

A photograph of a winter landscape. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow. Several trees with bare, snow-laden branches stand in the foreground and middle ground. The sky is a pale, overcast grey. The entire image is framed within a rounded rectangle.

For as the rain comes down  
and the snow from heaven, and returns  
not thither, but waters the earth,  
and makes it bring forth and bud, that  
it may give seed to the sower,  
and bread to the eater: So shall My Word  
be that goes forth out of my  
mouth: It shall not return to me void,  
but shall accomplish that  
which I please, and  
it shall prosper in  
the thing whereto  
I sent it.

ISAIAH 55:10-11

*Mid-week Lenten Service  
St. Peter's Union Church  
March 14, 2018*



## *St. Peter's Union Church of Mantzville*

*"... where worship and service don't stop with the final hymn."*

*The Reverend Kenneth L. Buckwalter, Interim Pastor*

*Kristine K. Betz, Director of Music*

*The Reverend Kenneth T. Melber Jr., Visitation Pastor*

March 14, 2018

# *Fourth Wednesday in Lent*

*Community Vespers Service 7:30pm*

### ***Week of Lent Four – SALVATION FREELY OFFERED TO ALL***

*In this evening's Scripture reading, Isaiah 55:1-11, resurrection is like a free feast, baptism like water for the thirsty, God like rain on the earth. Have you heard the call to be part of the feast?.*

*Welcome again to St. Peter's Union Church of Mantzville now for the fourth Wednesday in Lent 2018. Our worship theme for this year is "A Lenten Journey to the Easter Vigil." Even if your congregation does not celebrate an Easter Vigil Service, these times of worship will be a fine preparation for Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter because they are focused on the broad themes salvation from the Old Testament that lay the groundwork for the unfolding of the salvation event we celebrate in those important "Three Days." We have already heard and reflected upon the place of Creation and the Flood in our Christian story Flood story; today, we hear about a Promise of Salvation given freely to all people as prophesied in Isaiah; and, next week – our final for this series – we will hear about the Deliverance from the Fiery Furnace of Daniel and his companions. May our fellowship, prayer, song and sermon renew your faith and revive your spirit for the celebration of Resurrection that awaits us at the end of this journey . . . together!*

*A note about the hymns for this evening's service:*

*All are to the tune, "**Beach Spring**," whose original appearance was in a hymnal entitled "Sacred Harp," in Philadelphia, PA. Its lilting melody and moderate tempo make it appropriate for a reflective evening service such as ours, and the repetition of the tune brings a note of lullaby to the evening's music.*

# Gathering

***Some things to know as we begin . . .***

*We begin with words of welcome because you are welcome here!*

*Who is saying what and when? You are the congregation (C).*

**C** Congregation      **A** Assisting Minister      **P** Presiding Minister

**L** Lector      **M** Minister from the Congregation

*Please do not use cell phones during this service.*

♥ *Standing is always an invitation, not a requirement!* ♥

## **WORDS of WELCOME**

### **PRELUDE**

***“A Lenten Meditation”***

*~ L. Rogers*

### **DIALOGUE**

***We commit ourselves to worship and call upon the name of the Lord.***

**P** Behold, now is the acceptable time;

**C** **now is the day of salvation.**

**P** Turn us again, O God of our salvation,;

**C** **that the light of your face may shine on us.**

**P** May your justice shine like the sun;

**C** **and may the poor be lifted up.**

*The assembly **remains standing** for the gathering hymn.*

## HYMN of LIGHT

*We enter the evening confident of God's eternal provision.*

### ***Evening Shades are Softly Blending***

TUNE: *Beach Spring*; TEXT: *H. G. Jackson, 1838-1914*

1.

**Evening shades are softly blending with the daylight's parting ray,  
And the dreamy twilight bending o'er the couch of dying day:  
Gently whispers, gently whispers, "Truth and Love pass not away;"  
Gently whispers, gently whispers, "Truth and Love pass not away."**

2.

**Tho' the day seem long and dreary, work and care at twilight cease,  
And the toilers, worn and weary, find from labor sweet release;  
Anxious toilers, anxious toilers – find in slumber rest and peace;  
Anxious toilers, anxious toilers – find in slumber rest and peace.**

3

**Thus when life's brief day is ended,  
and the deep'ning shades appear,  
By thy rod and staff defended, e'en in death I'll know no fear.  
Blessed Savior, blessed Savior, death is life when thou art near;  
Blessed Savior, blessed Savior, death is life when thou art near.**

## **THANKSGIVING for LIGHT**

*As darkness descends we are reminded to give thanks for the light.*

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** And also with you.

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

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

**P** We give you thanks, O God, for in the beginning you called light into being, and you set lights in the sky to govern the night and day. In a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night you led your people into freedom.

Enlighten our darkness by the light of your Christ; may your Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for you are merciful, and you love your whole creation; and, with all your creatures, we give you glory, through your Son Jesus Christ in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

**P** Let us pray.

Holy God, you created all things by the power of your Word, and you renew the whole earth by your Spirit. Give now the water of life to all who thirst for you, that, rejoicing in your covenant of mercy, we may bring forth abundant fruit; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**C Amen.**

*The assembly may be seated.*

# Word

## **PSALMODY: Psalm 121**

*My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. (Ps. 121:2)*

*The psalm is read **responsively** as indicated between the lector and the assembly.*

I lift up my eyes to the hills—

from where will my help come?

**<sup>2</sup>My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.**

**<sup>3</sup>He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.**

**<sup>4</sup>He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.**

<sup>5</sup> The Lord is your keeper;  
the Lord is your shade at your right hand.

<sup>6</sup> **The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.**

<sup>7</sup> The Lord will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.

<sup>8</sup> **The Lord will keep you going out and your coming in  
from this time on and forevermore.**

Glory to the Lord Most High, Almighty and Ever-living God;  
**as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be. AMEN.**

*Brief silence for prayer follows the reading.  
The lector continues with the scripture reading.*

**SCRIPTURE READING: Isaiah 55:1-11 (NRSV)**

*Salvation freely offered to all.*

**L** A reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters;  
and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!  
Come, buy wine and milk  
without money and without price.

<sup>2</sup> Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread,  
and your labor for that which does not satisfy?

Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,  
and delight yourselves in rich food.

<sup>3</sup> Incline your ear, and come to me;  
listen, so that you may live.

I will make with you an everlasting covenant,  
my steadfast, sure love for David.

<sup>4</sup> See, I made him a witness to the peoples,  
a leader and commander for the peoples.

<sup>5</sup> See, you shall call nations that you do not know,

and nations that do not know you shall run to you,  
because of the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel,  
for he has glorified you.

<sup>6</sup> Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near;

<sup>7</sup> let the wicked forsake their way, and the unrighteous their thoughts;  
let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,  
and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

<sup>8</sup> For my thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

<sup>9</sup> For as the heavens are higher than the earth,  
so are my ways higher than your ways  
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

<sup>10</sup> For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven,  
and do not return there until they have watered the earth,  
making it bring forth and sprout,  
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,

<sup>11</sup> so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

**L** The word of the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God.**

*Brief silence for prayer follows the reading.*

*The minister continues with the responsive reading.*

**RESPONSE: Isaiah 12:2-6 (NRSV)**

*With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. (Is. 12:3)*

Surely God is my salvation;

I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
for the Lord God is my strength and my might;  
he has become my salvation.

<sup>3</sup> **With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation.**

<sup>4</sup> And you will say in that day:  
Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name;  
make known his deeds among the nations;  
proclaim that his name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup> **Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be known in all the earth.**

<sup>6</sup> Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

*Silence for reflection follows, after which the following prayer is said.*

**L** Almighty God, with joy we draw water from the well only you can provide. Feed our hearts on the abundance of your Word and guide our feet onto paths of righteousness, that we may be poured out like an offering of divine love upon the altar of your creation; through the Word from which all good things come, Jesus Christ your Son, our Lord.

**C** Amen.

## **GOOD NEWS!**

**SPECIAL MUSIC**     ~ *Molly Betz, soloist*

**SERMON**                 ~ *The Rev. Dr. Allison deForest*

*After the sermon the assembly **stands** for the Hymn of the Day.*

## **HYMN of the DAY**

*We rejoice in God's boundless providing!*

### ***Come to Me, All Pilgrims Thirsty***

**TUNE:** *Beach Spring*; **TEXT:** *Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939/©1996*

1.

**Come to me, all pilgrims thirsty; drink the water I will give.  
If you knew the gift I offer, you would come to me and live.**

**REFRAIN**

**Jesus, ever-flowing fountain, give us water from your well.  
In the gracious gift you offer there is joy no tongue can tell.**

2.

**Come to me, all trav'lers weary; come that I may give you rest.  
Drink the cup of life I offer; at this table be my guest. (Refrain)**

3.

**Come to me, believers burdened; find refreshment in this place.  
Come, receive the gift I offer, turn to me and seek my face. (Refrain)**

4.

**Come to me, repentant sinners, leave behind your guilt and shame.  
Come and know divine compassion, turn to me, I call your name. (Refrain)**

5.

**Come to me, distressed and needy; I would be your trusted friend.  
Come and seek the gift I offer, come, your open hands extend. (Refrain)**

6.

**Come to me, abandoned, orphaned; lonely ways no longer roam.  
Come and take the gift I offer, let me make in you my home. (Refrain)**

*The assembly may be seated as the offering is received.*

## OFFERING

*We offer our time, talents and treasures to God.*

**OFFERTORY MUSIC**            *“In the Shadow of the Cross”*

*Please stand for the remainder of the liturgy.*

## OFFERING HYMN

*We give back to God as God has given to us!*

***Day Behind Us, Night Before Us***

**TUNE:** *Beach Spring*; **TEXT:** *Kenneth Buckwalter, b. 1963/©2018*

1.

**Day behind us, night before us, all we have is by thy hand:**

**Cleansing wa – ters, bread that feeds us,**

**shelt’ring house and gen’rous land.**

**Grateful we shall look behind us, hopeful we shall look before.**

**Lord, thy mercies, never ceasing, bring us now to heaven’s door.**

2.

**Work behind us, rest before us, we shall not thy grace forget.**

**Ere we sleep we shall remember, Lord,**

**just how great to thee our debt.**

**What in plenty thou hast given, we return in full to thee.**

**Take us also, by thy mercy, to thine arms eternally.**

## OFFERTORY PRAYER

**P**    Compassionate God,

**C**    we offer you these gifts as signs of our time and labor.

**Receive the offering of our lives, and feed us with your grace, that,**

**even in the midst of death, all creation might feast on your**

**unending life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS of INTERCESSION**

*We pray for God's world and God's people.*

**P** As we journey through this season of repentance and renewal, let us turn to God who mercifully gives us new life. *A brief silence.*

**P** O God of promise, strengthen all the baptized and empower us to speak your promises in the wilderness of this world. (*Prayers for missionaries may follow.*) Hear us, O God;

**C** **your mercy is great.**

**P** O God of voice and word, speak tenderly to the world that you made, that the nations may know your loving presence, and their leaders your guiding wisdom. (*Prayers for the nations may follow.*) Hear us, O God;

**C** **your mercy is great.**

**P** O God of patience and kindness, remember those who approach death, and strengthen those who keep watch with them. Heal those who are sick or recovering from accident, injury or illness (*Minister pauses so that names of the sick and suffering may be lifted up silently or aloud in the assembly*); assure them of your abiding presence. Hear us, O God;

**C** **your mercy is great.**

**P** O God of our relationships, bless those preparing for baptism, for First Holy Communion and for Affirmation of Baptism. Give holy guidance to those who mentor them and to congregations who will receive them. Hear us, O God;

**C** **your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

**P** Almighty God, you wonderfully created and yet more wonderfully restored the dignity of human nature. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord.

**C** **Amen.**

# Sending

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

*We pray as Christ taught us.*

**P** Gathered by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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 sins, as we forgive those who sin 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. Amen.**

## **COMMISSIONING and BLESSING**

*We hear the call to serve and are blessed with power to do so.*

**P** Let us bless the Lord.

**C** **Thanks be to God!**

**P** The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**C** **Amen.**

## **SENDING HYMN**

*We enter the evening confident of God's eternal provision.*

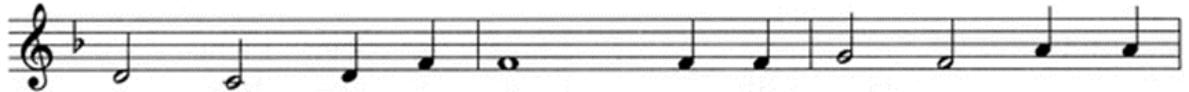
***God of Day and God of Darkness***

**TEXT:** *Marty Haugen, b. 1950/©1994*

*(printed on the following page)*



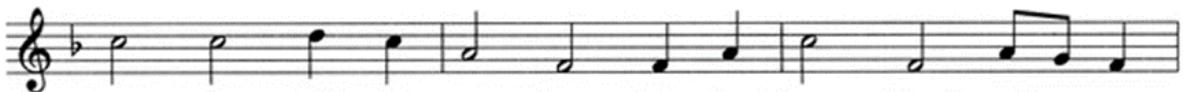
1. God of day and God of dark - ness, Now we  
 2. Still the na - tions curse the dark - ness, Still the  
 3. You shall be the path that guides us, You the  
 4. Praise to you in day and dark - ness, You our



stand be - fore the night; As the shad - ows stretch and  
 rich op - press the poor; Still the earth is bruised and  
 light that in us burns; Shin - ing deep with - in all  
 source and you our end; Praise to you who love and



deep - en, Come and make our dark - ness bright. All cre -  
 bro - ken By the ones who still want more. Come and  
 peo - ple, Yours the love that we must learn. For our  
 nur - ture As a fa - ther, moth - er, friend. Grant us



a - tion still is groan - ing For the dawn - ing of your  
 wake us from our sleep - ing, So our hearts can - not ig -  
 hearts shall wan - der rest - less 'Til they safe to you re -  
 all a peace - ful rest - ing, Let each mind and bod - y



might, When the Sun of peace and jus - tice  
 nore All your peo - ple lost and bro - ken,  
 turn; Find - ing you in one an - oth - er,  
 mend, So we rise re - freshed to - mor - row,



Fills the earth with ra - diant light.  
 All your chil - dren at our door.  
 We shall all your face dis - cern.  
 Hearts re - newed to king - dom tend.

## POSTLUDE

## *“Largo in G”*

~G. F. Handel

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*Please join us immediately following the close of worship for refreshments and fellowship in the fellowship hall located on the lowest level of the church. We wish to thank Jan Altenburg for coordinating the refreshments as well as all who contributed generously by bringing an item to share.*

*Our thanks to all who provided assistance for tonight’s service, your ministry has helped to build up the body of Christ gathered for worship this evening.*

*Special thanks to Pastor Allison deForest for preaching the good news of the gospel to us this evening.*

*We hope your presence at our mid-week Lenten services will continue. Next week we will gather at Zion’s Stone Church and continue our theme of “A Lenten Journey to the Easter Vigil” with the focus on “Deliverance from the Fiery Furnace.” Rev. Chris deForest, Pastor of St. John’s, Mahoning, will be preaching.*



Lenten Series  
of  
Shared Worship

The final mid-week Lenten service to be shared with our sister churches will be held on:

**Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup> – 7:30 p.m.**

*Sermon Topic: “Deliverance from the Fiery Furnace”  
at Zion’s Stone Church*

The Rev. Chris deForest, preaching

Each service is scheduled to begin at 7:30 p.m. and will offer a time of light refreshment and fellowship following the service.

Come and explore with us, within the context of our Christian faith, this year’s theme: *“A Lenten Journey to the Easter Vigil”*



# March 25 through April 1st

**Sunday, March 25th *Passion/Palm Sunday, 9:00 a.m.***



Morning worship service with the distribution of Palms.

*"Come and celebrate Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem!"*

**Thursday, March 29th *Maundy Thursday, 7:30 p.m.***

Service of Tenebrae



*"This dramatic service carries the worshiper into the heart of Christ's passion and crucifixion through sacred story, music, table Communion, lighting and sound."*

**Friday, March 30th *Good Friday, 7:30 p.m.***

*"Ah, Holy Jesus"*

*Worship with us in the starkness of an unadorned sanctuary with a dramatic presentation of those who encountered Jesus.*



**Sunday, April 1st *Easter Sunday***

6:30 a.m. Sunrise Service and 9:00 a.m. Service

Celebration of Communion at both services.

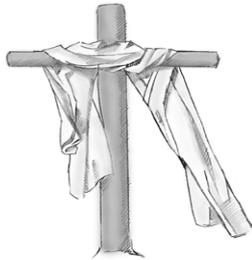
*"Celebrate new life in Christ as we worship with gratitude and praise the risen Lord!"*

*(7:45 a.m. Breakfast)*



*Give up complaining — focus on gratitude.  
Give up harsh judgments — think kind thoughts.  
Give up worry — trust God to provide.  
Give up discouragement — be full of hope.  
Give up bitterness — turn to forgiveness.  
Give up hatred — return good for evil.  
Give up anger — be more patient.  
Give up pettiness — become mature.  
Give up jealousy — pray for trust.  
Give up gossiping — control your tongue.  
Give up sin — turn to virtue.  
Give up giving up — persevere.*

*—Author unknown*



***A Prayer for Lent:***

***God be in my head, and in my understanding.***

***God be in my eyes, and in my looking.***

***God be in my mouth, and in my speaking.***

***God be in my heart, and in my thinking.***

***God be in mine end, and in my departing.***

***-Sarum Primer (1527)***