that bursts all
a - tion, gen - tle Christ who lights our way, lov - ing Spir - it



God of shad - ows, come and light our hearts a - new.
chains a - sun - der, set us free and make us whole.
of sal - va - tion, lead us on to end - less day.

Text: Greek hymn, 3rd cent., para. Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: JOYOUS LIGHT, Marty Haugen

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PRAYER

Holy God,

If I am honest, faith often feels like water in my hands.

No matter how hard I try to hold onto it, some of it always slips through—

Like droplets of truth running down my wrists, back toward my heart.

This human inability to hold onto you leaves me thirsty for more.

So as we prepare to read scripture,

I pray that once again, you would meet us here.

Meet us in our hope and our heartache.

Meet us in our fear and our joy,

Meet us in our cupped hands and clenched fists.

And even if the water keeps running,

And we do not have a sky-parting moment of clarity,

Or a tangible sense that you are near;

Even if we do not hear the words, “This is my beloved,”

Ringing in our ears,

We will trust that you are near,

Always and forever meeting us here,

Running toward our hearts.

Gratefully we pray,

Amen.

PSALMODY: Psalm 77

Prayer for God to remember us

¹ I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, that he may hear me.

² In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;

in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;

my soul refuses to be comforted.

³ I think of God, and I moan; I meditate, and my spirit faints. *Selah*

⁴ You keep my eyelids from closing; I am so troubled that I cannot speak.

⁵ I consider the days of old, and remember the years of long ago.

⁶ I commune^l with my heart in the night; I meditate and search my spirit:

⁷ “Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable?”

⁸ Has his steadfast love ceased forever?

Are his promises at an end for all time?

⁹ Has God forgotten to be gracious?
Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" *Selah*

¹⁰ And I say, "It is my grief that the right hand of the Most High has changed."

¹¹ I will call to mind the deeds of the LORD;
I will remember your wonders of old.

¹² I will meditate on all your work, and muse on your mighty deeds.

¹³ Your way, O God, is holy. What god is so great as our God?

¹⁴ You are the God who works wonders;
you have displayed your might among the peoples.

¹⁵ With your strong arm you redeemed your people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. *Selah*

¹⁶ When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you,
they were afraid; the very deep trembled.

¹⁷ The clouds poured out water; the skies thundered;
your arrows flashed on every side.

¹⁸ The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind;
your lightnings lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook.

¹⁹ Your way was through the sea, your path, through the mighty waters;
yet your footprints were unseen.

²⁰ You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

READING: GENESIS 9:8-17

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, ⁹ "As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, ¹⁰ and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. ^[a] ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth." ¹² God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: ¹³ I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ When I bring clouds over the earth and the bow is seen in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant that is

between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. ¹⁶ When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.” ¹⁷ God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN **“Shades of Purple, Shades of Blue”**
(Tune of ELW 879, “For the Beauty of the Earth”)

Shades of purple, shades of blue, green and yellow, orange, red —
Noah and his family, too, saw the rainbow overhead.
God, Creator, high above you displayed your sign of love.

Soon new life was springing forth, filling land and sea and air.
God, you chose to bless the earth with the promise of your care —
And your promised love extends far beyond our human friends.

In the rainbow, you were clear: every living thing has worth.
You love every creature here on this planet we call Earth.
God, forgive when we destroy gifts from you that bring you joy.

May your church begin to see in that rainbow high above:
We are daily called to be stewards of this world you love.
Since the earth is dear to you, may we treat it kindly, too.

Biblical Reference: Genesis 9:8-17

Tune: Conrad Kocher, 1838, in chorale *Treuer Heiland* ("For the Beauty of the Earth")

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REFLECTION **The Rev. Christina Auch**

HYMN #723

“Canticle of the Turning”





name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat
Music: STAR OF COUNTY DOWN, Irish traditional
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AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in a God who is everywhere and right here,
Bigger than the sky and in the smallest details,
All at once and in every moment.**

**We believe that God meets us where we are—
In heartbreak and high hopes,
Around crowded tables and in quiet homes,
In joy and in suffering,
In loneliness and in connection,
In sanctuaries and in living rooms,
In marches and in waiting rooms.**

**We believe that nothing we do or leave undone
Can distance us from God's love.
God is forever drawing us close and pulling us in.
Again and again, God meets us where we are**

**And invites us into wholeness.
Thanks be to God for a love like that.**

BENEDICTION

As you leave this space,
May your mouth speak of God's goodness.
May your arms hold those in need.
May your feet walk toward justice.
May your heart trust its worth.
May your soul dance in God's grace.
And may this be your rhythm—
Again and again and again,
Until God's promised day.
In the name of the Lover, the Beloved, and Love itself,
Go with courage, go with heart, go in peace.
Amen.

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