

Ascension Lutheran Church

Midweek Lenten Worship March 3, 2021

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

Light a candle.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Today in worship, we will be reminded that again and again, we are called to listen. This is part of our invitation as people of faith—to not only speak, pray, and sing, but to listen.

And I will be the first to say, listening is hard. From our toddler years on up, we struggle to listen, particularly when we don't know what we're listening for or we don't agree with what we're hearing.

So for just a moment, as we gather ourselves for worship, I want to invite you to join me in a kinesthetic call to worship by embodying our prayer as I prompt you. Let us listen, let us pray:

I invite you to close your eyes.

Rest your feet on the floor beneath you.

Release any tension you are holding—

In your jaw, your neck, your shoulders, your hands, your legs, your feet.

Take a deep breath in and slowly let it out.

The Hebrew word for breath (*ruach*) is the same word for Spirit.

So as you breathe, imagine that it is God who is filling up your lungs with energy and love. Trust that God is as close as your very breath.

Now I invite you to still your mind. Imagine your mind as a river.

Thoughts will drift into view; they always do.

However, instead of holding onto those thoughts, allow yourself to let them float by.

And listen.
 Listen deep.
 Listen far.
 Listen wide.
 Listen.

The sound of your breath is the sound of the Divine.
 This is a holy space.

Let us worship God.

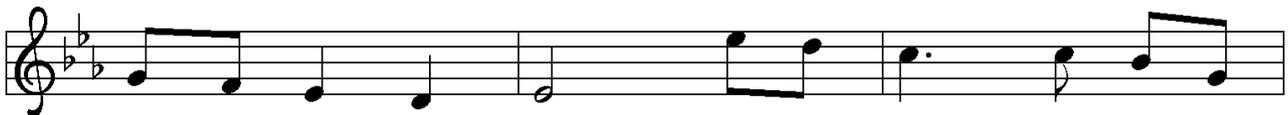
HYMN OF LIGHT #561 **“Joyous Light of Heavenly Glory”**



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

Creator God,

We cannot hear the trees growing — seeds pushing up through the dirt into the sun.

And we cannot hear a single drop of rain, missing one in the many.

We cannot hear the weight of people's grief, a burden that so often is silent.

And we cannot hear when hearts are changed, but you can.

You hear it all.

So once again, we come to you with bowed heads and hopeful hearts,

Asking that you would lend us your ears.

Help us to hear as you hear so that we can live as you lived.

We are listening.

Amen.

PSALMODY: Psalm 105:1-11, 37-45

God promises life to Abraham

¹ O give thanks to the LORD, call on his name,

make known his deeds among the peoples.

² Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.

³ Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

⁴ Seek the LORD and his strength; seek his presence continually.

⁵ Remember the wonderful works he has done,

his miracles, and the judgments he has uttered,

⁶ O offspring of his servant Abraham, children of Jacob, his chosen ones.

⁷ He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth.

⁸ He is mindful of his covenant forever,

of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,
⁹ the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac,
¹⁰ which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant,
¹¹ saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance."

³⁷ Then he brought Israel out with silver and gold,
and there was no one among their tribes who stumbled.
³⁸ Egypt was glad when they departed, for dread of them had fallen upon it.
³⁹ He spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light by night.
⁴⁰ They asked, and he brought quails,
and gave them food from heaven in abundance.
⁴¹ He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed through the desert like a river.
⁴² For he remembered his holy promise, and Abraham, his servant.
⁴³ So he brought his people out with joy, his chosen ones with singing.
⁴⁴ He gave them the lands of the nations,
and they took possession of the wealth of the peoples,
⁴⁵ that they might keep his statutes and observe his laws.
Praise the LORD!

READING: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 (KJV)

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the
heaven:

- ² A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;
³ A time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
⁴ A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
⁵ A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;
a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
⁶ A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
⁷ A time to rend, and a time to sew;

a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN **“There is a Time for Silence”**
(Tune of ELW 338, “Beneath the Cross of Jesus”)

There is a time for silence, a time to listen well,
a time to hear the painful stories others have to tell.
O God, may we who love to talk now hear the rage and fear,
and may we learn from neighbors who have long been silenced here.

There is a time for asking, a time to pause and pray,
there is a time to hear the prophets speak of God's new day,
to hear the words of Jesus who taught welcome, truth and love,
to hear the Spirit speaking through the ones who shout, "Enough!"

There's time for humble study — for reading and for thought.
God, may we learn from others of the justice they have sought,
And may we learn from those who bravely stand against the hate,
So when we're called to justice, we, your church, won't hesitate.

There's time for good reflection, to ponder who we've been,
to think how our own attitudes have paved the way for sin,
to listen to the ones we fear — to folks we may resent —
to hear of Jesus' call to love — and humbly to repent.

And there's a time to work now — to boldly say their names,
to protest and to organize, to advocate for change,
to use our voices and to stand with those who are oppressed.
As we seek justice, hand in hand, Lord, may your world be blessed.

Biblical References: Ecclesiastes 3:7; Isaiah 58; Luke 10:25-37

Tune: Frederick Charles Maker, 1881 ("Beneath the Cross of Jesus")

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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.



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

Sometimes our belief is confident,
Like a child on a dance floor—
Unashamed and wildly genuine.
We believe.

**Sometimes our belief is distant,
Flickering and calling out to us
Like a lighthouse on the sea.
We believe.**

Sometimes our belief shows up as passion,
Guiding the way we vote, shop, give, live, trust, and hope.
We believe.

**Sometimes our belief is like a shadow—
Faith stitched to our heels, unmoveable, unloseable,**

**A gift for winding journeys.
We believe.**

Sometimes our belief exists like growing pains.
We step forward. We fall back.
But again and again,
Jesus invites us to listen,
To grow, and to take another step.

**So again and again,
We speak these truths out loud:
We believe.
Again and again, we believe.**

Thanks be to God.
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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