



WINTER GRACE

A Service of Comfort and Hope

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

1390 North State Street
Jackson, Mississippi

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WINTER GRACE

A Service of Comfort and Hope

January 8, 2023

6:00 p.m.

The Lord is good,
a stronghold in the day of trouble;
he knows those who take refuge in him.

Nahum 1:7

The Prelude — “Beneath the Cross of Jesus”.....Maker/Wymond
Bonnie Brown, Violin; Nancy Bateman, Cello; William Wymond, Organ

THE GATHERING

† The Call to Worship — Psalm 13

Minister: How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
How long must I take counsel in my soul
and have sorrow in my heart all the day?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

All: Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;
light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,
lest my enemy say, “I have prevailed over him,”
lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

Minister: But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

All: I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Minister: Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

People: And also with you.

The Hymn No. 449 — “We Rest on Thee”

The Invocation

God of mercy, hear our prayer for ourselves, and for our families and friends who live with the struggles of illness and the pain of loss. We ask for strength for today, courage for tomorrow, and peace for the past. We ask these things in the name of Jesus, who shares our life in joy and sorrow, death and new birth, despair and promise. Amen.

The Doxology

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever will be.
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided -
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF PARDON

The Call to Confession (minister only)

Our Heavenly Father, we come to You this day to confess our weaknesses regarding our relationship with You; places where our faith is under sharp attack: You know that we come to You with heavy hearts that we find hard to unburden. It is often in this time of year, when the brilliance of Christmas lights has faded and the darkness of long nights sets in, that we acutely feel our losses, our fears, our doubts and our struggles. We may be confused, sad, lonely, and feeling our losses without remembering that You are always there to support us. Father, forgive any bitterness or blame-shifting. Sometimes we feel cut off from You because we allow our many hurts to engulf us. We lack trust in You. Open us to the understanding that You are the source of all love, and we need not feel so alone in our grief. Grant us wisdom to know that You—most of all—can be trusted, and that You are with us, especially when we are at our absolute worst.

The Corporate Prayer of Confession

All: My soul also is greatly troubled.
I am weary with my moaning;
every night I flood my bed with tears;
I drench my couch with my weeping.
My eye wastes away because of my grief;
it grows weak because of all my foes.
Depart from me, all you workers of evil,
for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping.
The Lord has heard my plea; the Lord accepts my prayer.
Psalm 6:6-9

Minister: Lord Jesus, You heal the sick; have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Minister: Lord Jesus, You forgive sinners; have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Minister: Lord Jesus, You give Yourself to heal us, rescue us, and bring us strength; have mercy.

People: Lord, have mercy.

The Assurance of Pardon — Isaiah 53:3-5

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and by his wounds we are healed.

† **The Offertory— “Is He Worthy”**.....Peterson/Shive
Trey and Kim Porter, Soloists

A Story of Rescue.....Serhiy Kolomiiets

**THE PRAYERS OF
SUPPLICATION AND INTERCESSION**

The Corporate Prayer for Healing (in unison)

Father, mend us and make us better than we could ever be without You. Take those things that are broken in our lives and visit us with Your healing. And help us to use the strength we receive in Your service, to Your glory!

The Meditation

- Minister: God the Father, Your will for Your people is life and salvation;
- Response: We praise You and thank You, O Lord.**
- Minister: God the Son, You came that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly;
- Response: We praise You and thank You, O Lord.**
- Minister: God the Holy Spirit, You make our bodies the temple of Your presence;
- Response: We praise You and thank You, O Lord.**
- Minister: Holy Trinity, one God, in You we live and move and have our being;
- Response: We praise You and thank You, O Lord.**
- Minister: Lord, grant Your healing grace to all who are sick, injured, or disabled, that they may be made whole;
- Response: Hear us, O Lord of life.**
- Minister: Grant to all who seek Your guidance, and to all who are lonely, anxious, or despondent, knowledge of Your will and an awareness of Your presence;
- Response: Hear us, O Lord of life.**
- Minister: Mend broken relationships, and restore those in emotional distress to soundness of mind and serenity of spirit;
- Response: Hear us, O Lord of life.**
- Minister: Bless physicians, nurses, and all others who minister to the suffering, grant them wisdom and skill, sympathy and patience;

Response: Hear us, O Lord of life.

Minister: Grant to the dying peace and a holy death, and uphold by the grace and consolation of Your Holy Spirit those who are bereaved;

Response: Hear us, O Lord of life.

Minister: Restore to wholeness whatever is broken by human sin—in our lives, in our relationships, in our nation, and in the world;

Response: Hear us, O Lord of life.

Minister: You are the Lord who does wonders; with You all things are possible:

Response: You have declared Your power among the peoples.

Minister: With You, O Lord, is the well of life:

Response: And in Your light we see light.

Minister: Hear us, O Lord of life:

Response: Heal us, and make us whole.

Silent Prayer for Healing

A Liturgy for Embracing both Joy and Sorrow

Minister: Do not be distant, O Lord, lest I find this burden of loss too heavy, and shrink from the necessary experience of my grief.

Response: Do not be distant, O Lord, lest I become so mired in yesterday's hurts, that I miss entirely the living gifts this day might hold.

Minister: Let me neither ignore my pain, pretending all is okay when it isn't, nor coddle and magnify my pain, so that I dull my capacity to experience all that remains good in this life.

Response: For joy that denies sorrow is neither hard-won, nor true, nor eternal. It is not real joy at all. And sorrow that refuses to make space for the return of joy and hope, in the end becomes nothing more than a temple for the worship of my own woundedness.

Minister: So give me strength, O God, to feel this grief deeply, never to hide my heart from it. And give me also hope enough to remain open to surprising encounters with joy, as one on a woodland path might stumble suddenly into dapplings of golden light.

Response: Amidst the pain that lades these days, give me courage, O Lord; courage to live them fully, to love and to allow myself to be loved, to remember, grieve, and honor what was, to live with thanksgiving in what is, and to invest in the hope of what will be.

Minister: Be at work gilding these long heartbreaks with the advent of new joys, good friendships, true fellowships, unexpected delights. Remind me again and again of your goodness, your presence, your promises.

Response: For this is who we are: a people of The Promise— a people shaped in the image of the God whose very being generates all joy in the universe, yet who also weeps and grieves its brokenness.

Minister: So we, your children, are also at liberty to lament our losses, even as we simultaneously rejoice in the hope of their coming restoration.

Response: **Let me learn now, O Lord, to do this as naturally as the inhale and exhale of a single breath:**

Minister: To breathe out sorrow, to breathe in joy.

Response: **To breathe out lament, to breathe in hope.**

Minister: To breathe out pain, to breathe in comfort.

Response: **To breathe out sorrow, to breathe in joy.**

Minister: In one hand I grasp the burden of my grief, while with the other I reach for the hope of grief's redemption.

Response: **And here, between the tension of the two, between what was and what will be, in the very is of now, let my heart be surprised by, shaped by, warmed by, remade by, the same joy that forever wells within and radiates from your heart, O God. Amen.**

From Every Moment Holy, Vol 2: Death, Grief, & Hope
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The Hymn No. 472 — “Come Ye Sinners, Poor and Wretched”

THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

The Scripture Reading — Various Proverbs

The Sermon — Keep Your Heart Mr. Felker

The Declaration of Future Hope

Minister: Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.” He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” (Revelation 21:1-5)

Response: **Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, Yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)**

The Closing Prayer

Lord, we pray for all who have been in attendance this night, that they all may have the inward anointing of the Holy Spirit. And for all those who have prayed—those who seek your mercy—those who have lifted their hearts to you in thanksgiving and in longing—for all present here, Father, we give thanks and ask that you continue with them day by day. Indeed, O Lord, keep us all from all evil, preserve us in all goodness. Bless us so that we may bless others in your most Holy Name—we ask it in the name of Christ Jesus—who taught us to pray together as one family, saying ...

The Lord's Prayer (in unison)

Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in 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, for ever. Amen.

The Blessing of Peace — “Shalom”.....Dan Forrest
Ryan and Erin Miller, Soloists

†The Benediction

The Postlude — “Aria in F”.....G. F. Handel

And when these things begin to come to pass,
then look up, and lift up your heads;
for your redemption is drawing near.

Luke 21:28

† Congregation Standing

THE BLESSING OF PRAYER

Immediately Following the Worship Service

An Invitation

It would be an honor and privilege to pray with you personally after the service. If you so desire, you may come the front of the sanctuary and one of our ministers would be delighted to meet with you and pray with you.

James 5:13-16

“Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”



ADVENT PRAYER OF LAMENT

Lord, we look with hope for the day
when there is no more grief,
no more sorrow,
no more sin,
no more death.
When you return, there will be no sickness,
no more weakness,
no more anxiety,
no more failing strength,
but we will be made complete.
We will see you,
and our souls will overflow with joy, worship, and blessings.

Here, we see things darkly,
our hopes are obscured by the suffering that surrounds us
and by the sinful longings of our own hearts.
We prefer comfort to holiness
and our hopes are set on temporary material things,
rather than eternal promises.

Give us a hunger for heaven
by opening our eyes to how far we are from home.
Show us how unsatisfying this world is,
so we can find satisfaction in the Gospel
and cling to Christ alone. Amen.

Mike Cosper