



“Where Can I Go?” Week 3

First Lutheran Church, Sandpoint
Worship - January 17, 2021

Prelude

Play meditative instrumental music that helps quiet your mind, body, and spirit for listening to God’s presence with you.

Let us seek to simplify this moment, slow down for a time. Let us worship, leaning on prayer, reflection and sharing with one another.

Threshold

“God is Holding Your Life” - (Inspired by Psalm 121)

[For those of you without access to the online service, we will look into creating a DVD of the music/ videos for these sections. Let the office 208-263-2048 Pastor Steve know if you could use a DVD to support your worship.]

This week’s Psalm text brings home this message: we are in an intimate relationship with God. There is nowhere we go that God is not present—no state of our being that results in our being abandoned. God has knit us together, has woven us, knowing us from before our beginning. God, indeed, is holding our lives.

**Turn now your gaze upon the earth
Where is the One who never sleeps?
We call the One who guards you now,
Your spirit safe in holy keep.**

**God is holding your life
God is holding your life
God is holding your life, we believe**
[repeat refrain]

Opening Collect Prayer

Leader: Dear and Near God, you never leave our side.
Open us this day to feeling and knowing your presence deep in our hearts
so that we might show forth love with the same confidence,
offering your reign of right relationship on earth as it is in heaven.

***People:* We praise you for your close attention,
holding our lives together in care. Amen.**

WORD

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

Psalm Reading: Psalm 139:1-18 *(Lukan Psalter translation)*

ADONAI, you've searched me and known me.
You know my sitting down and my rising up,
you discern my thoughts from afar.
You trace my journeys and my resting places;
and are acquainted with all of my ways.
Indeed, there is not a word on my lips;
but you, O God, know it altogether.
You press upon me, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
it is so high I cannot attain it!

Where can I go then from your Spirit,
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I climb up to heaven, you are there;
if I make the grave my bed, you are there also.
If I take the wings of the morning,
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
even there your hand will lead me,
and your right hand hold me fast.

If I say, "Surely the darkness will cover me,
and the light around me turn to night,"
darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day,
darkness and light to you are both alike.

You created my inmost being
and stitched me together in my mother's womb.
For all these mysteries I thank you—
for the wonder of myself,
for the wonder of your works—
my soul knows it well.
My frame was not hidden from you
while I was being made in that secret place,
knitted together in the depths of the earth;
your eyes saw my body even there.

All of my days
were written in your book,
all of them planned
before even the first of them came to be.

How precious your thoughts are to me, ADONAI!
How impossible to number them!
I could no more count them
than I could count the sand.
But suppose I could?
You would still be with me!

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

Additional Lectionary Scripture for today: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]
1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51

Reflection

The Hebrew poets made sure to highlight that their God was not one so high and mighty (like other gods worshiped by their neighbors) that the people could not “know” God and be known fully and wonderfully. This direct and intimate relationship is demonstrated in this Psalm that uses the Hebrew root “yada” over and over again—pointing to a kind of “knowing” that has a level of certainty, of not only familiarity, but of confidence in the relationship. Made in the image of God, are we willing to take the time to “knit and weave” those kinds of relationships?

In a book titled *Tales of the Hasadim*, Martin Buber, an early twentieth-century Jewish philosopher, offered these words concerning the relationship between God and humankind:

Where I wander – You!
Where I ponder – You!
Only You, You again, always You!
You! You! You!
When I am gladdened – You!
When I am saddened – You!
Only You, You again, always You!
You! You! You!

Sky is You, Earth is You!
You above! You below!
In every trend, at every end,
Only You, You again, always You!
You! You! You!

Testimonies of Being Held

This is an opportunity to let people share how they have felt the love and support of others, of God, in this time of pandemic. Take some time now and reflect on this. How does being known in this way, both challenge and inspire you?

Song of the Day:

“Here I Am Lord”

(ELW 574, v 1-2)

1 "I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*

2 "I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?" *Refrain*

Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you
call-ing in the night. I will go, Lord, if you
lead me. I will hold your peo - ple in my heart.

The musical notation consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the first line of the refrain, the second staff the second line, and the third staff the third line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Silence

Prayers of the People

Each week we will have a moment to write prayer concerns on small pieces of paper. We will then place these prayers in a container [*bowl, box, etc*]-a symbolic action of placing them in God's hands, God's care.

Take a moment to do this.

As we continue our prayers. I will offer a category of concern and we will allow a brief pause, then we will respond as indicated.

As a prayer posture for this worship series, I invite you to cup your hands, ready to receive God's love and peace, and in preparation to be God's love and peace in the world.

Let us pray for the leaders of this world and this church community... [*pause*]

God of Justice, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who live in conflict around the world... [*pause*]

Prince of Peace, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all who are experiencing loss of any kind in this pandemic...

[*pause*]

Comforting Healer, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who are homeless, hungry and alone... [*pause*]

Emmanuel, God-With-Us, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for those who live in comfort,
for Christ-like hospitality and generosity... [*pause*]

Transforming Spirit, hear our prayer.

Let us pray, for those we have named and the ones whose names we do not know,
[*pause and include any other petitions you might have*]

hear our prayer.

Holy and Living One, as we gather to break bread once again, break us open to your love, to your peace, to your presence, to your transformative power. In the name of the One who invites us time and again, Jesus the Christ.

Let the people say, "Selah"

Selah!

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Confession and Assurance

We are all invited to the gift of this table of grace. As a response to the invitation, we are asked to let go of all that separates us from accepting this grace. We confess the ways we have placed hardship in the hands of others, rather than peace.

[sung]

**Put peace into each other's hands
and like a treasure hold it,
protect it like a candle flame,
with tenderness enfold it.**

**Put peace into each other's hands
with loving expectation;
be gentle in your words and ways,
in touch with God's creation.**

[music continues to underscore]

When we place peace in each other's hands, we place love in all the hands of the world.

In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!
In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven!
Glory to God! Amen!

The Peace and Thanksgiving

The Peace of Christ be with you.
And also with you.

Will you make a gesture of peace toward others who may be with or near you as a sign of offering the peace that Christ gives us.

Then, write here what you are thankful for today and/or how you sense God calling you to respond to this gracious gift of peace and forgiveness today.

OFFERING

If you would like to offer financial support for the ministries of First Lutheran, you can mail them to the church. 526 S. Olive, Ave. Sandpoint, ID 83864 or online at <https://firstlutheransandpoint.breezechms.com/give/online>

[sung]

**Give thanks for strong yet tender hands
held out in trust and blessing.
Where words fall short let hands speak out;
the heights of love expressing.**

If you are with someone or on the phone with friends or family, Holy Communion can be shared now. Choose a leader and follow the liturgy included here. If you would like a pastor to share this meal with you by phone, arrange through the church office.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

*DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Open your hearts, your lives to the Holy One.

We long for this communion.

Let us give our greatest thanks to the Holy One.

It is a good and joyful thing to give our thanks and praise.

Gift of Life, Creator of All That Is,
You have breathed life into us,
filled our emptiness,
loved us through our resistance.

**Time and again you say, Listen!
Time and again you say, Live!
Time and again you say, Love!**

And so we gather and give thanks in this moment.
We stop so we may listen,
we breathe so we may live,
we open so we may love.

**Holy , holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you God,
And blessed be your work in Jesus,
Peace-Giver, Life-Healer.
Spirit-Anointer, do your work in us, as in him.

For Jesus gathered with his disciples, his friends, his family.
He took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to his companions saying,
“Take, eat, this is my body. My life given for you.
And after the supper he lifted his cup, gave thanks over it,
and offered it to his companions, saying,
“Drink from this cup, all of you. This is my life, my love poured out for you.
Whenever you gather together, stop... *Selah*... think of me. I am here.”

And so,
in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ’s offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

[sung]

**As at communion shape your hands,
into a waiting cradle;
the gift of Christ receive, revere,
united round the table.**

Let us pray the Lord’s Prayer together.

**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.**

We who are many are one body, one loaf, rising in Spirit together.
Even if we cannot be physically in the same space,
we are one in love.
We are one in the grace of Christ broken open for us.

While we have many cups,
God's love is poured upon us from the one cup of salvation.
It is in this sharing beyond all time and space that we are drawn close,
that we are made whole,
that we are made free.

As you are served by those with you,
or served by your own hand,
know that the hand that serves you is the hand of all Christ's Body,
through mystical union with the Divine.
You are not alone.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*Share bread with each person at your table saying,
"The body of Christ given for you."*

*Then share the wine or grape juice with each person saying,
"The blood of Christ shed for you."*

*For those at the table who do not yet receive Communion, you can offer this or a
similar blessing, "You are a child of God. God's love is always with you."*

Prayer After Receiving

God of all that is too deep for words,
we give you thanks that, at this table of grace,
you offer your holiness, your steadfast love.
Open us often to your *Selah*, your pause,
to hear the needs of your people.
We pray this in the name of the Host of this Table,
Jesus the Christ. **Amen.**

SENDING

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

Benediction

Now go in the knowledge that
God is holding your life
even as we hold each other.
You are not alone.
You are loved.
Amen.

Postlude

Worship Notes:

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Songs:

Psalm Songs for 121 “God is Holding Your Life” and 139 “Where Can I Go?” by Richard Bruxvoort Colligan; used with permission and license.

“Here I Am Lord”, Text: Daniel L. Schutte, b. 1946

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Prayer List: George Marker, Michelle Thurston, Lynn Franck, Ed Jewell, Chris Ingham; Randy Petersen; Charles Shobe Sr., Nicky Schripsema; Wendi Lies; Gerda Burke; Debbie Haberlock; Kara Schripsema; Kai Haberlock; Tom Taylor; Hunter Taylor; Eugene Kurwicki; Mike Shobe; Marguerite Suttmeier, Sylvia Greenwood; Janet Merrill, and those on your hearts and minds today.

We include prayers for Luther Park - its staff, residents, and families; Our nation, as it struggles with being a democratic republic; our congregation as we seek leaders and resources for our ministries in 2021, and our reflections this Martin Luther King Day.

FOR YOUR PRAYER AND REFLECTIONS UPON GOD'S WORD



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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America