

SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS AT HOME WORSHIP

MARCH 17, 2024

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of the beginning and of the end,
You ask us to put our trust not in worldly things, but in heavenly things. As we navigate the challenges of daily life and the much larger challenges faced by our communities and all creation, give us confidence in your power and grace, that we might live into our faith each day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



SCRIPTURE READINGS: PSALM 102: 12-17

¹² But you, O Lord, are enthroned forever; your name endures to all generations.

¹³ You will rise up and have compassion on Zion, for it is time to favor it;
the appointed time has come.

¹⁴ For your servants hold its stones dear, and have pity on its dust.

¹⁵ The nations will fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth your glory.

¹⁶ For the Lord will build up Zion; he will appear in his glory.

¹⁷ He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

MARK 13: 1-8, 24-37

As he came out of the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher, what large stones and what large buildings!" ² Then Jesus asked him, "Do you see these great buildings? Not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

³ When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked him privately, ⁴ "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished?" ⁵ Then Jesus began to say to them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. ⁶ Many will come in my name and say, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. ⁷ When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed; this must take place, but the end is still to come. ⁸ For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. This is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

²⁴“But in those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, ²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Praise be to Christ.

REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL BY ASSISTING MINISTER JOHN YARBERRY

This passage is more about wanting to know than about understanding. The disciples wanted in the worst way to know when these apocrypha events would come true. However, Jesus’s main point is to understand, to be prepared, and not try and know when these events will occur. As the human Jesus said, even I do not know the Father’s timetable.

We always want to know at the exclusion of understanding. To know is to see, touch, hear, taste and smell, all physical human attributes. Understanding comes when you realize you cannot trust your senses completely. When you observe a hologram, you see the three-dimensional object but when reaching out to touch the object your hand reaches through with no resistance. When viewing a jet passing overhead the plane grows smaller when in fact it has not changed in size. Material senses are laced with limitations. Spiritual sense, rather than material sense, is truly the dependable basis for knowing what is real.

I was struck by this concept when in the movie *Oppenheimer*, Professor Oppenheimer is asked by Kitty, his future wife, to explain quantum mechanics. He is in the midst of pouring a cocktail and begins by saying, “I thump a glass onto the cabinet-pour a drink-this drink.” He hands her the glass fingers touching. “Our bodies are mostly empty space-groupings of tiny energy waves bound together” Kitty inquires,

“by what?” “Forces of attraction strong enough to convince us that matter is solid..... I push the palm of my hand against yours and stop my body passing through yours.” As the Son of God, Jesus was fully endowed with the clarity of spiritual sense. He saw existence from God’s standpoint, from the standpoint of perfect Spirit, and understood that man is the pure child of divine Spirit. This understanding overturned the material view by bringing the concepts of forgiveness, love, and sacrifice into view as the real understanding of human existence.

Jesus did not merely brush aside a material sense of existence. He understood how real to people were their sickness and sinfulness. But he also understood this suffering of material sense could give way to a fuller reality, the supremacy and perfection of the Spirit.

Amen

HYMN OF THE DAY | CREATOR OF THE STARS OF NIGHT

https://youtu.be/EPYTQWO_GYO?si=BtNPeIM5Z2X45GJ3

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

As we walk together through this season of contemplation and preparation, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need. *(A brief silence).*

Merciful God, Jesus’ words about the end of time are provocative and frightening. We ask that you would stir up in us a profound trust in your promises, that we might live knowing that all will be well. God of the journey, **hear our prayer.**

All of creation bears witness to your presence. Open our eyes to see you in everything from a delicate blossom to a colossal mountain, that we might love creation as you do. God of the journey, **hear our prayer.**

Earthly powers will pass away, but you will reign forever. Remind all who lead that their power and authority is only borrowed, to be used in dedication to selfless service of all your beloved children. God of the journey, **hear our prayer.**

Comfort those who are facing the end of their lives, and all who love them, that they might trust in the promise of eternal life with you. Give strength to all in our community and beyond who struggle with the pains and trials of life, especially Dorothy, Lori, Ed, Terry, Dave, and all we lift up through our Prayer Chain. God of the journey, **hear our prayer.**

Wars, natural disasters, and famine are happening throughout our world. Help us not to see these things as a sign of the end and throw up our hands, but challenge us to address them head on in the here and now. God of the journey, **hear our prayer.**

Strengthen us to care for those in need through the outreach ministries of our community. To all who have hunger, give daily bread. To all who have bread, give hunger for justice. Bring aid and support to those who are poor, beaten down, abused, forgotten, silenced, or avoided, especially those seeking help through the Community Infant Program, the Little Free Pantry, Rise Against Suicide, and the Boulder Shelter for the Homeless. God of the journey, **hear our prayer.**

Provide for the work of the Joshua School and organizations like them. Empower the staff and parents of children living on the Autism Spectrum. Nurture the minds, bodies and spirits of these children and adults, that they might reach their highest quality of life. God of the journey, **hear our prayer.**

Encourage and empower those impacted by war, tyranny, and gun violence. Still the sounds of weapons. Teach us to seek security that comes from respect rather than violence. Strengthen and comfort the people of Ukraine, Russia, Israel, Palestine, Gaza, Sudan and all those throughout the world whose lives are impacted by violence. Remind us of what You require of us: That we do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with You. God of the journey, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, our help in every trouble, we pray for peace in the Holy Land. Protect those traumatized by ongoing violence, especially those with no access to safe spaces. Release people held hostage; provide food, water, fuel, and supplies for all in need; sustain medical personnel as they work in horrendous conditions; tend to those who are wounded; comfort all who grieve. Direct your people and its leaders into the way of peace. God of the journey, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

With gratitude we remember the saints who came in your name and guided us in your truth. May we, in turn, help others to not be led astray by the enticements of the world. God of the journey, **hear our prayer.**

Confident that you walk alongside us in our need, we lift to you all our prayers, spoken and unspoken, through Jesus Christ our savior. **Amen.**

LENTEN BENEDICTION

Whatever wilderness the Spirit has brought you to:

Walk in boldness, as a beloved child of God.

Walk in peace, under the shelter of the Most High.

Walk in faith, knowing Christ walks with you. **Amen.**

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here.

We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace.

Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person—questions, complexities and all.

Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

SHEPHERD CALENDAR OF EVENTS: MARCH 17 – MARCH 24, 2024

Sunday, March 17th – End of the Age

9:30 a.m. - Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship w/Holy Communion
Hybrid In-Person/Zoom “Why Church?” Lenten Study
immediately following worship

Wednesday, March 20th

11:00 a.m. - Amazing Grace Bible Study
6:30 p.m. - Zoom Only “Why Church?” Lenten Study

Friday, March 22nd

7:00 a.m. - Men’s Zoom Breakfast Bible Study
5:00 p.m. - Friday Night Perspectives Gathering

Sunday, March 24th - Triumphal Entry

9:30 a.m. - Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship w/Holy Communion
Hybrid In-Person/Zoom “Why Church?” Lenten Study
immediately following worship

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

ED J. 3/1
EMILY T. 3/3
MICHELLE K. 3/5
T. SCHREIER 3/6
JANET K. 3/21
LYNN T. 3/25
DICK W. 3/27
NINA S. 3/30

DAILY NARRATIVE READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF MARCH 17, 2024

Monday, March 18, 2024 – Mark 13:9-13 Persecution Foretold

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/mark-139-13-persecution-foretold2024>

Tuesday, March 19, 2024 – Mark 13:14-23 The Desolating Sacrilege

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/mark-1314-23-the-desolating-sacrilege2024>

Wednesday, March 20, 2024 – Mark 14:1-2 The Plot to Kill Jesus

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/mark-141-2-the-plot-to-kill-jesus2024>

Thursday, March 21, 2024 – Mark 14:10-11 Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/mark-1410-11-judas-agrees-to-betray-jesus2024>

Friday, March 22, 2024 – Mark 15:1-5 Jesus Before Pilate

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/mark-151-5-jesus-before-pilate2024>

Saturday, March 23, 2024 – Mark 15:6-15 Pilate Hands Jesus Over to be Crucified

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/mark-156-15-pilate-hands-jesus-over-to-be-crucified2024>

Sunday, March 24, 2024 – Mark 11:1-11 Triumphal Entry

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/mark-111-11-triumphal-entry2024>