



**March 29, 2023
6:30 p.m.
Vespers Lenten Service**

St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, ELCA

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Wednesday, March 29th 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 the springtime 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

God, Who Made the Earth and Heaven

1 God, who made the earth and heav-en, dark - ness and light:
 2 And when morn a - gain shall call us to run life's way,
 3 Guard us wak - ing, guard us sleep-ing, and, when we die,
 4 Ho - ly Fa - ther, throned in heav-en, all - ho - ly Son,

you the day for work have giv - en, for rest the night.
 may we still, what - e'er be - fall us, your will o - bey,
 may we in your might - y keep - ing all peace - ful lie.
 Ho - ly Spir - it, free - ly giv - en, blest Three in One:

May your an - gel guards de - fend us, slum-ber sweet your mer - cy send us,
 From the pow'r of e - vil hide us, in the nar - row path - way guide us,
 When the last dread call shall wake us, then, O Lord, do not for - sake us,
 grant us grace, we now im - plore you, till we lay our crowns be - fore you

ho - ly dreams and hopes at - tend us all through the night.
 nev - er be your smile de - nied us all through the day.
 but to reign in glo - ry take us with you on high.
 and in wor - thier strains a - dore you while a - ges run.

Text: Reginald Heber, 1783–1826, st. 1, alt.; William Mercer, 1811–1873, sts. 2, 4, alt.; Richard Whately, 1787–1863, st. 3, alt.
 Music: AR HYD Y NOS, Welsh traditional; arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958
 Outside USA: Arr. from *The English Hymnal*, © Oxford University Press 1906.

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Jacob's Blessing (by Jan Richardson)

Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.

—Genesis 32:24

If this blessing were easy,
anyone could claim it.

As it is,
I am here to tell you
that it will take some work.

This is the blessing
that visits you
in the struggling,
in the wrestling,
in the striving.

This is the blessing
that comes
after you have left
everything behind,
after you have stepped out,
after you have crossed
into the realm
beyond every landmark
you have known.

This is the blessing
that takes all night
to find.

It's not that this blessing
is so difficult,
as if it were not filled
with grace
or with the love
that lives
in every line.

It's simply that
it requires you
to want it,
to ask for it,
to place yourself
in its path.

It demands that you
stand to meet it
when it arrives,
that you stretch yourself
in ways you didn't know
you could move,
that you agree
to not give up.

So when this blessing comes,
borne in the hands
of the difficult angel
who has chosen you,
do not let go.

Give yourself
into its grip.

It will wound you,
but I tell you
there will come a day
when what felt to you
like limping

was something more
like dancing
as you moved into
the cadence
of your new
and blessed name.

Amen.

Genesis 32:22-32

The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had. Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket, and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to

face, yet my life is preserved.” The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip. Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the thigh muscle that is on the hip socket, because he struck Jacob on the hip socket at the thigh muscle.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less

1 My hope is built on nothing less than
 2 When dark - ness veils his love - ly face, I
 3 His oath, his cov - e - nant, his blood sus -
 4 When he shall come with trum - pet sound, oh,

Je - sus' blood and right - teous - ness; no mer - it of my
 rest on his un - chang - ing grace; in ev - 'ry high and
 tain me in the rag - ing flood; when all sup - ports are
 may I then in him be found, clothed in his right - teous -

own I claim, but whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.
 storm - y gale my an - chor holds with - in the veil.
 washed a - way, he then is all my hope and stay.
 ness a - lone, re - deemed to stand be - fore the throne!

Refrain

On Christ, the sol - id rock, I stand; all oth - er ground is sink - ing sand.

Text: Edward Mote, 1797-1874, alt.
 Music: MELITA, John B. Dykes, 1823-1876

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.

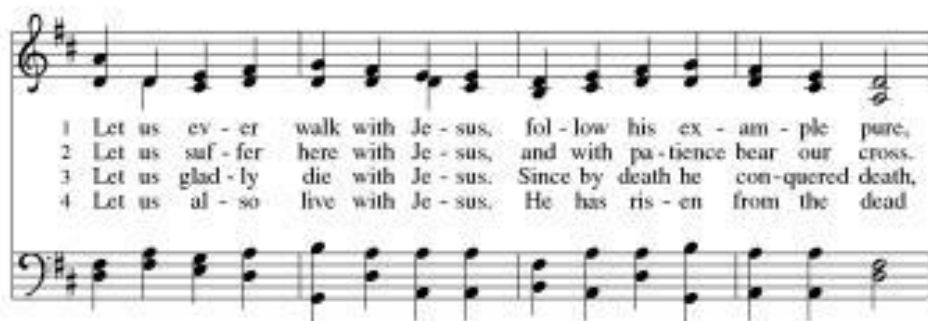
ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

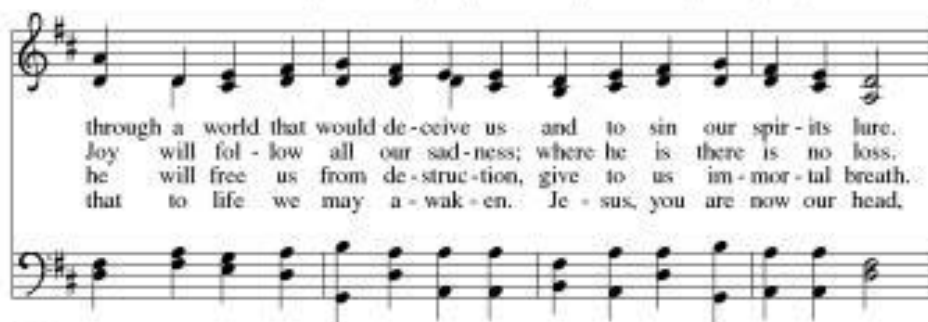
May God wrap you in love each night, providing you peace and rest,
And while you sleep may God weave strength & courage into every breath.
May you meet the morning with resilient vigor, ready for come what may,
And may the light of Christ fill your heart with joy every single day.
May the Spirit shine on you with favor, love, and never-ending grace
And may the Three In † One, bless you on this Lenten journey,
And in every single place.
Amen.

SENDING SONG

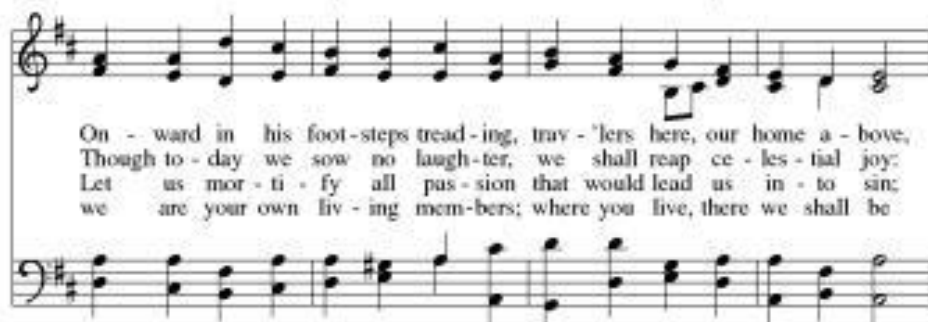
Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus



1 Let us ev - er walk with Je - sus, fol - low his ex - am - ple pure,
 2 Let us suf - fer here with Je - sus, and with pa - tience bear our cross.
 3 Let us glad - ly die with Je - sus. Since by death he con - quered death,
 4 Let us al - so live with Je - sus. He has ris - en from the dead



through a world that would de - ceive us and to sin our spir - its lure.
 Joy will fol - low all our sad - ness; where he is there is no loss,
 he will free us from de - struc - tion, give to us im - mor - tal breath.
 that to life we may a - wak - en. Je - sus, you are now our head,



On - ward in his foot - steps tread - ing, trav - 'lers here, our home a - bove,
 Though to - day we sow no laugh - ter, we shall reap ce - les - tial joy;
 Let us mor - ti - fy all pas - sion that would lead us in - to sin;
 we are your own liv - ing mem - bers; where you live, there we shall be



full of faith and hope and love, let us do our Sav - ior's bid - ding,
 all dis - com - forts that an - noy shall give way to mirth here - af - ter.
 and the grave that shuts us in shall but prove the gate of heav - en.
 in your pres - ence con - stant - ly, liv - ing there with you for - ev - er.



Faith - ful Lord, with me a - bide; I shall fol - low where you guide.
 Je - sus, here I share your woe; help me there your joy to know.
 Je - sus, here with you I die, there to live with you on high.
 Je - sus, let me faith - ful be; life e - ter - nal grant to me.

Text: Sigmund von Birken, 1626-1681; in *Luthers Book of Worship*, ed.
 Music: LASSET UNS MIT JESU ZIEHEN, Georg G. Bokke, 18th cent.

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve in love.

Thanks be to God.

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