

A Service of Morning Prayer
4th Sunday of Lent
March 22, 2020

Opening Sentences: Psalm 124:8; Lamentations 3:21-23

Our help is in the name of the LORD, **the Maker of heaven and earth.** This I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, **for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

Psalm 46

¹ God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. ⁴ There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. ⁵ God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. ⁶ Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. ⁷ The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. ⁸ Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. ⁹ He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰ He says, "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." ¹¹ The LORD Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 10

Q&A 27: Q. What do you understand by the providence of God? **A. Providence is the almighty and ever present power of God¹ by which he upholds, as with his hand, heaven and earth and all creatures,² and so rules them that leaf and blade, rain and drought, fruitful and lean years, food and drink, health and sickness, prosperity and poverty—³ all things, in fact, come to us not by chance⁴ but from his fatherly hand.⁵**

¹ Jeremiah 23:23-24; Acts 17:24-28 – ² Hebrews 1:3 – ³ Jeremiah 5:24; Acts 14:15-17; John 9:3; Proverbs 22:2 – ⁴ Proverbs 16:33 – ⁵ Matthew 10:29

Q&A 28: Q. How does the knowledge of God's creation and providence help us? **A. We can be patient when things go against us,¹ thankful when things go well,² and for the future we can have good confidence in our faithful God and Father that nothing will separate us from his love.³ All creatures are so completely in his hand that without his will they can neither move nor be moved.⁴**

¹ Job 1:21-22; James 1:3 – ² Deuteronomy 8:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:18 –

³ Psalm 55:22; Romans 5:3-5; 8:38-39 – ⁴ Job 1:12; 2:6; Proverbs 21:1; Acts 17:24-28

Romans 8:35-39

³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Homily: "What is God doing with COVID-19?"

Prayers of the People

Gracious God, rejoicing in your blessings, trusting in your loving care for all, we bring you our prayers for the world. We pray for the created world, for those who rebuild where things have been destroyed; for those who fight hunger, poverty, and disease; for those who have power to bring change for the better and to renew hope. In the life of our world, **your kingdom come, your will be done.**

We pray for our country; for those who frame our laws and shape our common life; for those who keep the peace and administer justice; for those who teach, those who heal, and all who serve our community. In the life of our land, **your kingdom come, your will be done.**

We pray for people in need: those for whom life is a bitter struggle; those whose lives are clouded by death and loss, by pain or disability, by discouragement or fear, by shame or rejection. In the lives of those in need, **your kingdom come, your will be done.**

We pray for those in the circle of friendship and love around us; children and parents; sisters and brothers; friends and neighbors; and for those especially in our thoughts today. In the lives of those we love, **your kingdom come, your will be done.**

We pray for the church: in its stand with the poor, in its love for the outcast and ashamed, in its service to the sick and neglected, in its proclamation of the gospel, in this land, in this place. In the life of your church, **your kingdom come, your will be done.**

Almighty and everlasting God, we thank you that you have brought us safely to the beginning of this new day. Keep us from falling into sin or running into danger. Guide us to do always what is right in your sight. Through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who taught us to pray... [The Lord's Prayer]

God's Blessing: Romans 15:13

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.