



March 6, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Laments From the Depths

Rev. Dr. Rich Christensen

What is the most helpful thing someone has said or done for you when you were facing a time of deep grief and mourning? Where do you find hope when you are grieving?

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The Rev. Harry G. Royer, Pastor Emeritus

The Rev. Dr.Carolyn Call, Covenanted Minister of Mission

Mr. Michael Slechta, Director of Music and SOT Choir Director

Dr. Robert T. Adams, Interim Organist

Mrs. Carmen Richards, Pianist

Mrs. Carol Kratz, Administrative Assistant

This week we turn our attention to the big laments that are a part of every believer's life. These are the times and situations in which we find our world turning upside down. Such times are disorienting and filled with deep grief. Some worry that our grief is too great for God or that it is inappropriate to share what is really on our hearts, especially when what is on our hearts is confusion and even rage. It is here that the scriptures can give voice to the deep stirrings of our hearts. Consider Psalm 88, a psalm of rage, lament, grief and sorrow from beginning to end. It is raw. It is real. It ends in dust and shadows and loneliness. And this psalm made it into the Bible! This suggests that our big moments of grief and sadness are also held in God's loving hands. No grief, no sorrow is too great for the God who so loves this world.

Why no alleluias or hymns of praise during Lent? You may have noticed that the hymn of praise following the assurance of forgiveness is missing from our worship. We join other churches in omitting alleluias, glorias, and other hymns of praise as we turn again to our Lenten journey of exile and repentance. We long for the eschatological New Jerusalem "...the Jerusalem above; she is free, and she is our mother" (Galatians 4:26). We walk in darkness awaiting the city of God where... "there will be no more night; the servants of God need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever" (Revelation 22:5). Until then, we travel with our Lord Jesus into the desert to face the devil, we join him in his triumphant procession into Jerusalem, we pray with him in the garden of Gethsemane, and we follow him to the painful cross and to the cold dark tomb. We trust that our journey with Christ does not end there. On Easter we once again join the praises of the choirs of heaven: "The Lord is risen; the Kingdom has come; our joy is complete; and, in concert with the angels and saints, we greet the risen Lord with shouts of 'Alleluia!'"

(http://catholicism.about.com/od/worship/f/No_Alleluia.htm).

Welcome all visitors! We welcome all who worship with us. May the joy of Christ's presence and the power of the Holy Spirit fill you with peace and hope! We are honored by your presence and trust that you will join us in the praise and worship of God.

PRELUDE

Near the Cross

W. Doane/arr. D. Hustad

Christine Oetama, Organ

(Please use the prelude as a quiet time to begin worship)

PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

OPENING HYMN

Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing

#47

CALL TO WORSHIP

AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM AND LENTEN VERSICLES

The love of God poured into our hearts, the saving grace of Jesus Christ, and the abundant life of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

The prophet Joel calls us to return to the Lord with all our hearts.

Lord, use this holy season of Lent to reorient our lives toward you.

As we raise our voices in lament,

Comfort us and give us cause for hope.

Bless our worship, our work, and our play.

Guide us with your Spirit, that we may follow where you lead in confidence and trust.

CONFESSION OF SIN

CALL TO CONFESSION

In Jesus Christ, God came among us to save us from sin and death. In walking to the cross, Christ freed us from the bondage of guilt and judgment. We come before God now, seeking grace freely given to us.

(SEATED OR KNEELING)

SILENT PRAYER OF CONFESSION

LITANY PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy immortal,
have mercy on us.

For self-centered living, and for failing to walk with humility and gentleness:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For longing to have what is not ours, and for hearts that are not at rest with ourselves:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For misuse of human relationships, for unwillingness to see the image of God in others:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For jealousies that divide families and nations, and for rivalries that create strife and warfare:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For reluctance in sharing the gifts of God, and for carelessness with the fruits of creation:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For hurtful words that condemn, and for angry deeds that harm:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

For idleness in witnessing to Jesus Christ, and for squandering the gifts of love and grace:

Holy God, holy and mighty, holy and immortal, have mercy on us.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON AND CHORAL AMEN

In the Cross, we see God's amazing love for us. We are God's children living in a confused and divided world. In abundant grace, God answers our doubt, heals our pain, and forgives our sin. I announce, therefore, to you who do truly repent of your sins and believe in Jesus Christ that your sins are forgiven through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.** *(sung)*

(PLEASE BE SEATED)

COLLECT

Let us pray together.

God of mercy, sometimes our grief feels too heavy to bear. In those moments, remind us of your presence. Let us receive the good news that nothing in this world has the power or strength to come between us and the love of Christ. Give us courage to offer our lament to you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOLY SCRIPTURES

THE PSALTER

Psalm 88

O Lord, God of my salvation, at night, when I cry out before you, let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry.

For my soul is full of troubles, and my life draws near to Sheol. I am counted among those who go down to the Pit;

I am like those who have no help, like those forsaken among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave, like those whom you remember no more, for they are cut off from your hand.

You have put me in the depths of the Pit, in the regions dark and deep.

Your wrath lies heavy upon me, and you overwhelm me with all your waves.

You have caused my companions to shun me; you have made me a thing of horror to them.

I am shut in so that I cannot escape; my eye grows dim through sorrow.

Every day I call on you, O Lord; I spread out my hands to you.

Do you work wonders for the dead? Do the shades rise up to praise you?

Is your steadfast love declared in the grave or your faithfulness in Abaddon?

Are your wonders known in the darkness or your saving help in the land of forgetfulness?

But I, O Lord, cry out to you; in the morning my prayer comes before you.

O Lord, why do you cast me off? Why do you hide your face from me?

Wretched and close to death from my youth up, I suffer your terrors; I am desperate.

Your wrath has swept over me; your dread assaults destroy me.

They surround me like a flood all day long; from all sides they close in on me.

You have caused friend and neighbor to shun me; my companions are in darkness.

THE GOSPEL LESSON

Luke 18:31-34

Glory be to You, O Lord.

#498

Then he took the twelve aside and said to them, "Look, we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written about the Son of Man by the prophets

will be accomplished. For he will be handed over to the gentiles, and he will be mocked and insulted and spat upon. After they have flogged him, they will kill him, and on the third day he will rise again.” But they understood nothing about all these things; in fact, what he said was hidden from them, and they did not grasp what was said.

THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD

Praise be to You, O Christ.

#498

SERMON

"No Way Out?"

Rev. Dr. Rich Christensen

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall 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.

HYMN

Ah, Dearest Jesus

#147

THE VERSICLE AND RESPONSE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

In Christ Jesus we meet the God who knows our weakness and bears the wounds of the world. Therefore, let us be bold as we pray, trusting that God draws near to those in any kind of need.

(SEATED OR KNEELING)

THE EVENING PRAYER

Create in us a clean heart, O God.

And renew a right spirit within us.

Cast us not away from your presence.

And do not take your Holy Spirit from us.

For the peace from on high and for our salvation, let us pray,
O God, hear our prayer.

For the welfare of all churches, and for those who lead us in faith,
O God, hear our prayer.

For our nation and our community, and for those who preside in public offices,
O God, hear our prayer.

For all who hunger, are sick, and in pain,
O God, hear our prayer.

For a peaceful evening and safety this night,
O God, hear our prayer.

Now in a time of silence, let us offer prayers for our loved ones who are in need of God's healing love.

THE SILENT PRAYER

Let us pray together.

Loving God, receive these prayers and those that remain unspoken, and in return grant us your peace, all for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(PLEASE BE SEATED)

PEOPLE'S OFFERING

CALL TO OFFERING

OFFERTORY

Larghetto (from Concerto No. 12)

G. F. Handel/arr. P. Hamill

Christine Oetama, Organ

(PLEASE STAND IF YOU ARE ABLE)

OFFERING RESPONSE

We Give Thee But Thine Own

#506

THE PRAYER OF OUR LORD

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

CLOSE OF WORSHIP

Lord of All Hopefulness

HYMN

1 Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy,
2 Lord of all ea - ger - ness, Lord of all faith,
3 Lord of all kind - li - ness, Lord of all grace,
4 Lord of all gen - tle - ness, Lord of all calm,

whose trust, ev - er child - like no cares could de - stroy,
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
your hands swift to wel - come, your arms to em - brace,
whose voice is con - tent - ment, whose pres - ence is balm,

be there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray, your
be there at our la - bors, and give us, we pray, your
be there at our hom - ing, and give us, we pray, your
be there at our sleep - ing, and give us, we pray, your

bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.
strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.
love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.
peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

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(PLEASE BE SEATED)

MUSICAL MEDITATION

BENEDICTION

POSTLUDE

Lamb of God, Pure and Holy
Christine Oetama, Organ

J. Pachelbel

CATCH THE VISION & SHARE THE JOY

Ministering This Evening

Liturgist: Rev. Dr. Christopher Rankin

Preacher: Rev. Dr. Rich Christensen

Building Trustee: John Shelsky

Ushers/Greeters: Charlene Cristy, Kathy McCarty

We welcome the Rev. Dr. Richard Christensen, a member of Trinity Church, as our guest preacher. Dr. Christensen is a graduate of Lancaster Theological Seminary and was ordained on June 7, 1970. He has participated in the life of Trinity Church as a lector, an adult Sunday School teacher, and the Children & Eucharist Task Force. Dr. Christensen is also involved with the Mercersburg Society. He has served the following ministries:

- 1998-12 Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion; Director of the Mission House Center for Theology, Lakeland College
- 1992-98 Professor of Church History, Phillips Theological Seminary
- 1988-92 Ph.D. in Church History, Union Theological Seminary (VA)
- 1983-88 Pastor, Salem U.C.C., Campbelltown
- 1980-83 Chaplain & Teacher of Religious Ed., Maun Secondary School, Botswana
- 1974-80 Pastor, St. Peter's U.C.C., State College
- 1972-74 Pastor, Congregational U.C.C., Amherst, OH
- 1971-72 Assistant Pastor, Faith U.C.C., State College
- 1970-71 Assistant to Director of Development, Lancaster Theological Seminary
- 1970 Summer Pastor, First Congregational U.C.C., Brookfield, VT

Tonight we welcome Christine Oetama as our guest organist. Christine recently retired as our organist after serving here from 2017-2023.

DEVOTIONALS: The January-March edition of These Days are available on the table across from the church office or on the lower level by the portico entrance. **Lenten devotionals are available on the table across from the church office.**

HOLY LAMENT: MIDWEEK LENTEN SERVICES

This series explores various kinds of lament found in scripture. Each week we will consider what it means to sit with our grief rather than try to push it aside. We will discover that many faithful believers have wrestled with grief, sorrow, and questions for God about why the innocent suffer. This series understands lament as one of the more faithful things we can do. When we approach God with honesty and humility, and we admit that some things are too big for our hearts to bear, we will find there not a disapproving God but one who weeps with us. We will find a God who can take our grief and disappointment and transform them into holy joy and renewed hope. We will learn, ultimately, that Jesus' death on the cross---the place to which the season of Lent leads us---is the reason we never mourn as those without hope.

Join us each Wednesday during Lent at 7 p.m. as some of our clergy members or religious teachers in our midst preach. Below is the list of our themes and preachers:

March 13: Individual Lament—Rev. Bob Bistline preaching

March 20: Communal Lament—Rev. Ken Trauger preaching



March 27: Holy Wednesday Worship with Order of Healing at 7 p.m.—Pastor Emeritus Harry Royer preaching.

March 28: Maundy Thursday Services at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.—Pastor Rankin preaching

LENTEN SERVICE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED: We are in need of ushers and greeters for our Wednesday Lenten services. If you are able to help, please contact Pastor Chris or Carol Kratz.



MEN OF TRINITY (M.O.T.) BREAKFAST: The men will be meeting in March 9 at 8:00 AM at Family Fare Restaurant. The sign-up sheet is on the table across from the church office. This is open to all men of the church!

EXPLORING THE SKY ABOVE TRINITY U.C.C. WITH SUE BOWMAN

(Sue is a member of Trinity and a retired Astronomy teacher)

Calling all stargazers and those interested in enjoying a celestial evening out! Bring your telescopes and binoculars and join in the fun as the Trinity Preschool families and the members of Trinity explore **The Sky Above Trinity U.C.C.** This observation session will train the telescope at Jupiter and its moons, Earth's moon as well as deep sky clusters and nebulae. The Trinity Youth will be assisting with the setup and use of the equipment and may be found to be quite conversant on matters astronomical! Great chance to use the star chart provided or look ahead with one of these apps: *Star Chart*, *NASA app*, *Night Sky*, *Sky View Free*, *Star Walk2*, *Sky Safari*. You may wish to bring along lawn chairs. Until then, keep looking up!



Look for the sign-up sheet across from the church office

March 14th

6-7 pm Pizza

7 pm Brief Intro to the observation session

7:15 pm Observation begins

OUR GIFTS TO OTHERS MISSION OFFERING will be received this Sunday! You can find envelopes in the hallway cross from the church office!

LENTEN DENIAL ENVELOPES: This year our Lenten Denial Offering is being donated to the international disaster relief charity call ShelterBox. ShelterBox was established in 2000, and partners with Rotary International, providing emergency shelter and other aid items to families around the world who have lost their homes to disaster and conflict. ShelterBox is funded by public donations. A ShelterBox provides more than just a tent but also includes a kitchen set, blankets, ground mats, hats, gloves, scarves, mosquito net, water filtration system, water carriers, solar light box, children’s school kit, hygiene supplies and wash basin. It also has a tool kit with a hammer, saw, wire cutters, and rope. The box weighs approximately 110 lbs. and is approximately 2’3” x1.4” x 11” in size. The price of a ShelterBox is \$1000. As of April 2021, ShelterBox has provided support to two million people since its start in 2000.

Good Friday Breakfast at YMCA of the Roses

Join us for community gathering that brings people of faith together to mark this important holy day with an inspirational message and ecumenical worship service in keeping with the Christian traditions of the YMCA.

When: Friday, March 29, 2024 @ 7:30 am (Doors open at 7 am)

Where: Farm and Home Center, 1383 Arcadia Road, Lancaster, PA

Details: The speaker will be Rev. Jennifer Mattson from Saint Thomas Episcopal Church in Lancaster, PA, along with live music and a buffet-style breakfast. Tickets are \$20 per person.

Call the church office to reserve your ticket.