

# Finding Hope in a House Divided and a World on Fire

## *A Midweek Liturgy*

**Bold** indicates congregational responses.

**Opening Sentences** – From *Letters and Papers From Prison* (528)

By powers of good so wondrously protected,  
**we wait with confidence, befall what may.**  
God is with us at night and in the morning  
**and oh, most certainly on each new day.**

**Psalmody** – with accompanying commentary from *The Prayerbook of the Bible*

*A hymn may be sung. Suggested hymn for all weeks: ELW 626 By Gracious Powers*

**Readings** – with accompanying reading from *Bonhoeffer's works*.

*A brief homily or reflection may be given.*

*Silence for reflection follows.*

**Who Am I?** – from *Letters and Papers from Prison* (448-449)

*May be read by a lector or by the congregation in unison.*

Who am I? They often tell me,  
I come out of my cell  
Calm and cheerful and poised  
Like a squire from his manor.

Who am I? They often tell me,  
I speak with my guards  
Freely and friendly and clear,  
As though I were the one in charge.

Who am I? They also tell me,  
I bear days of calamity  
Serenely, smiling and proud,  
like one accustomed to victory.

Am I really what others say of me?  
Or am I only what I know of myself?

Restless, yearning, sick, like a caged bird,  
struggling for life breath, as if I were being strangled,  
starving for colors, for flowers, for birdsong,  
thirsting for kind words, human closeness,  
shaking with rage power lust and pettiest insult,  
helplessly fearing for friends so far away,  
too tired and empty to pray, to think, to work,  
weary and ready to take my leave of it all?

Who am I? This one or the other?  
Am I this one today and tomorrow another?  
Am I both at once? Before others, a hypocrite  
and in my own eyes a pitiful, whimpering weakling?  
Or is what remains in me like a defeated army,  
Fleeing in disarray from victory already won?

Who am I? They mock me, these lonely  
questions of mine.  
Whoever I am, thou knowest me; O God, I am thine!

**Prayers - adapted from Letters and Papers from Prison (174-175)**

*Specific, contextual requests and petitions may be spoken.*

God, be gracious and help us.  
Give us strength to bear the pains of the world.  
Do not let fear rule over us.  
Give tender care to those we love,  
Protect them from all evil and all danger.

Merciful God,  
Forgive us everything in which we have sinned  
Against you and others.  
We trust in your grace  
And commit our lives entirely into your hand.  
We are with you, and you are with us, o God  
We await your salvation and your kingdom.  
Amen.

*\*If communion is desired skip to the order on the next page.*

***The Lord's Prayer***

***Blessing - from Letters and Papers from Prison (495)***

Not always doing and daring what's random, but seeking the right thing,  
Hover not over the possible, but boldly reach for the real.  
Not escaping to thought, in action alone is found freedom.  
Dare to quit anxious faltering and enter the storm of events,  
carried alone by your faith and by God's good commandments,  
then true freedom will come and embrace your spirit, rejoicing.

**Amen.**

***Dismissal***

Who is Christ for us, today?

**The outcasts, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed and reviled,  
the suffering.**

Go in peace to be with them.

**Thanks be to God.**

**This midweek liturgy is written to complement the curriculum Lessons from Dietrich Bonhoeffer as congregations use it as a midweek faith formation class during Lent. It can also be used by congregations and communities which have previously used the curriculum or any community wanting to explore the ways Bonhoeffer enlivens our discipleship and understanding of the Gospel.**

### **\*Communion**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise**

In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;  
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup,  
gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people  
for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this in remembrance of me.

### ***The Lord's Prayer***

#### ***Invitation to the Table - adapted from Life Together (97)***

As the grains of wheat have been gathered together in this bread, so the members of the community of faith are united in body and blood at the table of the Lord, so we will be together in eternity. Here joy in Christ and Christ's community is complete. Taste and see that the Lord is good.

*Communion is distributed. A hymn may be sung during distribution.*

*The service may continue with the blessing and dismissal.*

#### Referenced Works:

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Works - Reader's Edition, Fortress Press, 2015

Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible, Broadleaf Books, 2022

Scripture references are from the NRSVue.



# LAMPa

Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania

# Readings for Week 1

## ***Psalmody***

From *Prayer Book of the Bible* (21)

Who prays the psalms? David (Solomon, Asaph, etc.) prays, Christ prays, we pray. We—that is first of all the entire community in which alone the vast richness of the Psalter can be prayed, but also finally every individual insofar as that person participates in Christ and [their] community and prays their prayer. David, Christ, the church, I myself and wherever we consider all of this together we recognize the wonderful way in which God teaches us to pray.

## ***Psalm 8***

*May be read responsively.*

O Lord, our Sovereign,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory above the heavens.

**Out of the mouths of babes and infants  
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,  
to silence the enemy and the avenger.**

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars that you have established;  
**what are humans that you are mindful of them,  
mortals that you care for them?**

Yet you have made them a little lower than God  
and crowned them with glory and honor.  
**You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;  
you have put all things under their feet,  
all sheep and oxen,  
and also the beasts of the field,  
the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,  
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.**

O Lord, our Sovereign,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

# Readings for Week 1

***Suggested Hymn - ELW 808 Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song***

***Reading - John 1: 1-5, 14-19***

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

***From Life Together (75)***

The first service one owes to others in the community involves listening to them. Just as our love for God begins with listening to God's Word, the beginning of our love for other Christians is learning to listen to them. God's love for us is shown by the fact that God not only gives God's Word, but also lends us God's ear. We do God's work for our brothers and sisters when we learn to listen to them.

# Readings for Week 2

## ***Psalmody***

*From Prayer Book of the Bible (42)*

We pray these Psalms when we regard all that God does once for [God's] people as done for us, when we confess our guilt and God's grace, when we hold God true to [God's] promises on the basis of [God's] former benefits and request their fulfillment, and when we finally see the entire history of God with [God's] people fulfilled in Jesus Christ, through whom we have been helped and will be helped. For the sake of Jesus Christ, we bring God thanksgiving, petition, and confession.

## ***Psalm 106:1-5***

*May be read responsively.*

Praise the Lord!

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever.

**Who can utter the mighty doings of the Lord  
or declare all his praise?**

Happy are those who observe justice,  
who do righteousness at all times.

**Remember us, O Lord, when you show favor to your people;  
help us when you deliver them,**

that we may see the prosperity of your chosen ones,  
that we may rejoice in the gladness of your nation,  
that we may glory in your heritage.

***Suggested Hymn - ELW 650 In Christ There Is No East Or West***

# Readings for Week 2

## ***Reading - Matthew 7:7-12***

Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. Is there anyone among you who, if your child asked for bread, would give a stone? Or if the child asked for a fish, would give a snake? If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

## ***From Discipleship (5-6)***

Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which has to be asked for, the door at which one has to knock.

It is costly, because it calls to discipleship; it is grace, because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly, because it costs people their lives; it is grace, because it thereby makes them live. It is costly, because it condemns sin; it is grace, because it justifies the sinner...

...Thus, it is grace as a living word, word of God, which speaks as God pleases. It comes to us as a gracious call to follow Jesus, it comes as a forgiving word to the fearful spirit and the broken heart. Grace is costly, because it forces people under the yoke of following Jesus Christ; it is grace when Jesus says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

# Readings for Week 3

## ***Psalmody***

From *Prayer Book of the Bible* (53)

Psalm 103 teaches us to understand the entire fullness of the gifts of God, from the preservation of life to the forgiveness of sins, as a great unity and to come before God thanking and praising [God] for them (cf. also Psalm 65).

## ***Psalm 103:1-5***

*May be read responsively.*

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and all that is within me,  
bless his holy name.

**Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and do not forget all his benefits—**

who forgives all your iniquity,  
who heals all your diseases,

**who redeems your life from the Pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,**

who satisfies you with good as long as you live  
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

***Suggested Hymn - ELW 804 Come Down, O Love Divine***



# Readings for Week 3

## ***Reading - Luke 4: 16-21***

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to set free those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

## ***From Letters and Papers from Prison (381)***

“You are being baptized today as a Christian. All those great and ancient words of the Christian proclamation will be pronounced over you, and the command of Jesus Christ to baptize will be carried out, without your understanding any of it. But we too are being thrown back all the way to the beginnings of our understanding. What reconciliation and redemption mean, rebirth and the Holy Spirit, love for one’s enemies, cross and resurrection, what it means to live in Christ and follow Christ, all that is so difficult and remote that we hardly dare speak of it anymore. In these words and actions handed down to us, we sense something new and revolutionary, but we cannot yet grasp it and express it. This is our own fault. Our church has been fighting during these years only for its self-preservation, as if that were an end in itself. It has become incapable of bringing the word of reconciliation and redemption to humankind and to the world. So the words we used before must lose their power, be silenced, and we can be Christians today in only two ways, through prayer and doing justice among human beings.”

# Readings for Week 4

## ***Psalmody***

From *Prayer Book of the Bible* (57)

But even in the deepest hopelessness God alone remains the one addressed. Neither is help expected from people, nor does the distressed in self-pity lose sight of the origin and the goal of all distress, namely God. The wrathful God is confronted countless times with [God's] promise, [God's] previous blessings, the honor of [God's] name among humanity.

## ***Psalm 44:1-8***

*May be read responsively.*

We have heard with our ears, O God;

our ancestors have told us  
what deeds you performed in their days,  
in the days of old:

**you with your own hand drove out the nations,**

**but them you planted;**

**you afflicted the peoples,**

**but them you set free;**

for not by their own sword did they win the land,  
nor did their own arm give them victory,  
but your right hand, and your arm,  
and the light of your countenance,  
for you delighted in them.

**You are my King and my God;**

**you command victories for Jacob.**

Through you we push down our foes;

through your name we tread down our assailants.

**For not in my bow do I trust,**

**nor can my sword save me.**

But you have saved us from our foes

and have put to confusion those who hate us.

**In God we have boasted continually,**

**and we will give thanks to your name forever.**

***Suggested Hymn - ELW 712 Lord, Whose Love in Humble Service***

# Readings for Week 4

## **Reading - Philippians 2:1-13**

If, then, there is any comfort in Christ, any consolation from love, any partnership in the Spirit, any tender affection and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he existed in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God  
as something to be grasped,  
but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
assuming human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a human,  
he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.

Therefore God exalted him even more highly  
and gave him the name  
that is above every other name,  
so that at the name given to Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence but much more now in my absence, work on your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

## **From Ethics (32-33)**

God becomes human out of love for humanity. God does not seek out the most perfect human being with whom to be united, but takes on human nature as it is. Jesus Christ is not the transfiguration of noble humanity but the Yes of God to real human beings, not the dispassionate Yes of a judge but the merciful Yes of a compassionate sufferer. In this Yes all the life and all the hope of the world are comprised.

# Readings for Week 5

## ***Psalmody***

*From Prayer Book of the Bible (58-59)*

Now we know that there is no longer any suffering on earth in which Christ will not be with us, suffering with us and praying with us—Christ the only helper. On this basis the great Psalms of trust develop...whoever knows that God has entered into our suffering in Jesus Christ himself may say with great confidence, "Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

## ***Psalm 23***

*May be read responsively.*

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

**He makes me lie down in green pastures;  
he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.**

He leads me in right paths  
for his name's sake.

**Even though I walk through the darkest valley,**

**I fear no evil,  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff,  
they comfort me.**

You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
my whole life long.**

***Suggested Hymn - ELW 770 Give Me Jesus***

# Readings for Week 5

## **Reading** - Matthew 25:31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life."

## ***From Letters and Papers from Prison (20)***

It remains an experience of incomparable value that we have for once learned to see the great events of world history from the perspective of the outcasts, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed and reviled, in short from the perspective of the suffering.