



Pastor: In life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us.  
We are not alone!  
Friends, believe the good news of the gospel:  
People: **In Jesus, the Christ, we are forgiven!**

\*THE GLORIA PATRI 579

*Gloria Patri*

\*THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*Questions 122-123 from the PC(USA) Study Catechism*

Leader: [122] How does God respond to our prayers?

People: **God takes all our prayers into account, weighing them with divine wisdom, and responding to them by a perfect will. Although for the time being God's answers may seem beyond our understanding, or sometimes even bitter, we know nonetheless that they are always determined by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. God answers our prayers, particularly for temporal blessings, only in ways that are compatible with the larger purposes of God's glory and our salvation. Communion with God is finally the answer within the answers to all our prayers.**

Leader: [123] What encourages us to pray each day?

People: **The God who has adopted us as children is the God who encourages and commands us to pray. When we pray, we respond with love to that greater love which meets us from above. Before we enter into prayer, God is ready to grant all that we need. We may turn to God with confidence each day, not because we are worthy, but simply because of God's grace. By praying we acknowledge that we depend on grace for all that is good, beautiful, life-giving and true.**

\*THE GREETINGS OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP

THE CHILDREN'S SERMON

THE SHARING OF JOYS, CONCERNS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE CHORAL PRAYER OF ILLUMINATION

*Bless the Lord, O My Soul*

Robert Lau

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON Ezekiel 37:1-14 *(Pew Bible p. 764)*

Liturgist: This is the word of the Lord. All: **Thanks be to God!**

THE ANTHEM *Benedictus es, Domine* Joseph W. Clokey

THE EPISTLE LESSON Romans 8:6-11 *(Pew Bible p. 148)*

Liturgist: Here ends the reading of the Epistle. All: **Praise be to you, O Lord.**

THE GOSPEL LESSON John 11:1-45 *(Pew Bible p. 99)*

Pastor: The Gospel of our Lord. All: **Glory to You, O Christ.**

\*THE CONGREGATIONAL CANTICLE Hymn 574

*Lord, Have Mercy Upon Us*

Kyrie

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

**Christ, have mercy upon us.**

**Lord, have mercy upon us.**

## THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Pastor: God gives flesh to the dry bones of the dead. As we prepare for the passion of Christ and for the miracle of resurrection from the dead, let us earnestly beseech God to breathe on all creatures and call them out of the tomb of suffering and need.

People. **Hear our prayers, O Lord.**

*Intercessions may be voiced by the congregation during this brief time of silence. A name, a concern, a joy, or a sorrow may be spoken. Following each prayer request, the congregation should respond:*

**Hear our prayers, O Lord.**

Pastor: For all nations, peoples, tribes, clans, and families; for justice, mercy, and peace in all the world; for all who are sick, afflicted, or oppressed; for the dying and the dead, and for those who mourn; for our families, friends, and companions, and for all those we love, we pray to you, God of mercy and of healing...

... God of the living and the dead, you who called your Son from the grave: Receive the prayers we offer this day for all who seek new life in Jesus Christ and for all those in need in every place; in his name we pray.

NOTE: Today only, the Lord's Prayer will be sung by Michael Desnoyers for the Offertory Anthem instead of being spoken by the congregation.

## THE CHORAL AMEN

Danish

## THE PRESENTATION OF TITHES, OFFERINGS, AND GIFTS

## THE OFFERTORY ANTHEM

*Our Father*  
Michael Desnoyers, Tenor

Joe Negri

## \*THE DOXOLOGY

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise Him, all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

## THE UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

**O God, we bring our gifts in faithfulness to your call, beckoning us to a life of sacrifice and love. Now receive these offerings, and continue to shape us in the likeness of Christ, our Lord, whose obedience to your will and whose death on the cross have set us free from the bondage of sin and brought us from darkness into light. Amen.**

## \*THE RECESSIONAL HYMN 98

*O Sacred Head, Now Wounded*

PASSION CHORALE

\*THE BENEDICTION

\*THE CHORAL RESPONSE

*Take Up Your Cross, the Savior Said*

Harm. John Leon Hooker

\*A TIME OF SILENCE

\*THE CHARGE AND DISMISSAL

Pastor: Now may the blessing of God rest on our heads,  
And the Truth of God set us free from all dangers, real and perceived;  
So that in our labor and in our leisure,  
In our rising up and our sitting down,  
In hours of joy or in days of sorrow,  
We shall with gladness of heart  
Commend our lives wholly unto Him who keeps us from falling.

People: **Through Christ, our Lord! His peace endures.**

THE POSTLUDE

*Diapason Movement*

William Walond

\*Those who are able, please stand.

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**FELLOWSHIP HOUR** immediately follows this worship service downstairs in the Assembly Room. Everyone is cordially invited to attend. Hosting today's Fellowship Hour is Linda Peters.

**GREETINGS TO ALL this day who have come to worship.  
We want to get to know you, especially if you are a visitor!**

Please introduce yourself to others sitting nearby during the passing of the peace. Following the worship, everyone is invited to share a time of coffee, tea and fellowship downstairs in the Assembly Room. (exit at the rear of the sanctuary, go down the stairs and past the Library to the entrance near the Sallman painting of Christ knocking at the door.)

**YOU WERE GREETED TODAY** by Linda Peters.

**Covenant Cupboard:**

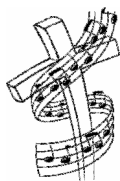
**March - soda or graham crackers**

*Baskets for your donations are located in the front hallway.*



**THANK YOU TO THE CHURCH ELVES:** Connie Brown, Donna Hobaugh, Jane Hall and Nancy Jo Moorhead cleaned the Sanctuary this past Thursday. Great job ladies; and once again, your *time and talent* are very much appreciated!

**THE COVENANT CHOIR REHEARSAL SCHEDULE:**



- Thursday, March 13 (time to be determined)
- WEDNESDAY, March 19 at 7 pm
- ***Maundy Thursday Service, March 20***
- Thursday, March 27 at 7 p.m.

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS THIS WEEK:**

- Administration & Stewardship - Tomorrow, Monday, March 10 at 7 pm (Connell Room)
- Session - This Tuesday, March 11 at 7 pm (Assembly Room)

*In The Life of Our Church*

*Prayer Concerns:*

- Mary Lee Marten . . . . . Eye surgery scheduled this Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup>  
Karen Swanson . . . . . Knee Replacement this Thursday, March 13<sup>th</sup>  
Grace Sechler . . . . . Released from Concordia, now at home  
Enid Dunmire . . . . . Shoulder surgery scheduled April 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Marion Campbell . . . . . Re-admitted to Butler Memorial Hospital,  
Medical Intensive Care  
Dr. Thomas Stover . . . . . Mary Lee's brother in Euless, TX, recently  
diagnosed with cancer  
Bill Wilson . . . . . At St. John's Specialty Care Center in Mars, PA  
Bob and Joan Moore . . . . . In the nursing home (Concordia at Rebecca)  
Mary Elizabeth Goehring . . . . . In the nursing home (Concordia)  
Julie and Bud Bruno . . . . . For improved strength and health (at home)  
Ray Welling . . . . . Health concerns

**Plan to Come Early on  
MAUNDY THURSDAY  
MARCH 20, 2008**

**6:30 pm - 7:30 pm**  
*In the Assembly Room*



*Passover  
Seder*

PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS BY CALLING THE CHURCH OFFICE  
(724) 287-7731

OR PLACE YOUR NAME(S) ON THE GUEST SIGN-UP SHEET  
IN THE ASSEMBLY ROOM.

**Invite friends and neighbors to join you also.  
All are welcome!**

*What is the significance of each of these?  
Maror, Haroset, Horseradish, Karpas,  
Matzo, Lamb, Egg, Elijah's Cup*

*Come to the Seder Meal, and Discover the Answer!*

*HOLY WEEK OPPORTUNITIES*



*Palm Sunday*

Next Sunday, March 16<sup>th</sup> - 11 am Worship

Procession with palms  
& distribution of palms to all worshippers  
One Great Hour of Sharing Offering received

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*Maundy Thursday - March 20th*

6:30 pm Instructional Seder Meal

Presented by Michael Desnoyers and Pastor Jim  
RESERVATIONS: Call the church office at 724.287.7731  
or place your name(s) on the Sign-up Sheet  
in the Assembly Room.

8:00 pm Tenebrae Service

Dale Wood's *Service of Darkness*  
Celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

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*Good Friday*

March 21<sup>st</sup> - 12 Noon Joint Worship

Joint Good Friday Worship Service with Covenant,  
Saint Andrews and Hill Presbyterian participating.  
The service will be held at Saint Andrews Presbyterian Church,  
201 E. Jefferson St., Butler

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*Easter Sunday - March 23rd*

10:30 am - Prelude of Easter Music

Special Music provided by a Brass Ensemble  
from Slippery Rock University

11 am - Festival Service of the Resurrection  
of Our Lord Jesus Christ



## Commentary on Today's Readings

From "Eyes of Faith" by John J. Pilch

Georgetown University

Christian apologists, at times, have had to contend with skeptics who argue that Jesus did not die and rise from the dead -- he merely collapsed and was resuscitated, according to their speculations. Others have said the same about Lazarus.

The often helpful insights of modern medical science have made us forget that the story of the raising of Lazarus is a "sign" in John's Gospel and not the medical notes of a coroner. In John's Gospel, there are seven "signs" that are primarily intended to stir faith in Jesus (2:11). Sometimes they do the very opposite (11:47-48).

According to the gospel story, Lazarus has died. Martha and others believe that had he arrived on time, Jesus might have prevented Lazarus' death or raised him up immediately. As John writes this story for his community, Martha represents that grieving community in asking the perennial question: "If Jesus gave us eternal life, why are believers still dying?" John's story offers a challenging response.

Like other New Testament communities, John's experienced a great crisis of faith when any believer died. "If Jesus gave us eternal life, why must we still die?" The evangelist therefore has added symbolic interpretations to this story of the death of Lazarus, the faithful disciple whom Jesus loved (11:5,36).

Martha represents the community with its real but inadequate faith: "Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died." If only Jesus had not left at his ascension, he would still be with the community and believers wouldn't die. After all, whatever Jesus asks of the Father will be given, won't it? (v. 22).

John's Jesus must correct this misunderstanding. He is indeed "the resurrection and the life" (v. 24). But resurrection does not mean the restoration of life to a corpse; it entails rather a *transformation* of life.

Moreover, the eternal life that Jesus gives his followers does not abolish death but rather transcends it. To continue to believe this firmly is the challenge posed to the survivors by each believer's death.

Through Martha, Jesus addresses believers of all times: "Do you believe this?" Her perfect answer ought to echo through the ages: "Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world."

Faith in the risen Jesus is not fully developed until it enables a believer to face physical death with the firm confidence that the present possession of eternal life is not simply a pledge of resurrection on the last day but is rather a present and continuing participation in the life of the ever-living Jesus now, at this moment. Those who believe in Jesus never truly die.

What scientifically minded Western believers must recognize in the story of Lazarus is that Martha pronounces her confession of faith as a response to Jesus, who reveals himself as the resurrection and the life. Her faith does not depend upon or flow from seeing her brother raised from the dead. Proof begets knowledge; faith does not rest on proof.

**March 9, 2008**  
**The Fifth Sunday in Lent**

We want to have life all buttoned down and figured out so there will be no surprises. We want to know that when the Great Call comes for us we will be safe. We want all darkness and uncertainty removed from our lives. . . O God, lead our spirits to find the courage to say 'All will be well because we are yours.' Lead our spirits to know that whether we wake or sleep, living or dying, we are yours into the ages of all ages. Amen.

--a portion of a prayer by Richard J. Einerson, from his book *Prayers of the People* (2006)

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***The Reverend Dr. James E. Swanson***

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