## Service of Word and Prayer Thursday, March 18, 2021 Week 4 in Lent

## INTRODUCTION

God's word, proclaimed and reflected upon, and the prayer it calls forth from those gathered, are the heart of this service, which is prepared especially for contemplative settings. The Holy Spirit, who knows our needs, prays with and through us, and when we have no words, for us. Silence makes room to breathe deeply, time to still the heart and quiet restless thoughts, and, a place to listen and rest in the presence of God, "like a child upon its mother's breast" (Psalm 131:2). Some times of silence will last no longer than a deep breath; some will be more spacious. A handbell or singing bowl may be rung to mark them. Before worship begins, keeping silence or listening to meditative music invites the community into the unhurried pace of prayer.

## GATHERING

The Holy Spirit gathers us into a community of prayer.

### GREETING

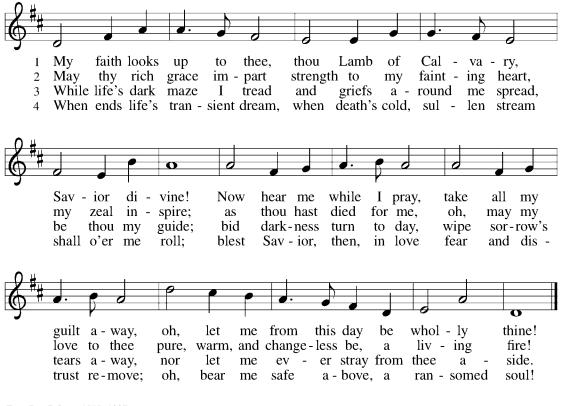
The love of God poured into our hearts, the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and the abundant life of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.** 

## **OPENING PRAYER**

O God, rich in mercy, full of kindness, out of your great love, you raise us up from sin and death and make us alive together with Christ. Write your word upon our hearts and restore in us the image of your love that, by your Spirit, our way of life may become the way of Christ, through whom we pray. **Amen.** 

SILENCE

# My Faith Looks Up to Thee



Text: Ray Palmer, 1808–1887 Music: OLIVET, Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

#### WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, silence, reflection, and song.

### **READING: Numbers 21:4-9**

<sup>4</sup>From Mount Hor [the Israelites] set out by the way to the Red Sea, to go around the land of Edom; but the people became impatient on the way. <sup>5</sup>The people spoke against God and against Moses, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we detest this miserable food." <sup>6</sup>Then the LORD sent poisonous serpents among the people, and they bit the people, so that many Israelites died. <sup>7</sup>The people came to Moses and said, "We have sinned by speaking against the LORD and against you; pray to the LORD to take away the serpents from us." So Moses prayed for the people. <sup>8</sup>And the LORD said to Moses, "Make a poisonous serpent, and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten shall look at it and live." <sup>9</sup>So Moses made a serpent of bronze, and put it upon a pole; and whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live.

### REFLECTION

#### PRAYER

The Holy Spirit prays with us and through us.

## INVITATION TO PRAYER

The leader invites the community into prayer.

In Christ Jesus we meet the God who knows our weakness and bears the wounds of the world. Therefore, let us be bold as we pray, trusting that God draws near to those in any kind of need.

#### **CONCLUDING PRAYER**

Gathering our many prayers into one, let us pray.

God of all compassion, gather our prayers in your mercy and grant to us what you know we need, that we may walk in the life and peace of your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our hope and our salvation.

## Amen.

#### LORD'S PRAYER

#### The Lord's Prayer may be prayed. The leader may introduce the prayer.

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

#### Our Father...

#### SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

SILENCE

#### Christ, the Life of All the Living Christ, the life of all the liv-ing, Christ, the death of death, our 1 foe. 2 You have suf-fered great af - flic-tion and have borne it pa - tient - ly, 3 Then, for all that bought my par-don, for the sor-rows deep and sore, Christ, your-self for me once giv-ing to the dark - est depths of woe: cru - ci - fix - ion, ful - ly e ven death by to a - tone for me; an - guish in the gar-den, I will thank you ev - er - more; for the through your suf-f'ring, death, and mer - it life Ι e - ter - nal in - her - it. you chose to be tor-ment-ed that my doom should be pre-vent-ed. for thank you for the groan-ing, sigh-ing, for the bleed-ing and the dy-ing, Thou-sand, thou-sand thanks are due, dear - est Je - sus, un - to you. Thou-sand, thou-sand thanks are due, dear - est Je - sus, un - to you. that last tri - um - phant cry, praise you ev - er - more on high. for

Text: Ernst Christoph Homburg, 1605–1681; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt. Music: JESU, MEINES LEBENS LEBEN, *Das grosse Cantional*, Darmstadt, 1687

### BLESSING

Christ Jesus dwell in our hearts through faith, as we are being rooted and grounded in love, strengthened by the Spirit, and filled with all the fullness of God. **Amen.** 

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