



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



Jews Mourning the Exile in Babylon, Eduard Bendemann, 1811-1889

Exile

September 20, 2020 10:30 Holy Communion

What do you do when all is lost? What do you feel when there is no hope? What is it like when you think God has forgotten you or failed? Ancient Jews were struggling with all these issues when Jerusalem was conquered and destroyed. Rather than abandoning their faith, and rather than thinking that God must have failed, they discover God is bigger and more powerful than they ever knew.

Welcome to worship today!

Please observe social distancing and remain conscious of the need to prevent the spread of infectious disease. In this bulletin is an insert that will be used to determine today's attendance. It will also help to identify who was here if contact tracing is necessary. Please fill it out and place it in the offering plate.

† GATHERING †

Welcome and Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who creates, redeems, and sustains us and all of creation.

C: Amen

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
Silence for reflection.

P: Faithful God,

C: have mercy on us.

We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves.

We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways.

We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves.

We place our own needs before those of our neighbors.

We keep your gift of salvation to ourselves.

Make us humble, cast away our transgressions,

and turn us again to life in you,

through Jesus the Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P: God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection, Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of Jesus the Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

C: Amen

Gathering Hymn Once We Sang and Danced
(For music see Hymn 701 in the Red Hymnal)

- 1. Once we sang and danced with gladness,
once delight filled ev'ry breath;
now we sit among the ashes,
all our dreams destroyed by death.**
- 2. All the willows bow in weeping,
all the rivers rage and moan,
as creation joins our pleading:
"God do not leave us alone."**
- 3. God, who came to dwell among us,
God, who suffered our disgrace,**

**from your own heart, grieved and wounded,
come the riches of your grace.**

**4. Come, O Christ, among the ashes,
come to wipe our tears away,
death destroy and sorrow banish;
now and always, come and stay.**

Text: Susan R. Briehl, b. 1952, based on Psalm 137, Copyright 2003 GIA Publications, Inc. Music: Latvian folk tune

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray:

Merciful God, you teach us in your holy word that you do not willingly afflict or grieve your children. Look with pity on us in our time of sorrow. Remember us in mercy. Strengthen us in patience, comfort us with the memory of your goodness, let your presence shine on us, and give us peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

Children's Sermon

† WORD †

Scripture Poetry Psalm 137 (*read responsively*)

A: By the rivers of Babylon
we sat weeping,
remembering Zion.

**C: There on the poplars
we hung our harps.**

A: Our captors shouted
for happy songs,
for songs of festival.
“Sing!” they cried,
“the songs of Zion.”

**C: How could we sing
the song of the Lord
in a foreign land?**

A: Jerusalem forgotten?
Wither my hand!

**C: Jerusalem forgotten?
Silence my voice!
if I do not seek you
as my greatest joy.**

A: Lord, never forget
that crime of Edom
against the city,
the day the cried,
“Strip! Smash her to the ground!”

C: Doomed Babylon, be cursed!
Good for those who deal you
evil for evil!
Good for those who destroy you,
who smash your children against rocks!

First Reading Isaiah 6:8-13

⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

⁹And he said, “Go and say to this people:
‘Keep listening, but do not comprehend;
keep looking, but do not understand.’”

¹⁰Make the mind of this people dull,
and stop their ears,
and shut their eyes,
so that they may not look with their eyes,
and listen with their ears,
and comprehend with their minds,
and turn and be healed.”

¹¹Then I said, “How long, O Lord?” And he said:
“Until cities lie waste
without inhabitant,
and houses without people,
and the land is utterly desolate;

¹²until the Lord sends everyone far away,
and vast is the emptiness in the midst of the land.

¹³Even if a tenth part remain in it,
it will be burned again,
like a terebinth or an oak
whose stump remains standing
when it is felled.”

The holy seed is its stump.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word the Lord

C: Thanks be to God!

Second Reading Jeremiah 29:1-14

These 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 Hilkiyah, 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 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.

⁸For thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Do not let the prophets and the diviners who are among you deceive you, and do not listen to the dreams that they dream, ⁹for it is a lie that they are prophesying to you in my name; I did not send them, says the Lord. ¹⁰For thus says the Lord: Only when Babylon's seventy years are completed will I visit you, and I will fulfill to you my promise and bring you back to this place. ¹¹For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. ¹²Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. ¹³When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, ¹⁴I will let you find me, says the Lord, and I will restore your fortunes and gather you from all the nations and all the places where I have driven you, says the Lord, and I will bring you back to the place from which I sent you into exile.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word the Lord

C: Thanks be to God!

Third Reading Isaiah 40:3-11

³A voice cries out:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

⁵Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

⁶A voice says, “Cry out!”

And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”

¹⁰See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word the Lord

C: Thanks be to God!

Sermon

Hymn of the Day Immortal, Invisible, God Only Wise
(For music turn to Hymn 834 in the Red Hymnal)

- 1. Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessed, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise!**
- 2. Unresting, unchanging, and silent as light,
nor wanting nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.**
- 3. To all, life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;**

**we blossom and flourish like leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish, but naught changeth thee.**

**4. Thou reignest in glory; thou dwellest in light;
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all laud we would render; oh, help us to see
'tis only the splendor of light hideth thee!**

Text: Walter Chalmers Smith, 1824-1908, alt. Music: Welsh traditional; arr. John Roberts, 1807-1876

Apostles' Creed

P: Let us confess our faith with the Apostles' Creed.

**C: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

P: With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

The pastor will begin the prayer with a petition and then invites the congregation to add additional petitions and thanksgivings. These four petitions will be read by people in the congregation:

To all who are suffering, show your mercy. We pray for firefighters, for communities devastated by fire, for all who suffer racial injustice, for migrants who seek safety, for all who are imprisoned, for victims of crime, for the unemployed, for students and faculty during the pandemic, for medical workers, for all who are hungry: O God, the list of the needy

is so long. Lord in your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

O God, you make the last first, and the first last. Give resources and courage to the churches around the globe that have few resources. When ministry in this time is so difficult, inspire bishops, pastors, deacons, and congregational leaders in their service. Be with the missionaries we support: the Rev. Matthew Nickloff and the Rev. Karen Anderson. Lord in your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

To places of conflict and violence, bring peace, especially to the cities of our nation. Bless the work of negotiators, peacekeepers, and development workers. Preserve protesters, and guide police. Enlighten our nation, the nations we call friends, and the nations that are deemed our enemies. Keep our election season from dishonesty.. Bring both healing and justice to our land. Lord in your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

The pastor concludes the prayer:

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: We share that peace with one another.

The congregation may greet one another with messages of Christ's peace.

† MEAL †

Thanksgiving Prayer

P: Let us pray: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things.

C: You have set before us these gifts of your good creation.

**Prepare us for your heavenly banquet,
nourish us with this rich food and drink,
and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world,
through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus of Nazareth; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with church of yesterday, today and tomorrow; and the church here in this place and all churches throughout the world, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

(spoken)

C: Holy, holy, holy Lord,

God of power and might,

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

P: In the night in which he was handed over our Lord Jesus took bread, gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Take and eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

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.**

Communion Distribution

Welcome to the Lord's Supper! All who are baptized are invited to receive communion. The pastor will bring a wafer to you and place it in your hands. The communion assistant will follow with a tray of grape juice or wine. If you need a gluten free option please tell the pastor.

Communion Blessing After all have communed the pastor will say:

P: The body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

Post Communion Prayer

P: Let us pray...

God of blessing, at this table we have seen you face to face, and in the gift of Christ's body and blood, our hearts have been refreshed. Send us now to shine with your goodness and bear witness to the one we have received; Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen

† SENDING †

Blessing

P: Nurturing God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Bless you and lead you into the ways of truth and life.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn Let All Things Now Living
(For music see Hymn 881 in the Red Hymnal)

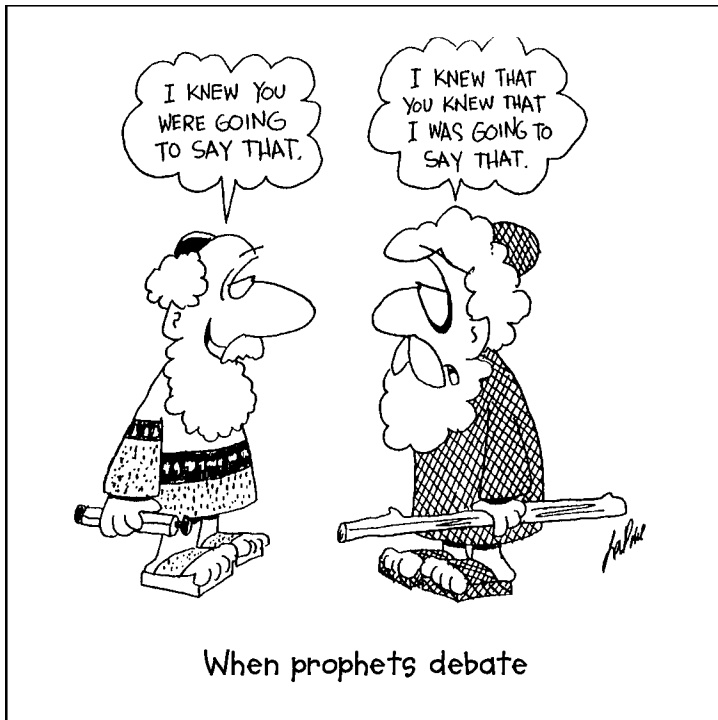
1. **Let all things now living
a song of thanksgiving
to God the creator triumphantly raise,
who fashioned and made us,
protected and stayed us,
who still guides us on to the end of our days.
God's banners are o'er us,
God's light goes before us,
a pillar of fire shining forth in the night,
till shadows have vanished
and darkness is banished,
as forward we travel from light into light.**

2. **God rules all the forces:
the stars in their courses
and sun in its orbit obediently shine;
the hills and the mountains,
the rivers and fountains,
the deeps of the ocean proclaim God divine.
We too should be voicing
out love and rejoicing;
with glad adoration a song let us raise
till all things now living
unite in thanksgiving:
"To God in the highest,
hosanna and praise!"**

Text: Katherine K. Davis, 1892-1980 alt. Copyright 1939, 1966 E.C. Schirmer Music Company. Music: Welsh folk tune

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
C: **God's Work. Our Hands.**



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