

HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH
ORDER OF WORSHIP May 3, 2020

Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness (*stand*)

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

Amen.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

O, God, I know the wrong I have done, and my sin is always before me. I have broken your laws and done what is evil in your sight. Have mercy on me, according to your unfailing love. Wash away all my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a pure heart and renew a faithful spirit within me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. Amen.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy on us and has sent His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To those who believe on His name He gives power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.

Grant this, Lord, unto us all. 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 728 How Firm a Foundation

**How firm a foundation, O saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He has said
Who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?**

**“Fear not! I am with you, O be not dismayed,
For I am your God and will still give you aid;
I’ll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.**

**“The soul that on Jesus has leaned for repose
I will not, I will not, desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I’ll never, no never, no never, forsake!**

**“When through fiery trials your pathway will lie,
My grace, all-sufficient, will be your supply.
The flames will not hurt you; I only design
Your dross to consume and your gold to refine.**

**“Throughout all their lifetime My people will prove
My sov’ reign, eternal, unchangeable love;
And then, when gray hairs will their temples adorn,
Like lambs they will still in My bosom be borne.”**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Genesis 15:1-6

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward. ” But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.”

He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be." Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Psalm 19

The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world. In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun. It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, like a champion rejoicing to run his course. It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is deprived of its warmth. The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward. But who can discern their own errors? Forgive my hidden faults. Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. Then I will be blameless, innocent of great transgression. May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Philippians 4:4-9

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 24th chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

Luke 24:13-35

Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" They stood still, their faces downcast. One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"

“What things?” he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.” He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

HYMN LSB 711 Savior, like a Shepherd Lead Us

**Savior, like a shepherd lead us;
Much we need Your tender care.
In Your pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use Your fold prepare.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
You have bought us; we are Yours.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
You have bought us; we are Yours.**

**We are Yours; in love befriend us,
Be the guardian of our way;
Keep Your flock, from sin defend us,
Seek us when we go astray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Hear us children when we pray.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Hear us children when we pray.**

**You have promised to receive us,
Poor and sinful though we be;
You have mercy to relieve us,
Grace to cleanse, and pow'r to free.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Early let us turn to You.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Early let us turn to You.**

**Early let us seek Your favor,
Early let us do Your will;
Blessed Lord and only Savior,
With Your love our spirits fill.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
You have loved us, love us still.
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
You have loved us, love us still.**

Sermon- Doubt And Faith

About the time I turned 36 I realized that my life was a failure. I had left a marriage and a career in shambles. I was unemployed and had no marketable skills. I was an atheist and a cynic. I drank too much and talked too much and my wife of three years was beginning to wonder what she had married. Those were the bare facts of my life. My wife finally managed to drag me kicking and screaming to a church down the street. The preacher was the chaplain at a local penitentiary. He was a tough guy and he used truth like a bludgeon in order to get people's attention. He forced me to face up to the fact that I was an unholy mess and that I had no reason to place any hope in myself. My only hope lay in turning to God. Two months later I was a believer. Then God began to turn my life around. Soon after that I managed to get a job with a manufacturing company. I did well, I liked the job, my boss liked me and everything was green pastures and blue skies. Then one Friday afternoon the phone rang in my office. It was my boss. He said in a low voice: "would you please come to my office?" I was unnerved, to say the least. Friday afternoons were when people got fired. As I started the walk down the hallway to his office my mind was churning. What could I have done to get in trouble? I joked around a lot; had I offended someone important? By the time I reached my boss's office I was in a near panic. I knocked—he said "come in and close the door"—he motioned to a chair in front of his desk—I sat down. He put down the file he was reading and looked up at me. My heart was racing and my mouth was dry. "Powell," he said, "I'm getting a new company car and we'd like to let you buy the old one at a ridiculously low price as a token of fact that we think you are doing a good job." In one instant, panic turned into joy! Instead of getting fired, I was going to be the proud owner of a two-year-old Oldsmobile! I went home and Karen and I celebrated over a bottle of wine. As I recall, I did most of the talking. I've thought many times about what happened that day—about how 7 words had thrown me into a panic. God had turned my life around, I was overflowing with faith and confidence that he would always take care of me. I was doing a good job and nothing had happened to change that. Yet 7 words threw me into an emotional tailspin.

Why? What had happened that day is that I had been attacked by something called **doubt**. There was no good reason that I should be in trouble, but **doubt** had thrown me into a panic. Doubt is not only a lack of confidence; doubt is a demonic power that continually gnaws at our heart. Luther described it as a spiritual disease and called it the “monster of uncertainty.” One day you're growing and blossoming in your faith, thankful to God for all he's done for you and expecting that the future will be just as wonderful as the past. Then something scary pops up—your child gets seriously sick, your marriage starts to show strains, apart, your job appears to be in jeopardy—and the monster of doubt is staring you right in the face. You think: God has always taken care of me in the past...but will he take care of me **this** time? Like our ancient enemy the devil, doubt is always prowling around like a lion looking for someone to devour. And sometimes are his dinner. Doubt is the monster that infected the two men in today's gospel lesson who were walking down the road to a town called Emmaus on the same day Jesus rose from the dead. These men knew their Old Testament scriptures—they knew that it had been prophesied for two thousand years that when Messiah came he would be rejected and killed and then raised up from the dead. Two days before they had watched as Jesus had been rejected and killed and on the day at hand they had heard that the tomb where his body had been laid was empty. But instead of regarding these events as evidence of fulfilled prophecy, showing that Jesus was the Messiah, they allowed doubt to lead them to despair. We must never, ever allow doubt to blind us to the truth of God's word. Consider Abraham: he was almost 90 years old, his wife Sarah's womb was barren and he had given up all thoughts of having children. Then God promised Abraham a son. The facts said one thing but God said another and Abraham believed God. The years went by—six, seven, eight, nine years—and Abraham was almost 100 and his wife not far behind. The facts of the situation still said that there was not going to be any son. But Abraham trusted God's word and clung to his promise despite the facts. And he received his son Isaac, just as God had promised. The two men on the road to Emmaus lacked Abraham's faith and had let doubt blind them to the truth of God's promise. So what did Jesus do? Instead of revealing himself as the risen messiah, he pointed them to the Old Testament prophecies about him and restored their faith. Their hearts burned within them as they were convicted by the truth of God's word. Luther once said that every believer struggles with doubt in the inmost heart. When Jesus asked a man if he believed he could heal his son, the man replied, “Lord, I do believe—but help me with my unbelief.” That's the most honest answer ever given! We're like the man: we believe, but the devil plants seeds of doubt in our minds, waters them with lies and unbelief springs up in us like an ugly weed. So what's the cure? Where there's a spiritual problem, God always provides a spiritual cure. And the cure for doubt is faith. Doubt makes sceptics; faith makes believers. Doubt comes from our enemy; faith comes from the holy spirit of God. Doubt sees only a fallen world where Murphy's Law reigns and everything will finally grind down to a screeching stop. Faith sees the kingdom of God growing and in the end, triumphant. Doubt sees the disease spreading, the wound festering and sin abounding. Faith sees the disease cured, the wound bound up, the sin washed away. Yet, ironically, faith has no power of its own; in fact faith is completely passive. It's been said that faith is the outstretched hand of a beggar receiving a gift from a king. For me, faith is a window the Holy Spirit opens up in our minds which allows the light of God's truth to shine in. This is why faith has no appetite for worldly facts: it feeds only on heavenly manna: the word proclaimed and the sacraments received. Spirit-created and spirit-nourished faith can banish all doubts and fears as we navigate our way through this valley of the shadow of death. Through faith, God performs miracles in human lives every day.

Through faith God saved the life of a woman named Kelly—a close friend of one of my daughters. Kelly had spent all of her life looking for meaning in the facts of her existence. But the facts were grim and she could find no meaning. Then about three years ago she became a believer and joined a local church. She had never been part of a church family before and the experience was exhilarating. Then about ten weeks ago Kelly began to feel sick. She developed a cough and became overwhelmed with fatigue. She went to her family doctor and he sent her immediately to the emergency room. She had contracted the covid-19 virus. The next day she fell into a coma and was placed on a ventilator. The doctors gave her a 40% chance of surviving. As she was going into the coma all she could think of was who would take care of her 3-year-old son if she died. While she was in the coma she had visions of her church family standing around her. What she didn't know is that members of her church had descended on the hospital in mass and were constantly praying for her. After several days in the coma, she revived and was restored to health. Kelly is positive that if this had happened to her before she was saved, she would not have survived. But the Lord who saved her soul also saved her body. Kelly recorded her account of this and her testimony is on the website of Fellowship Bible Church in Bainbridge. I urge you all to dial it up on Fellowship Bible's website and listen to it. It will add one more stone to the fortress of your faith and make you that much more invincible to doubt. God does these things all the time—we just don't always hear about them. But when we do, they give us confidence as we make our own journey down the long hallway to the boss's office that what awaits us there is a lot better than a used car. 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, Please draw close to Glenda Colburn and give her peace upon the death of her husband, Milt. Comfort the entire Colburn family with the knowledge that Milt is even now rejoicing in heaven with Jesus Christ.

Please continue to destroy this virus, keep the members of our church healthy and hasten the day we can gather together in worship.

In Jesus' name, 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 LW 264 I Know That My Redeemer Lives!

I know that my Redeemer lives!
What comfort this sweet sentence gives!
He lives, he lives, who once was dead;
He lives, my ever living head!

He lives triumphant from the grave;
He lives eternally to save;
He lives exalted, throned above;
He lives to rule his Church in love.

He lives, all glory to his name!
He lives, my savior, still the same;
What joy this blest assurance gives:
I know that my Redeemer lives!

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.