



*With the birth of Jesus in our hearts  
We carry light and love to the world.*

*March 12, 2025  
The Sense of Sight*



**Information for the hearing impaired:** Are you having difficulty hearing what is being said during our worship service? If so, try using our Assisted Hearing System, which is available from an usher.

***PLEASE SILENCE YOUR PHONE PRIOR TO SERVICE.***

## **WELCOME/ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **PRELUDE**

*Please, stand.*

### **GATHERING LITANY**

*The Litany of Trust*

From the belief that I have to earn Your love, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From the fear that I am unlovable, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From the false security that I have what it takes, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From the fear that trusting You will leave me more destitute, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From all suspicion of Your words and promises, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From the rebellion against childlike dependency on You, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From refusals and reluctances in accepting Your will, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From anxiety about the future, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From resentment or excessive preoccupation with the past, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From restless self-seeking in the present moment, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From disbelief in Your love and presence, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From the fear of being asked to give more than I have, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From the belief that my life has no meaning or worth, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From the fear of what love demands, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

From discouragement, **Deliver me, Jesus.**

That You are continually holding me, sustaining me, loving me, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That Your love goes deeper than my sins and failings, and transforms me, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That not knowing what tomorrow brings is an invitation to lean on You, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That you are with me in my suffering, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That my suffering, united to Your own, will bear fruit in this life and the next, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That You will not leave me orphan, that You are present in Your Church, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That Your plan is better than anything else, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That You always hear me and, in Your goodness, always respond to me, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That You give me the grace to accept forgiveness and to forgive others, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That You give me all the strength I need for what is asked, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That my life is a gift, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That You will teach me to trust You, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That You are my Lord and my God, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

That I am Your beloved one, **Jesus, I trust in you.**

*(Litany penned by Sister Faustina Maria Pia of the Sisters of Life)*

**GATHERING HYMN**

*Blest Are They*

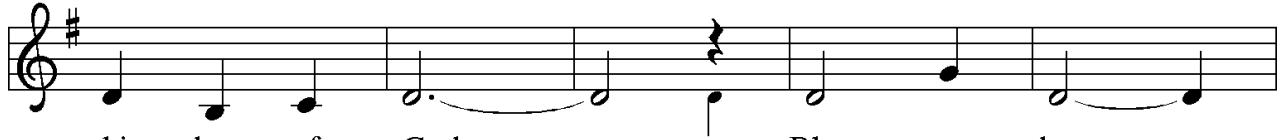
ELW 728

vv 1,2,5

Leader or All



1 Blest are they, the poor in spir - it; theirs is the  
 2 Blest are they, the low - ly ones; . . . they shall in -  
 3 Blest are they . . . . . who show mer - cy; mer - cy  
 4 Blest are they . . . . . who seek peace; . . they are the  
 5 Blest are you who suf - fer hate, . . . all . . . be -



king - dom of God. Blest are they,  
 her - it the earth. Blest are they who  
 shall . . . be theirs. Blest are they, the  
 chil - dren of God. Blest are they who  
 cause . . . of me. Re - joice, be glad,



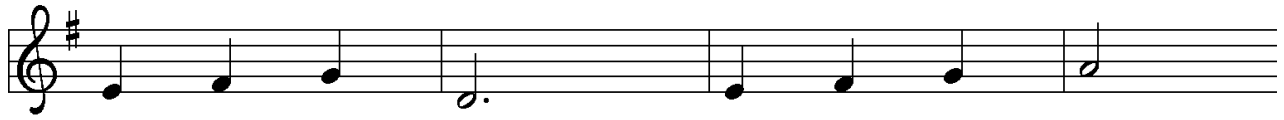
full of sor - row; they shall be con - soled.  
 hun - ger and thirst; they shall have their fill.  
 pure of heart; they . . . . . shall see God.  
 suf - fer in faith; the glo - ry of God is theirs.  
 yours is the king - dom; shine for all to see.

*Refrain*

All



Re - joice and be glad!



Bless - ed are you, ho - ly are you!



Re - joice and be glad!



Yours is the king - dom of God!

## OPENING PRAYER

God incarnate, **You have given us eyes to see your presence and love in the details of creation and in the creativity of those made in your image. Open our eyes and our hearts to receive the gifts You have for us, and teach us to share these gifts with the world. Amen.**

*You may be seated.*

## A READING FROM THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS

1:1-23

Reader: Carlan Helgeson

<sup>1</sup>Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>2</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>3</sup>Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. <sup>5</sup>He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup>that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup>In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, <sup>12</sup>so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with

the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; <sup>14</sup>this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory. <sup>15</sup>I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason <sup>16</sup>I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers, <sup>17</sup>that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, <sup>18</sup>so that, *with the eyes of your heart enlightened*, you may perceive what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, <sup>19</sup>and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. <sup>20</sup>God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. <sup>22</sup>And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM 146**

Reader: Carlan Helgeson

<sup>1</sup>Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

**<sup>2</sup>I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God all my life long.**

<sup>3</sup>Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.

**<sup>4</sup>When their breath departs, they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.**

<sup>5</sup>Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God,

**<sup>6</sup>who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;**

<sup>7</sup>who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.

**The Lord sets the prisoners free;**

**<sup>8</sup>the Lord opens the eyes of the blind.**

The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.

**<sup>9</sup>The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.**

<sup>10</sup>The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations.

**Praise the Lord!**

*Please, stand.*

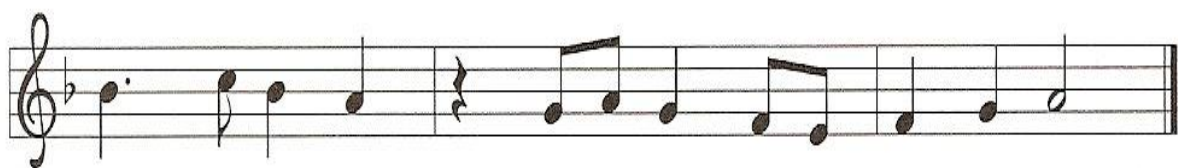
## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

### Lenten Refrain

### *Return to the Lord*



Re - turn to the Lord, your God, for he is gra - cious and mer - ci - ful,



slow to an - ger, and a - bound - ing in stead - fast love.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. <sup>2</sup>A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. <sup>3</sup>He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. <sup>4</sup>So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. <sup>5</sup>When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." <sup>6</sup>So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. <sup>7</sup>All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." <sup>8</sup>Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." <sup>9</sup>Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*You may be seated.*

*Meditation*

*Please, stand.*



## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Hear the words of challenge and comfort our Savior Christ says to all who follow him.

If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake will save it (Luke 9:23–24).

Come unto me, all who are tired of carrying your heavy loads, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

So, all of you who repent of your sins, who love your neighbors, and intend to live a new life following the way of Jesus, come with faith and humble yourselves before the Lord.

*A Moment of Silence.*

Let us reverently confess our sins to Almighty God.

**Creator of all, You marvelously made us in your image; but we have corrupted ourselves and damaged your likeness by rejecting your love and hurting our neighbors. We have done wrong and neglected to do right. We are sincerely sorry and heartily repent of our sins. Cleanse us and forgive us by the love sacrifice of your Son; remake us and lead us by your Spirit, the Comforter. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Almighty God, whose steadfast love is as great as the heavens are high above the earth, remove your sins from you, as far as the east is from the west, strengthen your life in his kingdom and keep you upright to the last day; through Jesus Christ, our merciful high priest. **Amen.**

*(Adapted from the Eucharistic Service from the Anglican Church of Kenya.)*

## **THE CREED**

**We believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of the heavens and the earth; Creator of all peoples and all cultures; Creator of all tongues and races.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son, our Lord, God made flesh in a person for all humanity, God made flesh in an age for all the ages, God made flesh in one culture for all cultures, God made flesh in love and grace for all creation.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, Through whom God incarnated in Jesus Christ makes his presence known in our peoples and our cultures; Through whom, God Creator of all that exists, Gives us power to become new creatures; Whose infinite gifts make us one people: the body of Christ.**

**We believe in the Church Universal because it is a sign of God's Reign, whose faithfulness is shown in its many hues where all the colors paint a single landscape, where all tongues sing the same praise.**

**We believe in the Reign of God, the day of the Great Fiesta when all the colors of creation will form a harmonious rainbow, when all peoples will join in joyful banquet, when all tongues of the universe will sing the same song.**

**And because we believe, we commit ourselves: to believe for those who do not believe, to love for those who do not love, to dream for those who do not dream, until the day when hope becomes reality. Amen.**

*You may be seated.*

## **A LORD'S PRAYER FOR JUSTICE**

**OUR FATHER . . .** who always stands with the weak, the powerless, the poor, the abandoned, the sick, the aged, the very young, and those who, by victim of circumstance, bear the heat of the day.

**WHO ART IN HEAVEN . . .** where everything will be reversed, where the first will be last and the last will be first, but where all will be well and every manner of being will be well.

**HALLOWED BE THY NAME . . .** may we always acknowledge your holiness, respecting that your ways are not our ways, your standards are not our standards. May the reverence we give your name pull us out of the selfishness that prevents us from seeing the pain of our neighbor.

**YOUR KINGDOM COME . . .** help us to create a world where, beyond our own needs and hurts, we will do justice, love tenderly, and walk humbly with you and with each other.

**YOUR WILL BE DONE . . .** open our freedom to let you in, so that the complete mutuality that characterizes your life might flow through our veins, and thus the life that we help generate may radiate your equal love for all and your special love for the poor.

**ON EARTH AS IN HEAVEN . . .** may the work of our hands, the temples and structures we build in this world, reflect the temple and the structure of your glory, so that the joy, graciousness, tenderness, and justice of heaven will show forth within all of our structures on earth.

**GIVE . . .** life and love to us, and help us to see always everything as gift. Help us to know that nothing comes to us by right and that we must give because we have been given to. Help us realize that we must give to the poor, not because they need it, but because our own health depends upon our giving to them.

**US . . .** the truly plural us. Give not just to our own but to everyone, including those who are very different than the narrow us. Give your gifts to all of us equally.

**THIS DAY . . .** not tomorrow. Do not let us push things off into some indefinite future so that we can continue to live justified lives in the face of injustice because we can make good excuses for our inactivity.

**OUR DAILY BREAD . . .** so that each person in the world may have enough food, enough clean water, enough clean air, adequate health care, and sufficient access to education so as to have the sustenance for a healthy life. Teach us to give from our sustenance and not just from our surplus.

**AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES . . .** forgive us our blindness toward our neighbor, our self-preoccupation, our racism, our sexism, and our incurable propensity to worry only about ourselves and our own. Forgive us our capacity to watch the evening news and do nothing about it.

**AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US . . .** help us to forgive those who victimize us. Help us to mellow our spirit, to not grow bitter with age, to forgive the imperfect parents and systems that wounded, cursed, and ignored us.

**SAVE US FROM THE TIME OF TRIAL . . .** do not judge us only by whether we have fed the hungry, given clothing to the naked, visited the sick, or tried to mend the systems that victimized the poor. Spare us this trial, for none of us can stand before your gospel scrutiny. Give us, instead, more days to mend our ways, our selfishness, and our systems.

**BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL . . .** that is, from the blindness that lets us continue to participate in anonymous systems within which we need not see who gets less as we get more.

**FOR THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY ARE YOURS**

. . . and not ours, no matter how much we try to claim them for ourselves, even though you freely offer them to us.

**NOW AND FOREVER . . .** though the work of justice cannot wait any longer. **AMEN.**

*(by Ronald Rolheiser, from his book "The Holy Longing: The Search for a Christian Spirituality")*

*Please, stand.*

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Grant, O Lord Jesus, that the ears which have heard the voice of your songs **may be closed to the voice of dispute**; that the eyes which have seen your great love **may also behold your blessed hope**; that the tongues which have sung your praise **may speak the truth in love**; that the feet which have walked in your courts **may walk in the region of light**; and that the bodies which have received your living body **may be restored in newness of life**. Glory to You for your inexpressible gift; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

God our tender Parent, God the crucified One, God the reconciling Spirit, + bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace! Care for others as God cares for you.  
**Thanks be to God!**



1 Be thou my vi - sion, O Lord of my heart;  
 2 Be thou my wis - dom, and thou my true word;  
 3 Rich - es I heed not, nor vain, emp - ty praise,  
 4 Light of my soul, af - ter vic - to - ry won,



naught be all else to me, save that thou art:  
 I ev - er with thee and thou with me, Lord.  
 thou mine in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways:  
 may I reach heav - en's joys, O heav - en's Sun!



thou my best thought both by day and by night,  
 Thou my soul's shel - ter, and thou my high tow'r,  
 thou and thou on - ly, the first in my heart,  
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,



wak - ing or sleep - ing, thy pres - ence my light.  
 raise thou me heav'n - ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.  
 great God of heav - en, my trea - sure thou art.  
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.

## *You may leave in silence.*

### Offering

*You may leave your offering in the basket on your way out.*

*You may also donate on-line at <https://www.nlcww.org>, or on our Facebook page. You may also contribute using Venmo or Zelle if you have an account, or using the QR code below:*



### **WORSHIP LEADERS TODAY**

**Worship Leaders**

**Reader**

**Organist/Director of Music**

**Audio**

Pastor Giuseppe Mattei

Carlan Helgeson

Donna Olsen

Art Alt

***Altar Flowers:*** *Please note that there are no flowers during Lent. Easter lilies will be available to order starting March 30. Watch the weekly announcement sheets for further details.*

**NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH OF WEEKI WACHEE  
A CONGREGATION OF THE FLORIDA-BAHAMAS SYNOD OF  
THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA**

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Reverend Giuseppe Mattei

Deacon Charlotte Downing

Music Director: Donna Olsen

Audio/Visual Director: Art Alt

Bell Choir Directors: Janet & Todd Holly

Sunday Service at 9:30 a.m.