

Ascension Lutheran Church

Midweek Lenten Worship March 24, 2021

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

Light a candle.

CALL TO WORSHIP

The story of faith is a story of courage.

It took courage for John the Baptist to prepare the way.

It took courage for Mary to say, "Here I am. Use me."

It took courage for the disciples to drop their nets and follow Jesus.

It took courage for the paralyzed man's friends to lower him through the roof.

It took courage for Peter to walk on water.

It took courage for Zacchaeus to give half of his possessions to the poor.

It took courage for Jesus to enter Jerusalem on a donkey.

Faith has never been easy. It is a journey of courage.

Again and again, God, show us the way.

Let us worship a brave and courageous God.

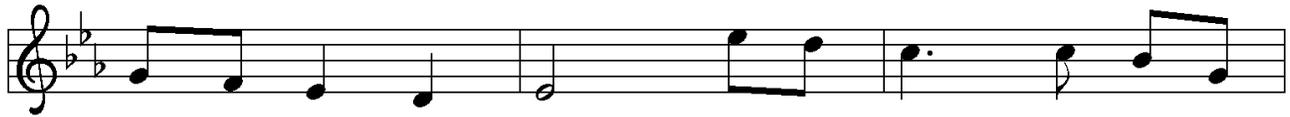
HYMN OF LIGHT #561 "Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory"



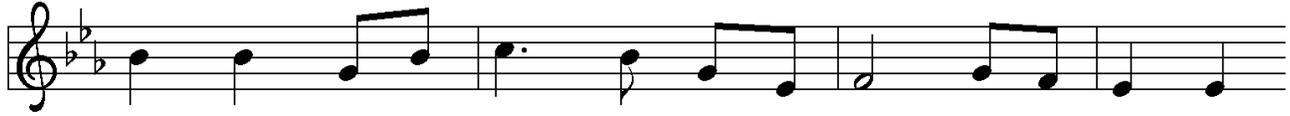
1 Joy - ous light of heav'n-ly glo - ry, lov-ing glow of God's own
2 In the stars that grace the dark - ness, in the blaz - ing sun of
3 You who made the heav-en's splen - dor, ev-'ry danc - ing star of



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

If we could buy our way closer to you, we'd sell everything we have.

If we could work our way to you, we'd never take a day off.

If we could walk our way to you, we'd keep our tennis shoes on tight.

But I know—we know—we cannot buy, or work, or walk our way closer to you.

We must listen our way closer to you.

So holy God, as you have so often done again and again,

Open our ears.

Clear out the self-talk that keeps us from you.

Dust out the negativity and distractions.

Remove any doubt hindering our way.

Amen.

PSALMODY: Psalm 119:9-16

I treasure your promise in my heart

⁹ How can young people keep their way pure?

By guarding it according to your word.

¹⁰ With my whole heart I seek you;

do not let me stray from your commandments.

¹¹ I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.

¹² Blessed are you, O LORD; teach me your statutes.

¹³ With my lips I declare all the ordinances of your mouth.

¹⁴ I delight in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches.

¹⁵ I will meditate on your precepts, and fix my eyes on your ways.

¹⁶ I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.

READING: Jeremiah 31:31-34

We are Reformed

³¹The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ³²It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt—a covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, says the LORD. ³³But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴No longer shall they teach one another, or say to each other, “Know the LORD,” for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the LORD; for I will forgive their iniquity, and remember their sin no more.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN

“The Days are Coming, Said the Lord”

(Tune of ELW 592)

"The days are coming," said the Lord,
"When I will bring in something new.
My people now reject my word
So look and see what I will do."

"I'll write my words upon the heart,
 And I will put my law in them.
 Though they have wavered from the start,
 My people will return again."

O God, this law that is within
 Becomes the means by which we're free.
 No longer bound by human sin,
 In Christ, we're who we're called to be.

In every sinful, hurting place,
 Our hearts know what it means to yearn.
 We hear your promised love and grace;
 Now at your cross may we return.

Biblical Reference: Jeremiah 31:31-34

Tune: William Batchelder Bradbury, 1849 ("Just As I Am, Without One Plea")

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REFLECTION

The Rev. Christina Auch

HYMN #723

"Canticle of the Turning"



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
 3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
 work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



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.

Refrain



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

I refuse to believe that I am powerless.

I refuse to believe that injustice and hatred are simply the way it has to be.

I refuse to believe that I am better or more deserving than my neighbor.

I refuse to believe that my self-worth is rooted in my accomplishments or appearance.

I refuse to believe that the Church is dying, because I see God all around me.

I refuse to believe that the traditions of old are the only path for moving forward.

I refuse to believe that I cannot make a difference.

So with hope in my heart, I will strive to live a life of courage, conviction, and compassion, just as Jesus taught us.

Amen.

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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