

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Wilton, WI

Midweek Lenten Service

March 30, 2022

**Inviting People to
Journey with Christ's Family**

**(Indicates that the people should stand as they are able.)*

Announcements

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.^

Prelude....A time for silent reflection

INVITATION TO WORSHIP

The Israelites called Jerusalem home because they believed God lived in Jerusalem. Yet, the Babylonian exile robs them not just of their home, but their identity, their welfare, and their perceived proximity to God. The prophet Jeremiah delivers a startling message to those in Babylon—to settle in, build homes, and plant gardens in that foreign land. What does this mean for those in exile? Where does God dwell when we are uprooted? What does God—what does Love—say when our dreams unravel?

We gather in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

*The Sunday Assembly, Lorraine S. Brugh, Gordon W. Lathrop, Augsburg Fortress, 2008

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Watch, O Lord; A prayer by St. Augustine, Adapted by Marty Haugen

Prayers for the Children

We ask that all members join the Women of the ELCA and pray this prayer as you rise in the morning and as you prepare to retire each evening.

Lord, Jesus Christ, I bring to you:

Jada, Myles, & Conner Garske; Britain Hahn, Gracie Brandau; Amara Brandau; Chase Brandau; Avery Brueggen; Riley & Aria Brueggen; Nolan & Logan Buchholz; Thadyn & Ayawyn Conner; Vanessa & Elliott Ornes; Lailah Eckes; Lena Ornes; Porter Sorenson; Kennedy & Josie Ornes; Brooklyn, Madelyn, & Kaylin Gruen; Emma, Bryce, Marah & Bria Gruen; Ava, Katie, & Benjamin Gruen; Brady Zimmerman; Braylee Zimmerman; MaKenzie & Cooper Powell; Wesson & Arden Mayne; Vanessa, Mia, & Brek Anderson; Tyler & Jaden Bever; Carlee, Collin, & Camden Neidfeldt; Morgan Speicher; Krista & Sierra Cook; Tyler Brandau; Franklin & Douglas Wildes; Emma Elder, Bryson Lamb, Elizabeth Wildes; Sophia, Derek & Deacon Erdman; Kody Tormoen; Angel Brueggen; Callie Fleming; Miranda, Daphne & Linus Arndt; Alaina & Braxton Holthaus; Jayda Leis; David, Sam & Zachary Ross; Gannon Tormoen; Jase & Margo Picha; Watson Sebranek, Rylan McCarthy, Ellery Tormoen.

That your spirit will dwell with them according to your will. That they will grow in the knowledge of you and know that they are dearly loved by you. I pray that you will protect them from deception by the evil one and all his darts that would lead them astray. May they do well in school, learning and discerning what direction you have in mind for them. I also pray for all children everywhere, that you would keep them in your care.

In Jesus' name I pray.

Amen

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Sometimes life takes us where we don't expect.

C: Sometimes, God takes us where we don't expect.

L: In worship, we gather to get in touch with God's bigger narrative.

C: In worship, we gather to expand our hearts.

L: So let us worship the God of unending surprises.

C: Let us worship the God of love.

Opening Hymn "Change My Heart, O God" **ELW #801**

PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

God of unending surprises, this life is a tapestry of moments woven together, and we long to be weavers of love. Today we gather and pray that you would unravel our bias. Unravel our assumptions. Unravel whatever it is that keeps us from you. And as you do, clear space in our hearts for your Word. We are listening. We are praying.

Amen.

Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.^

Jeremiah 29:1-7

¹These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ²This was after King Jeconiah, and the queen mother, the court officials, the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the artisans, and the smiths had departed from Jerusalem. ³The letter was sent by the hand of Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom King Zedekiah of Judah sent to Babylon to King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. It said: ⁴Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world. ^

Sending Hymn “Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow” **ELW #327**
(vs. 1, 4)

DISMISSAL

L: Go forth into the world to serve God with gladness;
be of good courage;
hold fast to that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honor all people;
love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.
C: **Thanks be to God.**

IN OUR PRAYERS

Katie Wallace, Steve Zirk, Gary Von Ruden, Sue Ann Degenhardt,
Curt Brieske, Randy Steinbrink, Gloria Meltesen, LuAnn Bever-Denter,
Florence Dougherty, Darlene Babbitt, Sacia Morris, John Acker,
Lois Reineke, Rylan McCarthy, Judy Bever, Greg Flock.



they produce. ⁶Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon Encouraging the Israelites in Exile Rev. Gloria Stubitsch
Hymn “Bless Now, O God, the Journey” **ELW #326**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Creator God,

**Being faithful has never been easy. You asked Noah to build a ship. You asked the Israelites to plant gardens and build homes while in exile. You asked the prophets to speak challenging truths. You asked the disciples to drop their nets and follow you. And you ask us to love bigger than society wants to. Being faithful has never been easy, and as a result, we often miss the mark. Forgive us for holding tightly to human-made plans. Forgive us for the times we say no to you so that we can say yes to ourselves. Unravel the grip we have on our agenda so that we can make room for you. Gratefully we pray,
Amen.**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**I believe in God, the Great Sower—
Who weaves us together in community,
Collecting our loose ends and turning them into belonging.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit—
Who hems us in before and behind,
Catching us when we fall and writing us into God’s holy narrative.**

**And I believe in Jesus Christ—
Who loved and claimed the people society had thrown out,
refusing to disregard anyone as scrap.**

**I believe God has woven part of God's self into the fiber
of our being, Making us inherently worthy of love and
belonging.**

**I believe the fabric of my life is weak,
That I am prone to error and need God's handiwork
to remind me of love.**

**I believe in the Church, and that like a quilt of different
fabrics, She is designed to be as diverse and beautiful as
God's creation.**

**And I believe that when life unravels,
God is there to stitch my wounds together,
To hold me in the palm of God's hand, to tell me of love,
And to invite me into a new journey.
Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

**Tend your ailing ones: in your love, Lord;
Rest your weary ones: in your love, Lord;
Bless your dying ones: in your love, O Lord for all.
Watch, O Lord, with all those awake this night.
Watch, O Lord, with all those who weep;
Give your angels and saints charge over all who sleep.**

**Sooth your suffering ones: in your love, Lord;
Heal afflicted ones: in your love, Lord;
Shield your joyous ones: in your love, O Lord for all.
Watch, O Lord, with all those awake this night.
Watch, O Lord, with all those who weep;
Give your angels and saints charge over all who sleep.**

**Hold your grieving: in your love, Lord;
Raise your fallen Ones: in your love, Lord;
Mend your broken ones: in your love, O Lord for all.
Watch, O Lord, with all those awake this night.
Watch, O Lord, with all those who weep;
Give your angels and saints charge over all who sleep.**

**Guard your little ones: in your love, Lord;
Guide your searching ones: in your love, Lord;
Grant us all your peace: in your love, O Lord for all.
Watch, O Lord, with all those awake this night.
Watch, O Lord, with all those who weep;
Give your angels and saints charge over all who sleep.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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

**May all that binds your heart be unraveled in the days to come.
May the fear and pain and suffering be released to the Holy One.
May God go with you as you put down your brokenness.
And may God fill you with all hope and joyfulness.
For Christ will gather you once again.
This is the blessing for the unraveled one. Amen.**