



**A Lenten Service of Word and Prayer  
March 8, 2023**

**Greeting:**

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

**Call to Worship:**

God, the vision of your reign fills our hearts and minds.

**The music of your love invites us to move to its rhythms.**

The dance of your grace beckons us to follow its steps.

**We gather to let go of what holds us back from following you.**

To learn the new steps of your life-dance,

**to set out to explore the new realms of your salvation.**

Your Spirit blows through our hearts and lives, may it:

**move us to sing and dance,**

to love and to serve,

**to journey and to discover.**

Enliven and leads us with your lifegiving Breath.

**Amen.**

**Prayer:**

Grace and peace from our Savior Jesus Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

We thank you, Gracious God,

**for renewing your life in us again, for moving like the wind within**

**us and among us. For opening our hearts, minds and senses to your**

**wisdom. For teaching us the first, challenging steps of your life-dance. Thank you for allowing yourself to be lifted up, Jesus, for drawing our eyes and hearts to you, and for the saving grace we find when we come to you. Amen.**

## **Psalms of Joy:**

### **Psalm 98**

<sup>1</sup>O sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things. His right hand and his holy arm have gotten him victory.

**<sup>2</sup>The LORD has made known his victory; he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.**

<sup>3</sup>He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the victory of our God.

**<sup>4</sup>Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.**

<sup>5</sup>Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody.

**<sup>6</sup>With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD.**

<sup>7</sup>Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; the world and those who live in it.

**<sup>8</sup>Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills sing together for joy**

<sup>9</sup>at the presence of the LORD, for he is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with equity.

### **Psalm 150**

<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty firmament!

**<sup>2</sup>Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his surpassing greatness!**

<sup>3</sup>Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!

**<sup>4</sup>Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!**

<sup>5</sup>Praise him with clanging cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

**<sup>6</sup>Let everything that breathes praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!**

## **Meditation**

## **A Psalm of Despair**

### **Psalm 88**

<sup>1</sup>O LORD, God of my salvation, when, at night, I cry out in your presence,

<sup>2</sup>**let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry.**

<sup>3</sup>For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol.

<sup>4</sup>**I am counted among those who go down to the Pit; I am like those who have no help,**

<sup>5</sup>like those forsaken among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand.

<sup>6</sup>**You have put me in the depths of the Pit, in the regions dark and deep.**

<sup>7</sup>Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves.

<sup>8</sup>**You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a thing of horror to them. I am shut in so that I cannot escape;**

<sup>9</sup>my eye grows dim through sorrow. Every day I call on you, O LORD; I spread out my hands to you.

<sup>10</sup>**Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the shades rise up to praise you?**

<sup>11</sup>Is your steadfast love declared in the grave, or your faithfulness in Abaddon?

<sup>12</sup>**Are your wonders known in the darkness, or your saving help in the land of forgetfulness?**

<sup>13</sup>But I, O LORD, cry out to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you.

<sup>14</sup>**O LORD, why do you cast me off? Why do you hide your face from me?**

<sup>15</sup>Wretched and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am desperate.

<sup>16</sup>**Your wrath has swept over me; your dread assaults destroy me.**

<sup>17</sup>They surround me like a flood all day long; from all sides they close in on me.

<sup>18</sup>**You have caused friend and neighbor to shun me; my companions are in darkness.**

**Prayer of Confession and Forgiveness:**

Though your call beckons us, O God, filling our hearts with visions of new places, new ways of being, new steps to learn and follow,

**We confess that we are afraid of the unknown.**

Though your life invites us, O God, into new richness and energy, new challenges and discoveries, new companions and creativity,

**We confess that we are addicted to the comfortable.**

Though your promise allures us, O God, to experience new joys, new freedoms and possibilities, new tasks and resources,

**We confess that we are unwilling to let go of what we have.**

Forgive us when we get stuck in our comfortable lives, our secure ways of thinking, our familiar patterns of being,

**And give us the courage to take the first risky steps in learning your life-dance, however frightening and foolish it may feel.**

Teach us new ways of being, of living, of sharing, for ourselves and our world.

**Teach us to release that which no longer helps us.**

Teach us to see

**what life really looks like.**

Teach us to dance

**to the rhythm of your salvation.**

**Amen.**

Hear the good news! For God so loved the world that God gave the only Son, so that all may receive life. God embraces us with divine mercy, † forgives us in Christ's name, and renews us in the Spirit's power.

**Lord, we thank you for the love that sent you, the invitation that calls us to you, and for the life-dance we learn as we follow you. We praise you and celebrate your Spirit and your life, and with faith we commit ourselves again to move in step with you. Amen.**

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

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray...

**C: 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**

## **Benediction:**

We go now as those who are children of God,  
**born of the Spirit, and belonging to Christ;**  
We go now to live in step with your reign,  
**and to welcome all who would join us in the dance of life that you lead. Amen.**

## **Blessing and Sending:**

God, the giver of love, ✝ Christ, the resurrection and the life, and the Holy Spirit of rebirth bless us in this Lenten journey.  
**Amen.**

Go in peace. Serve in love.

**Thanks be to God.**

**References:** Liturgy: Lent 2A: "First Steps", *Dancing with the Light: A Journey in Worship for Lent*, John van de Laar, Sacredise, 2011.  
Woods, Len. "When You Need to Pray but You're All Out of Words," Chapter 11, *Spiritual Life Hacks: Uncommon Solutions to Common Challenges*. Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2019, 69-72.  
Excerpt from: Woods, Len. "When Your Devotional Life is Stale and Blah," Chapter 12, *Spiritual Life Hacks: Uncommon Solutions to Common Challenges*. Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, OR, 2019, 73-77.