



**March 8, 2023
6:30 p.m.
Vespers Lenten Service**

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA

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Wednesday, March 8th 2023

Vespers Lenten Service

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WELCOME

Blessed be the Holy Trinity † one God, who journeys with us these forty days, and sustains us with the gift of grace.

Amen.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Behold, unveiled the vesper skies: the evening has begun.

Let prayer and praise like incense rise as sets the golden sun.

How blest are you, all loving God, who weaves both day and night.

A starry mantle for our road, the shadow and the light.

Stay with us, Christ, our rest prepare as labor ebbs with night.

And holy dreams woven with prayer till dawns the splendid light.

PRAYER

Loving God,

As winter days grow longer, drawing short the hours of night, may your presence be our comfort, and may Christ become our light. As we journey through this season, pilgrims through a thirsty land, quench us with your living presence, and guide us with your loving hand.

Amen.

OPENING HYMN

All Praise to Thee, My God, This Night

The musical score is written for a single voice part in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has four measures, each with a measure number above it: 1*, 2, 3, and 4. The second system also has four measures. The lyrics are printed below the notes. The music features a simple, hymn-like melody with a steady bass line.

1* All praise to thee, my God, this night for all the bless-ings of the light.
 2 For - give me, Lord, for thy dear Son, the ill that I this day have done;
 3 Teach me to live, that I may dread the grave as lit - tle as my bed.
 4 Oh, may my soul in thee re - pose, and may sweet sleep mine eye-lids close,
 5 Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; praise God, all crea-tures here be - low;

Keep me, oh, keep me, King of kings, be - neath thine own al - might - y wings.
 that with the world, my - self, and thee, I, ere I sleep, at peace may be.
 Teach me to die, that so I may rise glo - rious at the awe - some day.
 sleep that shall me more vig - rous make to serve my God when I a - wake!
 praise God a - bove, ye heav' n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

** May be sung in canon.*

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711, alt.
 Music: TALLIS' CANON, Thomas Tallis, 1505–1585

A Blessing for This Beautiful, Limited Day

(From Bless the Lent We Actually Have)

Blessed are we who see the impossibility
of solving today.
It can't be done.

God, there are lists on lists
and errands on errands
and a taste, like tin in our mouths,
of the unfinishedness—the imperfectability—
of our lives.

*Are we counting items instead
of knowing what counts?*

God, help us live here,
seeing the whole truth of what is.

Blessed are we who walk toward
the discomfort,

bringing what gifts we have,
and our sufferings too,
whether of illness or loss,
grief or betrayal,
confusion or powerlessness.

Blessed are we who scoot up close
so we can whisper our loves, our fears,
all that feels too heavy to carry alone,
and all that we wish we could
hold onto for longer.

Show us what we love.

Show us what we never want to lose.

And show us what we no longer need
here in this beautiful, limited day,
as we place our trust and hope in you.

Amen

READING: Exodus 17:1-7

From the wilderness of Sin the whole congregation of the Israelites journeyed by stages, as the Lord commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. The people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?" But the people thirsted there for water, and the people complained against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried out to the Lord, "What shall I do for this people? They are almost ready to stone me." The Lord said to Moses, "Go on ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you; take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile and go. I will be standing there in front of you on the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it, so that the people may drink." Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. He called the place Massah and Meribah, because the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord, saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.


SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

My Life Flows On in Endless Song




1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam - en - ta - tion,
2 Through all the tu - mult and the strife, I hear that mu - sic ring - ing.
3 What though my joys and com - forts die? The Lord my Sav - ior liv - eth.
4 The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring - ing!




I catch the sweet, though far - off hymn that hails a new cre - a - tion.
It finds an ech - o in my soul. How can I keep from sing - ing?
What though the dark - ness gath - er round? Songs in the night he giv - eth.
All things are mine since I am his! How can I keep from sing - ing?

Refrain



No storm can shake my in - most calm while to that Rock I'm cling - ing.



Since Christ is Lord of heav - en and earth, how can I keep from sing - ing?

Text: Robert Lowry, 1826-1899
Music: HOW CAN I KEEP FROM SINGING, Robert Lowry, alt.

PRAYER

God of the Universe,

We give thanks that your promises are true, and that you are faithful. May we find joy through giving and delight in our offering. Prepare our hearts to give freely and cheerfully. Breathe life into the seeds we sow, allowing them to grow into well-watered, fruitful trees of life. Bless us and keep us, make your face shine upon us. Turn your face towards us and give us peace.

Through Jesus Christ we pray.

Amen.

OFFERING

OFFERING PRAYER

Gracious God,

Our treasures come only from you. It is only through your goodness, that we have received so much. We came into this life with nothing, and we leave the same way. Guide us, and inspire us, to share ourselves and the resources we have. May these offerings be used for the goodness of your creation.

Amen.

Watch, O Lord

Refrain - All

Watch, O Lord, with all those a - wake this night,
 watch, O Lord, with all those who weep; give your
 an - gels and saints charge o - ver all who sleep.

Leader *All*

1 Tend your ail - ing ones:
 2 Soothe your suf - f'ring ones: in your love, Lord.
 3 Hold your griev - ing ones:
 4 Guard your lit - tle ones:

Leader *All*

Rest your wea - ry ones:
 Heal af - flict - ed ones: in your love, Lord.
 Raise your fall - en ones:
 Guide your search - ing ones:

Leader *All* *Refrain*

Bless your dy - ing ones:
 Shield your joy - ous ones: in your love, O Lord of all.
 Mend your bro - ken ones:
 Grant us all your peace:

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, based on a prayer attributed to Augustine
 Music: WATCH, O LORD, Marty Haugen
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LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

May the Creator of rocks bring you courage,
May Christ spring forth a river of hope in your midst,
May the Spirit bless you and keep you, providing you with peace,
And may the Living Water of God ✠ sustain you on this Lenten journey.
Amen.

SENDING SONG

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It consists of three systems, each with a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are as follows:

1 Lord, dis - miss us with your bless - ing, fill our hearts with joy and peace;
2 Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion for your gos - pel's joy - ful sound.
3 Sav - ior, when your love shall call us from our strug - gling pil - grim way,

let us each, your love pos - sess - ing, tri - umph in re - deem - ing grace.
May the fruits of your sal - va - tion in our hearts and lives a - bound.
let no fear of death ap - pall us, glad your sum - mons to o - bey.

Oh, re - fresh us; oh, re - fresh us, trav - 'ling through this wil - der - ness.
Ev - er faith - ful, ev - er faith - ful to your truth may we be found.
May we ev - er, may we ev - er reign with you in end - less day.

Text: attr. John Fawcett, 1740–1817, sts. 1–2, alt.; Godfrey Thring, 1823–1903, st. 3, alt.
Music: SICILIAN MARINERS, Sicilian, 18th cent.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve in love.

Thanks be to God.

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