

MID-WEEK LENTEN SERVICE 6 2026

THE GOOD NEWS OF A GOD WHO SUSTAINS US ON OUR JOURNEY

The Israelites complained that the Lord wasn't properly providing for them after He had delivered them from Egypt. Often, we take the Lord's blessings for granted and question whether He is caring for us as He should. In Christ, God provides for all that we need for our journey through this life and into eternity.

May the Lord bless our worship tonight

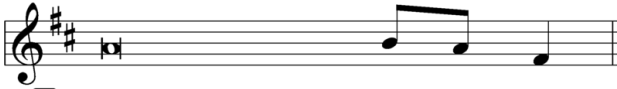


VESPERS

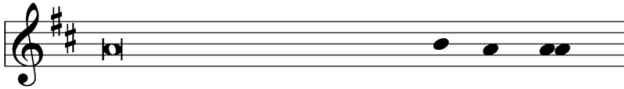
As the minister approaches the altar the congregation stands



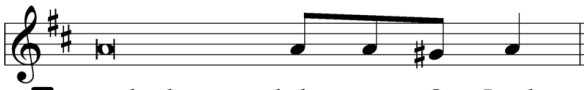
P O Lord, o - pen my lips,



C and my mouth will de - clare Your praise.



P Make haste, O God, to de - liv - er me;



C make haste to help me, O Lord.

PSALM

Psalm 103:1-14

P Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

C Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits,

P Who forgives all your iniquity, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from the pit, Who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,

C Who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

P The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.

C He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the people of Israel.

P The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

C He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever.

P He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.

C For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him;

P as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us.

C As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear Him.

P For He knows our frame;

C He remembers that we are dust.

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Sit

HYMN 814

FIRST READING

Exodus 16:1-18, 35

P The First Reading is from Exodus, the sixteenth chapter.

They set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the people of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had departed from the land of Egypt. ² And the whole congregation of the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness, ³ and the people of Israel said to them, “Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”

⁴ Then the LORD said to Moses, “Behold, I am about to rain bread from heaven for you, and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether they will walk in My law or not. ⁵ On the sixth day, when they prepare what they bring in, it will be twice as much as they gather daily.”

⁶ So Moses and Aaron said to all the people of Israel, “At evening you shall know that it was the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, ⁷ and in the morning you shall see the glory of the LORD, because He has heard your

grumbling against the LORD. For what are we, that you grumble against us?”
⁸ And Moses said, “When the LORD gives you in the evening meat to eat and in the morning bread to the full, because the LORD has heard your grumbling that you grumble against Him—what are we? Your grumbling is not against us but against the LORD.”

⁹ Then Moses said to Aaron, “Say to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, ‘Come near before the LORD, for He has heard your grumbling.’”¹⁰ And as soon as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the people of Israel, they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.¹¹ And the LORD said to Moses,¹² “I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”

¹³ In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp.¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground.¹⁵ When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat.¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat. You shall each take two litres, according to the number of the persons that each of you has in his tent.’”¹⁷ And the people of Israel did so. They gathered, some more, some less.¹⁸ But when they measured it with a two-litre measure, whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack. Each of them gathered as much as he could eat...³⁵ The people of Israel ate the manna for forty years, till they came to a habitable land. They ate the manna till they came to the border of the land of Canaan.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Philippians 4:10-13

P The Second Reading is from Philippians, the fourth chapter.

¹⁰ I rejoiced in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me. You were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity. ¹¹ Not that I am speaking of being in need, for I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. ¹² I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. ¹³ I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

THE PASSION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST DRAWN FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS

The soldiers now had charge of Jesus. Carrying His own cross, He went out of the city to a place called Skull Hill, in Hebrew, *Golgotha*. As they led Him away, they laid hold of Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus, who was coming in from the country. On him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. Following Him was a great company of people and of women who bewailed and lamented Him. Jesus turned to them and said, “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. The days are surely coming when they will say, ‘Blessed are the barren and the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!’ Then they will say to the mountains, ‘Fall on us,’ and to the hills, ‘Cover us.’ For if they do these things with a green tree, what will happen with a dry one?”

There were also two others, criminals whom they led along to be put to death with Him. When they came to the place called Golgotha, they gave Him wine mingled with gall to drink, but when He tasted it, He would not drink it.

It was the third hour, and there they crucified Him.

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

The two criminals were also crucified with Him—one on His right, the other on His left, with Jesus in the middle. The Scripture was then fulfilled, which says, “And He was numbered with the transgressors.”

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they cast lots to divide His clothes and decide what each should take. They made four parts, one for each soldier. There remained His tunic, which was without seam, woven in one piece from the top to the bottom. They said to one another, “Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to decide who shall have it.” The Scripture was thus fulfilled, which says, “They divided My garments among them and cast lots for My clothing.” These things the soldiers did and, sitting down, they kept watch over Him there.

Over His head was put the charge against Him. Pilate wrote the notice to be put on the cross. It read, JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS. This title was read by many of the Jews, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The chief priests of the Jews then said to Pilate, “You should not write, ‘The King of the Jews,’ but ‘This Man said, I am the King of the Jews.’”

Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.”

People stood by, watching. Those who passed by derided Him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself. If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.”

So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked Him to one another saying, “He saved others; He cannot save Himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, now come down from the cross that we may see and believe. He trusts in God; let God deliver Him now, if He wants Him, for He said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

The soldiers also mocked Him, coming to Him and offering Him wine, and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.” The thieves who were crucified with Him also reviled Him. And one of the criminals who hung there with Him railed at Him: “Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us.”

But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God since you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we are getting what we deserve for what we have done; but this Man has done nothing wrong.” Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

Jesus said to him, “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise.”

Near to the cross of Jesus stood His mother, His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing near, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*” which means, “My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?”

When some of them that were standing there heard it, they said, “He is calling for Elijah.”

After this, Jesus knew that all things were accomplished. Fulfilling the Scripture He said, “I thirst.” There was a jar of wine standing there. One of them ran immediately to get a sponge. He filled it with wine, put it on a reed, held it up to His mouth, and gave it to Him to drink.

Others said, “Wait and see if Elijah will come and save Him.”

When Jesus had received the wine, He cried with a loud voice, “It is finished!” Then He said, “Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit.” Having said this, He bowed His head and gave up His spirit.

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split. The tombs broke open and the bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life. They came out of the tombs, and after Jesus’ resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

When the centurion who stood facing Him saw how He died, he said, “Truly, this Man was the Son of God.”

All the people who had gathered to see the sight, when they saw what had happened, turned away beating their breasts. Those who had known Him stood at a distance, as also the women who had followed Him from Galilee. Among them was Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joses, and Salome the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

It was the day of Preparation before the Sabbath, and this was Passover Sabbath. Therefore, so that the bodies should not remain on the crosses during the Sabbath, the Jews asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies removed. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs, but one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. One who saw it is our witness, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth that you also may believe. These things were done that the Scripture should be fulfilled, “Not one of His bones shall be broken.” And again, another Scripture says, “They shall look on Him whom they pierced.”

By this time evening had come. A respected member of the council, Joseph of Arimathea, was one who was looking for the kingdom of God, a good and righteous man who had not consented to their purpose and deed. He was a disciple of Jesus secretly, for he feared the Jews. Now he took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

Pilate was astonished that He could be dead already. He called for the centurion and asked him whether Jesus was already dead. When he was assured by the centurion that it was so, Pilate granted Joseph the corpse and commanded that it be given over to him.

Joseph bought fine linen and came and took the body of Jesus. Nicodemus also came, bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 35 kilograms in weight. It was he who had first come to Jesus by night. They then took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews.

Now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new tomb, where no one had ever been buried. Joseph laid the body in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock, and rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb, and departed.

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Jesus, were sitting there opposite the tomb and saw where He was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath day they rested according to the commandment.

On the next day, the day after the Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees went together to Pilate and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said, while He was still alive, 'After three days I shall rise again.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day to stop His disciples from coming and stealing Him and saying to the people, 'He has risen from the dead,' making the final deception worse than the first."

Pilate said to them, "You have a guard of soldiers. Go and make it as secure as you know how." So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting a watch.

After the Narrative:

P Here ends the reading.

Stand

P Deliver me, O Lord, my God, for You are the God of my salvation.

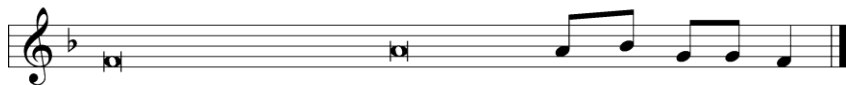
C Rescue me from my enemies, protect me from those who rise against me.

CANTICLE

LSB 231



Let my prayer rise before You as in - cense,



and the lifting up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.

The Word That Spoke in Darkness

Lisa M. Clark

Mark Knickelbein



- 1 The Word that spoke in dark - ness And prom - ised com - ing light
- 2 The Sav - ior came to con - quer And meet His mis - sion's aim:
- 3 The Christ pro - claimed His vic - t'ry With ev - 'ry act of grace:
- 4 The Prince of Peace con - tin - ued With each new task com - plete



Kept guid - ing through the a - ges Un - til the time was right
 Up - end - ing Sa - tan's ter - ror, Cre - a - tion to re - claim
 The out - cast shown com - pas - sion And God's own ho - ly face
 At cross and tomb and glo - ry Up - on His roy - al seat,



To take on flesh and fol - low The Fa - ther's good com - mand
 By walk - ing on the wa - ters So we by faith may stand
 As Jes - sus looked with fa - vor On all from ev - 'ry land
 De - liv - er - ance ac - com - plished Ex - act - ly as He planned;



And dwell a - mong His peo - ple, The king - dom now at hand.
 With trust in Him whose res - cue Is of - fered by His hand.
 Who need - ed life and heal - ing From His al - might - y hand.
 Our King will raise in wel - come His pierced and ris - en hand.

SERMON The Good News of a God who Sustains us on our Journey

Exodus 16:1-18, 35

Dear friends in Christ,

The Lord heard His people's cries as slaves in Egypt and answered them. He had sent them a deliverer, freed them from slavery, and brought them through the waters into a new life of freedom in His care. God had redeemed His people.

Yet having begun this new life in great joy, the people soon grew weary. Although they were no longer enslaved, life in the wilderness, an arid wasteland, was not easy. It was tiring, and they soon found themselves feeling parched and hungry, and beginning to question why the LORD didn't seem to be doing more *now*. In their grumbling, they said, **“Would that we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the meat pots and ate bread to the full, for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.”** They were beginning to wonder whether they were *really any better off in this life with the LORD*.

Their problem was that they had little or no faith. The Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth, had rescued them. They had seen His mighty acts in the parting of the Red Sea, *but now they were grumbling*. Silly people! How could they have been so stupid?

But let's not rush to criticise them, because what we often overlook is that these words also sadly reveal an honest picture of us, the people of God today.

As we've heard these last few weeks, God had graciously rescued Israel from a prison of slavery in Egypt and had wondrously delivered them into a new life of liberty. With the Lord's promise that He would bring them into a land flowing with milk and honey, and with Moses as their divinely appointed leader, the future could not have looked brighter! But just weeks later, everything seemed to have changed. Life in the wilderness was wearing them down. In a dry and barren land, they were growing hungry, thirsty, and weak. The Lord's promises for the future now seemed unbelievable, and the difficulties of the present loomed so large in their thoughts that the *suffering of the past seemed to disappear from their memories*. They grumbled that the Lord was not properly providing for them and longed for the meat and bread of Egypt.

Looking back, we might shake our heads in disbelief, wondering how the

Israelites could have possibly been so ungrateful for the Lord's amazing grace to them, so blind as not to see the Lord's faithfulness and put their trust in His promises, so foolish as to put fleeting worldly pleasures above the abundant life and joy awaiting them in the land the Lord had promised them. But looking within, *are we really any different?*

In His great mercy, the Lord has mightily saved us from sin, death, and the devil—oppressive enemies we were powerless to overcome. In His saving grace, He has brought us through the waters of Holy Baptism into a whole new life of freedom in Christ Jesus. And in His steadfast love, He has promised to lead us to a glorious home He has prepared for us. With such exceedingly great promises, our future could not be any brighter! But along the way, our journey is not easy. Life in the wilderness of this world can be wearying; at times, we may feel that we don't have the strength to keep going. Perhaps recent events in the world worry us. With war in the Middle East, I'm sure we're worried about the cost and availability of fuel and the flow-on effects on the cost of living. And if you are a farmer, the availability and cost of fertiliser are another problem. Again, looking to our younger generation, will you be able to afford to buy or even build a house? Housing is in short supply and extremely expensive.

It's difficult to find contentment in the world we live in. Contentment is hard to come by, as we hunger and thirst for something we hope will give us a greater sense of satisfaction. During the more difficult stretches, when the wilderness feels especially hot and dry, we may find ourselves questioning whether the Lord is caring for us as He should—and whether we can really count on Him. The problems we perceive can seem so large that they block our view of the blessings we've received. And all the while, this world beckons with the promise that it has something better to offer.

Now, imagine for a moment that you were in God's place. After all that you have done for these people, and after the unimaginable good that you have prepared for them and promised them, this is how they respond? With ingratitude, complaints, and distrust. What would you do?

Whatever your answer to that question may be, it's likely not the same as the Lord's answer.

His grace is *not* conditional on our gratitude, and His mercy is not based on our merit. Our faith may be fickle, but the Lord's love remains steadfast.

So what does the Lord do? He shows compassion. He patiently pardons and provides.

To the people of Israel, starving in the sun-scorched desert of the Sinai Peninsula, He said to Moses, **“I have heard the grumbling of the people of Israel. Say to them, ‘At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall be filled with bread. Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God.’”**

¹³ In the evening quail came up and covered the camp, and in the morning dew lay around the camp. ¹⁴ And when the dew had gone up, there was on the face of the wilderness a fine, flake-like thing, fine as frost on the ground. ¹⁵ When the people of Israel saw it, they said to one another, “What is it?” For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, “It is the bread that the LORD has given you to eat. ¹⁶ This is what the LORD has commanded: ‘Gather of it, each one of you, as much as he can eat.’”

God sent manna—bread from heaven—to nourish and strengthen them for their journey. And to the people of God struggling in the sin-scorched wildernesses of this fallen world, God sends Jesus Christ, the living bread that came down from heaven to give life to the world.

When the Israelites gathered the manna each day, they found that the supply never fell short. And in Jesus, the bread of life, we have an unending supply of rest, refreshment, and renewal. When we’re weak, He strengthens us. When we feel empty, He fills us. Do you truly believe that God will take away His providence over us? He sees all that is happening the world over, and has compassion on us. And when we find that we’ve been forgetting Him and His benefits, He feeds us with His forgiveness. With this bread, we lack nothing.

In God’s super-abounding grace, this bread is given to us at no charge. But that does not mean that it comes at no cost. It is free to us because the Lord Himself paid the price. For while we so often hunger for all the wrong things—for food that does not satisfy—Christ hungered and thirsted for our salvation. So He came down from heaven to the wilderness of this fallen world to make a way for us from slavery to freedom, and from famine to the feast of salvation. He redeemed us with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death. He gave Himself up to death for us to be the bread of life, and He arose to lead us and freely feed us.

After their exodus from Egypt, the people of Israel still had a long journey ahead, and those years in the wilderness were not easy. But through it all, the Lord provided for them. For forty years, the Lord rained down manna each morning to strengthen and sustain them. And ultimately, He did bring them into the good and abundant land He had promised to give them.

So also, having been redeemed by Christ, we still have a pilgrimage ahead of us—and the path is not always smooth. But as we walk on, we shall not be on our own. Never will the Lord leave us or forsake us, and never will He fail to provide for us. Through His Word and His Holy Supper, He feeds us with the very bread of life, and the supply will never run out. In these means, He continues without fail to forgive us—every new sin, every time we fail. And every time we hear His Word, live and in-person in our ears, and receive Christ’s body and blood, placed on our tongues and received into our own bodies, He is reminding us that He is with us every day of this journey. Whoever eats of this bread, Christ Jesus Himself, will never truly hunger, and the Lord will bring us to the heavenly land He has promised us and prepared for us, for in Christ, God provides all that we need for our journey through this life and into eternity.

Having reached our destination, never again shall we hunger, never again shall we thirst. The Lord will welcome us to His table, we shall take our places at the seats He has prepared for us, and the great banquet we have been waiting for will begin.

This is the great story of the Gospel in Exodus—and it is the great story of God’s Good News to us!

For coming to our rescue and setting us free, for feeding us and sustaining us on our journey, and for the glory that awaits us, all glory, honour, and praise be to Christ Jesus, our great Redeemer, now and forevermore. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

HYMN 918

Stand



P The Lord be with you.



C And with your spir - it.

P Let us pray.

C Almighty and everlasting God, You despise nothing You have made and forgive the sins of all who are penitent. Create in us new and contrite hearts that, lamenting our sins and acknowledging our wretchedness, we may receive from You full pardon and forgiveness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

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.

BENEDICAMUS

LSB 234



P Let us bless the Lord.



C Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTION

LSB 234



P The grace of our Lord ✠ Je - sus Christ and the love of God



and the communion of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.



C A - men.

Sit

HYMN 441