

**HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**ORDER OF WORSHIP April 19, 2020**

**Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness (stand)**

P: In the name of God, the Father, Who has created all things in the universe for the sake of His dear children.

**C: And the Son, Who has redeemed His people from their sins,**

P: And the Spirit, Who moves us to accept the gifts of our salvation and of God's creation with joy.

**C: We gather for renewal in worship.**

*Silence for reflection and self-examination*

P: Let us confess our sins to God, our Father.

**C: From depths of grief I cry to you O Lord. My voice is trying to reach your heart and, break through with cries and sighing. If you keep a record of our sin and hold against us what we have thought and said and done, who then, can stand before you?**

P: God wants you to be absolutely sure of His love and to be totally confident that you have His full forgiveness for all of your sins because of what Jesus Christ has done for you. As you trust in Him, you become as dear to the Father as His own Son and can hear Him speak to you, "This is My dear child, My chosen, My child in whom I delight."

**C: Amen.**

**KYRIE**

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort and defend us gracious Lord.

**Amen.**

## **THE HYMN OF PRAISE**

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and Father: We worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God: You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

## **HYMN LSB 720 We Walk by Faith and Not by Sight**

**We walk by faith and not by sight,  
No gracious words we hear  
From Him who spoke as none e'er spoke,  
But we believe Him near.**

**We may not touch His hands and side,  
Nor follow where He trod;  
But in His promise we rejoice  
And cry "My Lord and God!"**

**Help then, O Lord, our unbelief;  
And may our faith abound  
To call on You when You are near  
And seek where You are found.**

**For You, O resurrected Lord,  
Are found in means divine:  
Beneath the water and the Word,  
Beneath the bread and wine.**

**Lord, when our life of faith is done,  
In realms of clearer light  
We may behold You as You are,  
With full and endless sight.**

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

### **Genesis 28:10-17**

Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. There above it stood the LORD, and he said: "I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac.

I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you." When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it." He was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

### **Psalm 33**

Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the LORD with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully, and shout for joy. For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The LORD loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love. By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars ; he puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance. From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth— he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do. No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save. But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. May your unfailing love be with us, LORD, even as we put our hope in you.

### **Romans 11:33-36**

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out! "Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" "Who has ever given to God, that God should repay them?" For from him and through him and for him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen.

### **GOSPEL**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 21<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

### **Luke 21:5-11**

Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God.

But Jesus said, "As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down." "Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?" He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away." Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ**

**HYMN LSB 763 When Peace Like a River**

**When peace, like a river, attendeth my way;  
When sorrows, like sea billows, roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.**

**Refrain:**

**It is well with my soul,  
It is well, it is well with my soul.**

**Though Satan should buffet, though trials should come,  
Let this blest assurance control,  
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate  
And hath shed his own blood for my soul.  
[Refrain]**

**He lives—-Oh, the bliss of this glorious thought;  
My sin, not in part, but the whole,  
Is nailed to His cross, and I bear it no more.  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!  
[Refrain]**

**And, Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,  
The trumpet shall sound and the Lord shall descend;  
Even so it is well with my soul.  
[Refrain]**

## SERMON- Are These the Endtimes?

There was a song that was popular when I was a kid called “life gets teejus, don’t it?” It went something like this: “the sun comes up and the sun goes down; the hands on the clock go round and round; I just get up and it’s time to lie down: life gets teejus, don’t it?” I expect we all can relate to that song about now. As we’re shut up in our houses every day, the sun comes up, the sun goes down, the hands on the clock go round and round... We can’t go out to eat and we’re sick of television. There aren’t any ball games to watch and it’s gotten to the point where it would even be a pleasure to watch the tribe lose. We take all the precautions we can but fear still niggles at us that the virus might find a way into our homes. Life gets teejus.

We wonder how this could happen here. We have access to the best healthcare in the world and we’re still under siege. It doesn’t seem fair! I mean, we’re the good guys, right? So what’s going on? Some people are starting to wonder if it’s the end of the world. Really. Some members of our congregation have asked me if I think these are the endtimes and Jesus is about to return. So I thought I would try to answer their questions and put this whole affair into its proper perspective.

First of all, are these the endtimes? Jesus’ disciples asked him that question almost 2000 years ago. “Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?” “He replied, ‘watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and ‘the time is near.’ do not follow them. When you hear of wars and revolutions, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away...nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and so, plagues in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.” So wars and revolutions and false prophets and earthquakes and famines and plagues are going to be signs of the endtimes. The key thing in what Jesus said is this: “these things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.” So we have to distinguish between “the endtimes” and “the end.” The endtimes, Jesus said, are the times during which all these things will take place. The endtimes come first and the end will come later. Well, all these things have been taking place for quite a while, so we must be living in the endtimes—right? Right. Ever since Jesus walked the earth we have been living in the endtimes. The endtimes began when Jesus said that the kingdom of God was at hand. Some of the signs were given when nature went into convulsions after he died on the cross. The sky turned black at noon, there was an earthquake, rocks split, tombs burst open and the dead came to life. And earthquakes, famines, plagues, wars and revolutions are going to continue until the end comes.

And what will happen at the end? Jesus says, “The sun will be darkened and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky and the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time the sign of the son of man will appear in the sky and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the son of man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.”

When Jesus returns to judge the earth, the sign of his coming will be unmistakable. It will be a day of rejoicing for all those who have believed in him, but a day of unspeakable terror for those who have rejected him. So the endtimes are here, but the end is not. And God alone knows when that will be. All Jesus told his disciples was that it would come when the gospel has been preached to all nations, so if you want to keep it from coming, keep sharing the gospel!

The question is: what do we do in the meantime? One of the best places we can go to find an answer to that question is the *Book of Psalms*. The Psalter is a wonderful instruction manual for living our lives during the endtimes—between Jesus' ascension into heaven and his return in glory. Our Psalm for today, *Psalm 33* is a perfect example. In its first words, it describes what the life of a believer should be—and can be: “Sing joyfully to the Lord you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him. Praise the Lord with the harp; make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre. Sing to him a new song; play skillfully and shout for joy!” In other words, **praise the Lord!!!** This is as good advice as you'll ever get: spend your days praising God in every way you can think of. After prayer, praise may be the most important thing we can do in our relationship with God. That is why the word, “praise,” occurs 321 times in 150 psalms—a little over two times per Psalm. There's a reason for this: it is good to praise the Lord! Not because the Lord needs it but because you do. The more you praise the Lord the more the Lord will fill your heart with praise, and a heart filled with praise is a heart filled with joy. This should not be too difficult for you to do because no matter what your circumstances are, you have a lot to thank and praise God for—beginning with your life itself. The Psalmist writes: “for the word of the Lord is right and true; he is faithful in all he does. The Lord loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of his unfailing love.” Our problem is that we're so used to enjoying God's bounty and his blessings that we take them for granted. The first time I saw Niagara Falls, I was stunned by the sheer volume of water plunging down into the river below. I've often wondered what would it have been like to be the person who discovered Niagara Falls. On the other hand, someone who drives by Niagara Falls on their way to work every day hardly notices them. The Pacific Ocean, with its four-mile depth and vast expanse is marvel to imagine, but it's only flyover time for tourists headed for Hawaii. The wonders of God's creation surpass our power of imagination, yet we barely give them a thought. But if you set your mind to re-imagine them, you will regain a sense of wonder. If you set aside a few moments each day to thank and praise God for the glory of his creation; it may seem artificial and mechanical to you at first, but before long you will begin to truly “feel” the thanks and praise you are offering. You will learn a wonderful secret: thankfulness begets more thankfulness and praise begets even more praise. The Psalmist continues: “by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea into jars; he puts the deep into storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm.” And so here is your proper perspective: God is God and you are not. Yet along with all the other marvelous things he has created, he created you and you are a marvelous creation too! More than that, you are a priceless treasure in his eyes. Isn't that worth thanking and praising him for? “The Lord foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.”

Man proposes but God disposes. We can align our will with his will—or we can kick against the goads. You can swim with the current of a river or you can try to swim against it. One way puts the power of the river behind you and impels you forward; the other way pits you against the river and it will be all you can do to stay in one place. God's will is a mighty river that will either propel you ahead or stop you in your tracks. But is there a role for us in this drama? The Psalmist continues: "from heaven the lord looks down and sees all the sons of man; from his dwelling place he watches all who live on the earth—he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do. No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save." The sources of power available to us in this world amount to nothing in God's scheme of things. The king's army, the warrior's strength, the stallion's speed and power—all of them are nothing apart from God. All earthly sources of power will fail you in the end. "But the eyes of the lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine." Fear God and place your hope in him and he will sustain and deliver you. So let go—and let God. He is our help and our shield during this time of pestilence and economic confusion, just as he has always been and will always be. And so, the psalmist concludes: "We wait in hope for the Lord; he is our help and our shield. In him our hearts rejoice for we trust in his holy name. Lord, let your unfailing love be upon us, according as we have hoped in thee."

What should we do as people who live in the endtimes and await the return of our Lord? Pray to God, praise God and place your hope in him. As we pray to God he gradually conforms our will to his will and we will find that we are working with him rather than against him. As we praise God, he fills our heart with praise and gives us joy. And as we place our hope in God we are not disappointed, because he is always true to his word. So praise the Lord! Amen. And now the peace of God that surpasses our understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

#### **APOSTLE'S CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

## **THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

Father in heaven, As we labor under fear of this virus, please give us confident hearts, knowing that you are in control of all things and that you will rein in this disease and deliver our country from economic chaos.

We especially pray for the following people:

- For Milt Colburn who is receiving physical therapy at Anna Maria. Lift his spirits and strengthen his body so that he can return home soon.
- For Glenda Colburn during this time of separation from her husband Milt.
- For Wyatt Mullins, that he will receive an accurate and favorable diagnosis of his liver problems and be enabled to live a normal and healthy life.
- For all healthcare workers who are exposed to the Covid-19 virus every day, that you would keep them safe and healthy and bless the important work that they do.
- For the Mattmuller famiy as they mourn the loss of Donna's grandson, Michael, who passed from cancer this week.
- We praise and thank you gracious Lord that Carol Ewell's daughter Jaime was able to retain sight in her eye after surgery. Please speed her recovery and alleviate her discomfort as she heals.

We pray all these things in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

## **HYMN LSB 837 Lift High The Cross**

**Refrain:**

**Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
Till all the world adore His sacred name.**

**Come, Christians, follow where our Captain trod,  
Our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God.**

**[Refrain]**

**Led on their way by this triumphant sign,  
The hosts of God in conqu'ring ranks combine.**

**[Refrain]**

**All newborn soldiers of the Crucified  
Bear on their brows the seal of Him who died.**

**[Refrain]**

O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
As Thou hast promised, draw us all to Thee.  
[Refrain]

Let ev'ry race and ev'ry language tell  
Of Him who saves our lives from death and hell.  
[Refrain]

### **BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and † give you peace.

**Amen.**