

Dear members and friends of Holy Trinity,

Since it is best that we not meet for worship together, what follows is a worship service you can use wherever you are located.

A few details to note:

- 3 hymns are listed. After each one, there is a link which should allow for you to hear an arrangement of that particular hymn. (I did my best this first time given what I could choose from on the internet.)
- After the dismissal, if you continue to scroll down, you will find what would typically be in the bulletin on an insert about one of the hymns. In addition, the names of those on the prayer list are included.
- For the service, have a bible ready so you can look up the readings.

We will continue to send pertinent information, next week's thoughts for the Lenten study on chapter 4, and some type of Sunday worship service.

While a remote service can not take the place of public worship together, we can trust that the Spirit is at work in whatever format our takes.

You might consider using this service on Sunday morning at 9:30 as a way to be in prayerful solidarity with other congregation members.

God's Peace and Well-Being be with you all,

Pastor John

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church

5800 Long Beach Blvd. Brant Beach, NJ 08008

Morning Worship: 9:30 am

Sunday, March 22, 2020

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Rev. John Anderson, Pastor

Preparation For Worship *Lord Jesus Think on Me*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqQ1IPOIZwA>

ORDER FOR CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Gracious God,

Have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our ☩ Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

HYMN: *Christ Be Our Light*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZeyWIO6DF Mo>

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Bend your ear to our prayers, Lord Christ, and come among us. By your gracious life and death for us, bring light into the darkness of our hearts, and anoint us with your Spirit, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

READINGS

1 Samuel 16:1-13

Psalm 23

Ephesians 5:8-14

John 9:1-41

SERMON

I am sure you are like me in that 2 weeks ago you never would have thought we would not be able to sit in a restaurant, that we would be seeing empty shelves in the supermarket, looking at troubling investment data, and not meeting for worship. We hear about fights between customers over the last package of paper products. In addition, we are living in a time of unanticipated uncertainty and concern for our own health, the health of people close to us and for the health and well - being of others in our community, nation, and world.

Today's gospel passage is another lengthy reading, John 9:1-41. Last week in church we read the passage about Jesus and the woman at the well in parts, in dramatic form, as we would a play. This week's reading is one which can be broken down into six scenes and also read in dramatic form. Whether we hear this account through a number of voices reading the different parts or we read it ourselves at home, the passage has powerful assurances for us in this time of uncharted territory.

On the church sign this week, I put up a message about the services on March 22nd and 29th being suspended. In addition, I included the words *God is our refuge and strength* (Psalm 46:1). This gospel passage lets us know that God through Jesus is indeed our refuge and strength.

Three inter-related thoughts ...

First, God has SENT Jesus to draw us into community, fellowship, relationship with God. Jesus says to the disciples in vs.4, "We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day" By one person's counting, in John's Gospel we hear 38 times that God sent Jesus into the world for us and humanity.

Notice how this Jesus sent from God treats the man born blind. Near the end of the reading, the religious authorities interrogate again the man who has been given physical sight by Jesus. The leaders force the man out of the community (v. 34). Jesus, having learned what had happened to the man, tracks him down (v.41). In this second meeting, the man is given spiritual sight or faith. We see Jesus going the second mile to seek out this man and draw him into the community with him. This man, no doubt, knew what it felt like to be on the outside, on the margins of life, looked down upon. Jesus extends care and community to this individual. This man born blind represents us. God SENT Jesus and Jesus seeks us out too.

Second, God sending Jesus Makes a Difference for this formerly blind individual and each of us. At the start of the account, the man is begging, v.8. By the end the man is behaving in a shocking manner for that very hierarchical culture. At the close, he is having a vigorous dialogue with the religious leaders. He shows that he is the one with true sight and that they, the religious leaders, are the blind ones. Jesus, working in this man's life, leads him to live more fully. He stands up to the leaders. He defends Jesus as one whom God has used to give sight and healing. Before meeting

Jesus he would not have spoken up in this way. Jesus makes a difference in the man's life.

How does this apply to us? As with this individual from about 2000 years ago, Jesus shows us compassion, values each of us as unique children of God, and gives us truest security. **Those gifts make a difference, freeing us, allowing us to live more fully for God.**

Third, Jesus urges us to share his love with others, extending to them the refuge and strength we have from God. The man given sight couldn't keep quiet when questioned by the authorities. I bet he made a great evangelist after this!

Given that we are secure in Jesus' family, how can we share Jesus' grace with others? On Wednesday, the food pantry at St. Thomas, with a number of wise precautions in place, was open to serve. A couple arrived during the hours of operation. It was assumed that they arrived hoping for a food distribution for their household. Instead, they opened up their trunk and carried in bags of donated groceries. Anonymously, after their generous act, they went on their way.

I spoke with the owner of a pizzeria near our house. We talked about how his business was going given the social distancing. He added that his elderly parents lived in Italy. I asked about their health given the Corona 19 outbreak. He answered that they were okay but commented that they had stayed inside their house for the last month. Friends dropped off food for them at their door. I told him I would pray for them. He thanked me for doing so.

We may not always be sure how exactly we can help. Generosity, praying for others, checking on them, maybe by phone, are certainly three ways to extend Jesus' compassion to others.

God has **SENT** Jesus for us.

God sending Jesus makes a difference for us and how we might live.

God is our refuge and strength. Amen.

APOSTLES CREED:

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord.

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

he is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic Church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Turning our hearts to God who is gracious and merciful, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of insight, open the hearts of the church and the world to all who testify to your deeds of power (*like Jonathan Edwards, whom we commemorate today*). Raise up voices in your church that are often silenced or overlooked due to age, gender expression, race, or economic status. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of insight, empower us to care for the land and all living things that dwell in it and beneath it. Provide rich soil for crops to grow. Bring rain to lands suffering drought. Protect hills and shorelines from damage caused by erosion. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of insight, bring peace to all people and nations. Anoint leaders who seek goodness, righteousness, and truth on behalf of all. Frustrate the efforts of those who would seek to cause violence or terror. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of insight, you care for our needs even before we ask. Come quickly to all who seek prayer this day (*especially*). Accomplish healing through the work of doctors, nurses, physical therapists, nutritionists, and all who tend to human bodies. Send forth your healing and wellbeing to all those impacted by the Corona 19 virus. Fill with wisdom all make decisions in this time of uncertainty. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of insight, help this assembly lift up the unique gifts of each person who enters, no matter their physical capacity, cognitive ability, or sensory need. Help us to be creative and brave in making our facilities and our ministries accessible to all. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of insight, you call out to those who are asleep and awaken them to new life with you. We give thanks for your saints (*especially*). Join us together with them as your children in this world and the next. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

According to your steadfast love, O God, hear these and all our prayers as we commend them to you; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

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.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

Song: O God, Our Help in Ages Past

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-hN740J6qA>

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Bulletin Insert

“O God, Our Help in Ages Past”

Written by Isaac Watts, Jr. in 1708, “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” has a rich history. Coming of age during a time of religious intolerance in England, Watts began crafting hymns when Protestants were restricted to singing metrical psalms (which were psalms written in a metered, poetic form having rhyme). When Queen Anne became deadly ill in 1714, England was thrown into chaos. It was at that time when Watts sat down to write this majestic hymn of comfort, reminding those around him that God takes the long view of Time while we, as humans, can frequently become fraught with the trials and tribulations of current crises.

Hence, since its penning, “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” has experienced a litany of notable uses during times of crises and upsetment. Among them, on April 14, 1912 (as per passenger Archibald Gracie IV), this hymn was the last hymn sung at a church service presided over by Captain Edward J. Smith on the morning before the RMS Titanic sank. And, on January 30, 1965, this hymn was sung at the funeral of Winston Churchill. The hymn's first words, “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” indeed capture the timelessness of God. God has been our help *in ages past*, hope *for years to come*, and *our eternal home!*

PRAISE!

We are praying for these people:

Dawne	Frank	Alice
Jean	Bev	Pat
Robert	John	Sandy
Candy	Mary Ellen	John C.
John Jr.	Dick	Dot
Dennis	Bobby	Carol
Tim	Kathy E.	Jackie
Phyllis	Pat	Alice
Michelle	Carol	
Cody	Bob	
Ann	Irene	
Lynn	Emit	
Dot	Jeanette	