

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

Sunday, March 19, 2023

9:30 am

PRELUDE

“Movement in A-flat”

Elisabeth Stirling

+ Gathering +

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

RINGING OF THE BELL

CONFESSION

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Gracious God, Have mercy on us.

We confess that we have turned from you and from neighbors claimed and loved by you.

We have given ourselves to the powers of sin at work in division, bickering, bullying, isolation, hatred, fear, and oppression.

We have sinned against you and your people in judgmental thoughts, careless words, and fearful deeds; by what we have said and done, and by what we have left unsaid and undone.

We have left members of our human family isolated and alone.

We have not confronted hatred and violence.

We have left our own privilege, sexism, and heteronormativity unexamined.

We have failed to notice and challenge gender oppression, racism, ageism, classism, ableism, sizeism, binary thinking, and all the other ways we oppress.

We have turned away from hunger and poverty, turned our backs on the suffering of most of our world.

We have loved our own comfort more than we have loved others.

We have put the norms of our own sexual orientation, gender, race, and class before our love for you and our neighbors.

Turn us again toward you, bringing us into full relationship through your Spirit with all our siblings. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us to walk in the ways of the table-turner, the

oppression-healer, and the community-builder. Let your Holy Spirit move in us and guide us into beloved community.

Text by The Rev. Jay Wilson, adapted by The Rev. Allison Bengfort.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

As a minister of Christ, I proclaim that God loves you and forgives all your sins. God created you, knows you intimately, and calls you “good.”

This absolution is for you, and it is also for the sake of the world. We live as forgiven children of God within cycles of oppression. Our forgiveness creates the opportunity to renounce, resist, and undermine the unjust systems we live within.

Go forth as created, known, and loved people, forgiven and freed to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives, and to let the oppressed go free. **Amen.**

Text from Reconciling Works, adapted by The Rev. Allison Bengfort.

GATHERING HYMN

Through the Night of Doubt and Sorrow (ELW 327)



1 Through the night of doubt and sor - row, on - ward
 2 One the light of God's own pres - ence on the
 3 One the strain that lips of thou - sands lift as
 4 On - ward, there - fore, sis - ters, broth - ers; on - ward,



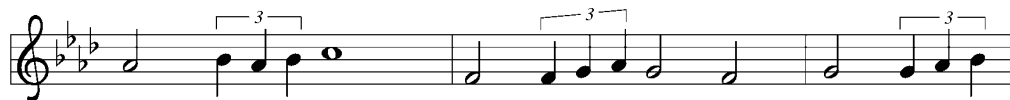
goes the pil - grim band, sing - ing songs of ex - pec -
 ran - somed peo - ple shed, chas - ing far the gloom and
 from the heart of one; one the con - flict, one the
 with the cross our aid. Bear its shame, and fight its



ta - tion, march - ing to the prom - ised land. Clear be -
 ter - ror, bright - 'ning all the path we tread. One the
 per - il, one the march in God be - gun. One the
 bat - tle till we rest be - neath its shade. Soon shall



fore us through the dark - ness gleams and burns the
 ob - ject of our jour - ney, one the faith which
 glad - ness of re - joic - ing on the far e -
 come the great a - wak - 'ning; soon the rend - ing



guid - ing light; pil - grim clasps the hand of
 nev - er tires, one the ear - nest look - ing
 ter - nal shore, where the one al - might - y
 of the tomb! Then the scat - t'ring of all



pil - grim step - ping fear - less through the night.
 for - ward, one the hope our God in - spires.
 Fa - ther reigns in love for - ev - er - more.
 shad - ows, and the end of toil and gloom.

Text: Bernhard S. Ingemann, 1789–1862; tr. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924, alt.
 Music: EBENEZER, Thomas J. Williams, 1869–1944

GREETING


The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
 and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

Cantor sings: ...let us pray to the Lord.

Congregation: 

Lord, have mer - cy.

Last time: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Congregation: 

A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together.

God of holy anticipation, you have promised that you would return at a time unknown to us. Make us ready, so that when you return, we might be welcomed into your kingdom with open arms. We pray these things in the name of Jesus Crist, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

The congregation may be seated.

+ Word +

REFLECTIVE SONG

When Our Song Says Peace, verse 1



1 When our song says peace and the world says war, we will
 2 When our song says free and the world says bound, we will
 3 When our song says home and the world says lost, we will



sing de-spite the world. We will trust the song, for we sing of God,
 sing de-spite the world. We will trust the song, for we sing of God,
 sing de-spite the world. We will trust the song, for we sing of God,



who breaks the spear and sword and stills the storm of war.
 who o - pens pris - on doors and sets the cap - tives free.
 who brings us home at last, and gives a song to all.

READING

Psalm 43

A reading from the Psalms.

- ¹Give judgment for me, O God,
and defend my cause against an ungodly people;
deliver me from the deceitful and the wicked.
- ²For you are the God of my strength; why have you rejected me,
and why do I wander in such gloom while the enemy oppresses me?
- ³Send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me,
and bring me to your holy hill and to your sanctuary;
- ⁴that I may go to the altar of God, to the God of my joy and gladness;
and on the harp I will give thanks to you, O God my God.
- ⁵Why are you so full of heaviness, O my soul,
and why are you so disquieted within me?
Put your trust in God,
for I will yet give thanks to the one who is my help and my God.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

REFLECTIVE SONG

When Our Song Says Peace, verse 2 (see page 4)

GOSPEL

Matthew 25:1-13

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹ “Then again, the kingdom of heaven could be likened to ten attendants who took their lamps and went to meet the bridal party. ² Five of them were wise; five were foolish. ³ When the foolish ones took their lamps, they didn’t take any oil with them, ⁴ but the wise ones took enough oil to keep their lamps burning. ⁵ The bridal party was delayed, so they all fell asleep.

⁶ “At midnight there was a cry: ‘Here comes the bridal party! Let’s go out to meet them!’ ⁷ Then all the attendants rose and trimmed their lamps. ⁸ The foolish ones said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ ⁹ But the wise replied, ‘Perhaps there won’t be enough for us; run to the dealers and get some more for yourselves.’ ¹⁰ “While the foolish ones went to buy more oil, the bridal party arrived; and those who were ready went to the marriage feast with them, and the door was shut. ¹¹ When the foolish attendants returned, they pleaded to be let in. ¹² The doorkeeper replied, ‘The truth is, I don’t know you.’ ¹³ “So stay awake, for you don’t know the day or the hour.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

REFLECTIVE SONG

When Our Song Says Peace, verse 3 (see page 4)

SERMON

Pastor Allison Bengfort

HYMN OF THE DAY

Keep Your Lamps Trimmed and Burning



1 Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your
 2 Dark - er mid - night lies be - fore us, dark - er
 3 Lo, the morn - ing soon is break - ing, lo, the
 4 Keep your lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your



lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your lamps
 mid - night lies be - fore us, dark - er mid - night
 morn - ing soon is break - ing, lo, the morn - ing
 lamps trimmed and burn - ing, keep your lamps



trimmed and burn - ing, for this work's al - most done.
 lies be - fore us, for this work's al - most done.
 soon is break - ing, for this work's al - most done.
 trimmed and burn - ing, for this work's al - most done.



Refrain
 Chil-dren, don't grow wea - ry; chil-dren, don't grow wea - ry;



chil-dren, don't grow wea - ry, for this work's al-most done.

Text: African American spiritual

Music: KEEP YOUR LAMPS, African American spiritual

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

I invite you to assume a posture of prayer. You may sit, stand, or kneel; fold your hands or turn your hands up toward the sky; close your eyes or lift your eyes upward.

Eternal God, you seal us by the Holy Spirit and mark us with the cross of Christ forever in baptism. Inspire us by your love as together we strive for justice and peace in all the earth.

Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Creating God, by your word you have made all things, and you hate nothing you have made.

Teach us to perceive the beauty of the breadth of your creation, from the grandest mountain range to the smallest springtime bud. Merciful God,

receive our prayer.

Powerful God, you anoint kings and establish rulers. Guide the work of heads of state and elected officials. Encourage them to lead with justice and to remove barriers that impede the well-being of all. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Shepherding God, you lead us beside still waters and restore our souls. Keep watch over those who weep; tend all who are sick and comfort those who grieve. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

God our host, you fill us at your table with more than we could ever ask. Feed us with hunger for justice. Equip the feeding ministries of our community. Nourish us so we can nourish our neighbors. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

People of God, for what else shall we pray this day? Your prayers are invited now, either silently or aloud. *(Pause for prayers.)*

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

or Lord, we praise you,
Thanks be to God.

God of history, with thanksgiving we remember our ancestors in faith who cared for your people. We praise you for the ways they formed the faith of others and continue to inspire us. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your steadfast love and your promise to renew your whole creation; through Jesus Christ our Savior.
Amen.

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

You are invited to share a sign of peace with one another (wave, handshake, hug, etc.), honoring the personal boundaries of all. Those online may unmute and verbally share the peace.

+ Meal +

INVITATION TO OFFERING

The congregation may be seated.

Our ancestors in faith gathered together long ago to remember, to be restored, to be renewed. They shared their story, prayed together, and made an offering to God as they prepared to set out on the long journey to freedom in the Promised Land. Today we gather to remember and to pray together, to be restored and renewed, and we bring our own offerings so the ministry of this church will continue to participate in the saving works of God. Let us gather our gifts together and offer them to God in gratitude and praise.

OFFERTORY

We give thanks for your ongoing support of the ministry of St. John's! Gifts may be placed in the offering plate, made in the Vanco Mobile app, or given online by scanning the QR code. Thank you for your generosity!



OFFERTORY SOLO

"Du Bist die Ruh"

Fanny Hensel

OFFERTORY VERSE

When Jesus Set His Table

When Je - sus set His ta - ble, no one was turned a - way. That ta - ble was a
No race, no creed, no na - tion, no love of heart and vow, No gen - der is re -
pro-mise of bles-sing and of grace. So set the ta - ble ful - ly in - vite the whole world in. If
ject - ed. The ta - ble's wait - ing now.
13
we would share love's wel - come then here's where we be - gin!

Music and text: Amanda Udis-Kessler

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray together.

**God of good gifts, receive these and all our offerings as we present them in faithful service for the sake of your gospel. Prepare our hearts to receive you in this meal as you pour out your very presence through Christ Jesus, the wellspring of eternal life.
Amen.**

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

LORD'S PRAYER

**God our Mother, God our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kin-dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kin-dom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

INVITATION

COMMUNION

All are welcome to commune at Christ's table without exception! If you are online, serve yourself or those worshipping with you by saying, "The body of Christ, given for you," and, "The blood of Christ, shed for you." If you are communing in person, please proceed down the center aisle at the direction of an usher. You may receive bread or request a gluten-free wafer. A glass of wine (dark colored) will be placed on the table for you, or you may request grape juice (light colored).

After drinking, please place your empty glass in the basket before returning to your seat via the side aisle. If you would prefer to receive only a blessing, you may cross your arms across your chest to indicate this preference. If you would like to receive communion in your seat, please inform an usher, and the sacrament will be brought to you.

COMMUNION VERSE

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re - new a right

spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a - way from your

pres - ence, and take not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -

store un - to me the joy of your sal - va - tion,

and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

COMMUNION HYMN

Jesus, You Have Truly Called Us

Unison F Dm B \flat B \flat /C

1 Je - sus, you have tru - ly called us. Still, to - day, we hear your
 2 Je - sus, save us from poor choic - es. Ha-tred, run - ning like a
 3 Je - sus, save us from our weak - ness, from de - ceit and from de -

voice. Lead us on - ward, lead us up - ward, till all peo - ple can re -
 thread through the fab - ric of our his - t'ry, mars our faith and leaves us
 spair. Move us on to new cre - a - tion in a world that's free and

F F F/E Dm Dm/C B \flat B \flat /C

joyce.
 dead. Meet us in our time of tri - al, fill us with your Spir - it's
 fair.

F Refrain Am Am/C Dm Dm/C B \flat

B \flat /C C Dm Am/C B \flat F/A Gm7 B \flat /C F

power. As we stand be - fore op - pres - sion, give us cour - age for this hour.

WORDS: Daniel Charles Damon

BEACH SPRING

MUSIC: Attr. B. F. White, *The Sacred Harp*, 1844; arr. Daniel Charles Damon

8.7.8.7.Ref.

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PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together.

**Holy One-in-Three, through your death,
 we are fed with the bread of life.**

**Let us follow your way to the cross,
 to be for others a sign of your compassion and life.**

As you have fed us, let us go out to be part of feeding the world.

Amen.

+ Sending +

BENEDICTION

Creator, source of love,
Christ, the resurrection and the life,
Holy Spirit, midwife of rebirth,
✠ bless you in this Lenten journey.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Lord, Dismiss Us with Your Blessing (ELW 545)



1 Lord, dis - miss us with your bless-ing, fill our hearts with joy and peace;
2 Thanks we give and ad - o - ra - tion for your gos - pel's joy - ful sound.
3 Sav - ior, when your love shall call us from our strug - gling pil - grim way,



let us each, your love pos - sess-ing, tri - umph in re - deem-ing grace.
May the fruits of your sal - va - tion in our hearts and lives a - bound.
let no fear of death ap - pall us, glad your sum - mons to o - bey.



Oh, re - fresh us; oh, re - fresh us, trav - 'ling through this wil - der - ness.
Ev - er faith - ful, ev - er faith - ful to your truth may we be found.
May we ev - er, may we ev - er reign with you in end - less day.

Text: attr. John Fawcett, 1740–1817, sts. 1–2, alt.; Godfrey Thring, 1823–1903, st. 3, alt.
Music: SICILIAN MARINERS, Sicilian, 18th cent.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Jesus meets you on the way.
Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

“O Traurigkeit, O Herzeleid”

Ethel Smyth

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- Scripture readings from The Inclusive Bible and the NRSV.

SERVING TODAY

<i>Preaching & Presiding Minister:</i>	The Rev. Allison Bengfort
<i>Assisting Minister:</i>	Chris Maglocchi
<i>Minister of Music:</i>	Luke Duroc-Danner
<i>Cantor:</i>	Alexandra Ioan
<i>Usher:</i>	Tom Morrison, Brandon Leinberger
<i>Children's Church:</i>	Erin & Luke Rasmussen
<i>Altar Guild:</i>	Cindi Rachowicz
<i>Livestream Camera Operator:</i>	Jason Shutters
<i>Coffee Hour Host:</i>	Jan Wendel
<i>Cover Art:</i>	"Bridesmaids Sleeping," from St. Giles' Church, Oxford, UK. Photo from <i>Art in the Christian Tradition</i> , a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TONIGHT: Game Night + Pizza

Please join us for a fun family game night this evening, from 5-8 pm in the Fellowship Hall. We'll order pizza, play board/party games, and socialize. Feel free to bring your favorite game or two to this event. Sponsored by the Youth & Family Ministry Team.

Easter Lily Orders

Lilies will be used to decorate the sanctuary on Easter Sunday. If you would like to donate a plant, please complete the form in today's bulletin and return it to the church office or place it in the offering plate today. You may also order lilies online through our website (stjohnswilmette.com/give). The deadline for ordering is tomorrow, March 20. The cost of each plant is \$15, and they may be taken by their donors following the worship service on Easter.

Nominate an Organization for EMF Consideration!

Each spring, the Extended Ministries Fund (EMF) Committee distributes approximately 5% of the EMF fund balance to organizations and causes that further the mission of our congregation. The amount to be dispersed this year is about \$12,000, and we are looking for your input on which organizations to consider. Please nominate an organization or cause that you believe furthers our congregation's new mission and vision. You can do so by filling out the online form in your eNewsletter or by completing the bulletin insert and submitting it via the offering plate or church office. You may nominate multiple orgs/causes by submitting multiple forms (ask an usher for extras). We appreciate your input as well as your prayers for the EMF Committee as we receive these submissions, reflect, and discern how to steward the EMF Fund this year.

Easter Vigil Volunteer Meeting

Are you available to help with this year's Family-Friendly Easter Vigil at 5 pm on Saturday, April 8? If so, please join us for a volunteer meeting at 7 pm this Wednesday (after Dinner Church), where we will finalize the logistics of the service and assign roles. Reach out to Pastor Allison with questions.

Sunday School Promise Creation

Over the past several weeks, St. John's Sunday School students have been exploring Bible readings involving rules and promises, and recently created their own set of promise statements to guide their actions and behaviors while at church. During class, the children investigated the 10 Commandments, learned how Micah condensed these rules into just three, and explored how the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) further distilled these down to just one guiding idea. Students also discussed how "rules" are obligations generally expected of the *other* person, while "promises" are obligations that *we ourselves* agree to do. The children set about applying the lessons by exploring the question, "If we want church to be an enjoyable place where everyone can learn, feel included, and have fun, what might that look like?" The children brainstormed a long list of actions and ideas, then worked to group them according to commonalities, finally identifying the three main themes of "participation," "Golden Rule," and "safety." From here they created the following three promise statements:

- "I promise to participate during church."
- "I promise to always treat others as I want to be treated."
- "I promise to have a safe body and be safe in my environment."

The children recorded these promises on beautifully decorated posters which they then signed to show their commitment. With this work done, the students are now beginning the hard work of applying these within different settings during church. Feel free to take a look at their promise posters and/or congratulate the children on the hard work they have done so far!

No Children's Church Next Sunday

Children's Church will be off next Sunday, March 26, for spring break. We will resume on April 2!

Wednesday Dinner Church during Lent

On each of the five Wednesdays in March, we will gather at 6 pm in the Fellowship Hall for Dinner Church. The service will begin with portions of Holden Evening Prayer accompanied by piano and violin and including song, prayer, and scripture. We will continue the service with a soup supper and conversation about topics from the book, *Queer Virtue: What LGBTQ People Know about Life and Love and How it Can Revitalize Christianity*, by The Rev. Elizabeth Edman. We will watch a 2-minute video of the author sharing about the day's theme and look at a brief excerpt from the book to spark conversation. Reading the book is not required or expected, but certainly welcome! Books are now available to be picked up at worship or in the church office during the week. A \$10 donation to offset the cost of the book is suggested, but not required. If you'd like to read along with the theme for each week, follow the schedule below:

- March 22: Adoption & Authenticity – Chapters 6 & 9
- March 29: Scandal & Hospitality – Chapters 5 & 10

Our RIC Journey: Resources Available, Questions & Comments Invited

This winter and spring, our congregation is doing the internal reflection and learning necessary to become not just welcoming, but fully affirming of the LGBTQIA+ community. This is called the Reconciling in Christ (RIC) process, which our RIC Team (Chris Maglocchi, Chad Johnson, Molly Bolash, and Luke Rasmussen) hopes will culminate in an affirmative vote at our June congregational meeting to become an RIC church. Free resources on Biblical interpretation, supporting LGBTQIA+ youth, and queer terminology can be found on the table in the gathering area. The team would love to talk with you about your questions, comments, or concerns, so please reach out to have a conversation. You may also place anonymous questions in the rainbow box in the gathering area.

CCA Presents J.S. Bach's St. Matthew Passion

Chicago Choral Artists' once again joins the Bach Cantata Vespers Chorus and the Orchestra of Grace Lutheran Church to perform J.S. Bach's St. Matthew Passion. Bach's largest vocal work, the St. Matthew Passion is monumental in scale and packed with drama as soloists, two choirs, and two orchestras bring the words of Matthew's gospel to life. Bach is a master storyteller, building tension in the narrative, and knowing when to step back and change the pace with new melodies, new meters, deeper emotions, and infinite invention. Intimate arias and familiar, reflective chorales speak to the heart of the Christian faith, that Christ died for us and for our salvation. This concert is free and unticketed. Performances are on March 25th at 6 pm and March 26th at 4 pm at Grace Lutheran Church (7300 Division St., River Forest).

NOTES ON TODAY'S COMPOSERS

Elisabeth Stirling (1819-1895) was an English organist and composer. Well-known in her day as a virtuosic performer, Stirling was a trailblazer as both a female organist who held official positions at All Saints Church, Poplar as well as St. Andrew Undershaft. She was first reviewed in 1837 where she was particularly lauded for her pedal technique and she also performed famously at the 1862 Crystal Palace International exhibition where she performed her own composition alongside music by Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, and Lefébure-Wély.

Ethel Smyth OBE (1858-1944) was an English composer and prominent member of the Women's Suffrage movement. Though Smyth was the first female composer in England to become a member of the Order of the British Empire in 1922, her compositions were not taken seriously in her time, and are now beginning to have a resurgence. Smyth studied at the Leipzig conservatory where she met Antonín Dvořák, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Johannes Brahms, Edward Grieg, and Clara Schumann. She wrote a wide range of music, but her opera, *The Wreckers*, was not given a full professional performance until 2022 - only the overture had been previously performed and read received widespread praise from critics.

Fanny Hensel, née Mendelssohn, (1805-1847) was a German pianist and composer, and the elder sister and confidante of the composer, Felix Mendelssohn. Felix himself described Fanny as the superior pianist, and she is reported to have memorized J.S. Bach's complete *Well-Tempered Clavier* by age 13. She remained a close musical advisor to Felix throughout his life, but she was not permitted to publish her own music until late in her life. Most of her approximated 500 musical compositions exist only in manuscript form or were published under her brother's name.