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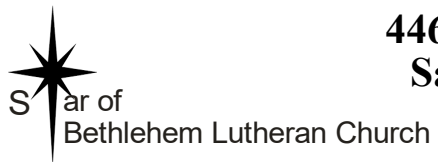
2019

“My times
are in
your
hand.”

Psalm 31:15



Star of
Bethlehem Lutheran Church



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Pastor Michael Foley**

Worship Service

Wednesday, December 4, 2019 7:00 p.m.

ADVENT Vespers, 2019

Theme of the Day: There is a time for everything. This evening is the time to reflect on the year past and the forgiveness our Lord has given us. It is also a time for looking at the year ahead and the peace God gives us here and on into eternal life.

ENTRANCE INTO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

M: O Lord, open my lips.

C: And my mouth will declare your praise.

M: Hasten, O God, to save me;

C: O Lord, come quickly to help me.

M: Solomon reminds us, "For everything there is an appointed time.

There is an appropriate time for every activity under heaven: a time to give birth,

C: and a time to die,

M: a time to plant,

C: and a time to uproot,

M: a time to kill,

C: and a time to heal,

M: a time to tear down,

C: and a time to build,

M: a time to weep

C: and a time to laugh,

M: a time to mourn,

C: and a time to dance,

M: a time to love,

C: and a time to hate,

M: a time for war

C: and a time for peace. (*Ecclesiastes 3*)

**A TIME TO MOURN:
We Confess our Sins**

M: We pray. In the name of our God, to whom all hearts are open and from whom no secrets are hidden: purify our hearts through your Holy Spirit so that we may love you as you deserve and be worthy of magnifying your holy name through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

M: I now ask you in the presence of God Almighty, who examines the heart:

Do you recognize, confess, and regret that by your sinful nature, you have insulted and offended your God and Savior in thought, word, and action for which you deserve condemnation? If this is your confession, declare so by saying: Yes.

C: Yes.

M: Do you believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and that all who believe in him receive forgiveness of sins, and therefore, do you desire to be freed from all of your sins and believe that your heavenly Father, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, has forgiven your sins and has cleansed you from all iniquity? If you believe this, declare so by saying: Yes.

C: Yes.

M: Do you have a sincere desire to obey the Holy Spirit from here on, to turn from and abandon all types of sin, to live as children of God, and to strive each day to reach holiness of heart and life? If this is your desire, answer: Yes.

C: Yes.

Silence to reflect and examine yourself.

♪ **Chief of Sinners Though I Be** (CW: 385)

**Chief of sinners though I be, Jesus shed his blood for me,
Died that I might live on high, Lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine, I am his and he is mine!**

**Oh, the height of Jesus' love, Higher than the heavn's above,
Deeper than the depths of sea, Lasting as eternity,
Love that found me—wondrous thought!
Found me when I sought him not.**

**Strengthen me, O gracious Lord, By your Spirit and your word.
When my wayward heart would stray,
Keep me in the narrow way;
Grace in time of need supply While I live and when I die.**

**A TIME TO HEAL:
We Receive God's Forgiveness**

M: Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, has had mercy on us, and by the suffering, death and resurrection of his beloved Son Jesus Christ, he has forgiven us all of our sins. In light of your confession, I as a called minister of Christ and by his authority, forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord!

**A TIME TO LAUGH:
We Sing**

Song: *to melody of CW: 89*

**♪ My soul now magnifies the Lord;
My spirit shall in God rejoice.
My humble state he did regard,
Exalting me by gracious choice.**

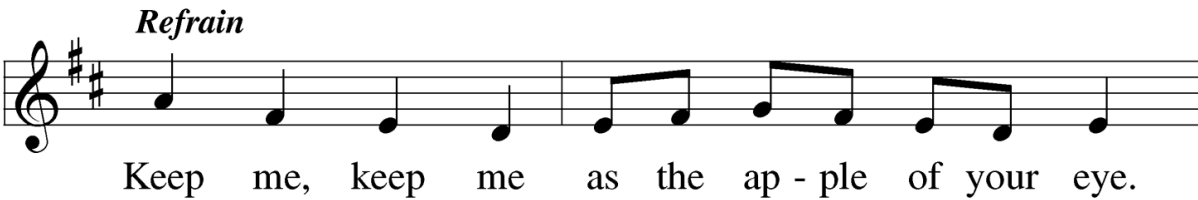
**Henceforth shall people call me blest,
For great things he has done for me.
The mighty God is now my guest;
The Holy One has set me free.**

**His mercy is on all who fear,
Who trust in him from age to age.
His arm of strength to all is near;
The proud he scatters, though they rage.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

**A TIME TO PLANT:
We Reflect on the Word of God**

PSALM OF THE DAY: Psalm 121



I lift up my eyes to the hills.*
Where does my help come from?

My help comes from the LORD,*
the maker of heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot slip,*
he who watches over you will not slumber;

indeed, he who watches over Israel*
will neither slumber nor sleep.

Refrain

The LORD watches over you,*
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.

The LORD will keep you from all harm,*
he will watch over your life;

the LORD will watch over your coming and going*
both now and forevermore.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Refrain

READING from the OLD TESTAMENT: Isaiah 51:1-6

**Listen to me, you people who pursue righteousness,
you people who seek the LORD!**

**Look confidently to the rock from which you were hewn
and to the quarry from which you were cut.**

**²Look confidently to Abraham your father,
and to Sarah, who gave birth to you.**

**Yes, when I called him, Abraham was only one person,
but I blessed him and multiplied him.**

**³The LORD is certain to comfort Zion.
He will comfort all her ruins.**

**Certainly he will make her wilderness like Eden
and her wasteland like the garden of the LORD.**

**Joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the sound of music.**

⁴Pay attention to me, O my people.

My nation, listen to me!

**For the law will go out from me,
and I will establish my justice as a light to the peoples.**

⁵My righteousness is near.

**My salvation goes forth,
and my arms will bring justice to the peoples.**

The seacoasts will wait for me.

They will have confidence in my arm.

⁶Lift up your eyes to the heavens.

**Look closely at the earth beneath,
because the heavens will vanish like smoke,
and the earth will wear out like a garment,
and its inhabitants will die like gnats.**

**But my salvation will remain forever,
and my righteousness will never be abolished.**

♪ “We Have a Sure Prophetic Word” (CW 291)

**Whate’er the Word in times of old
Of future days and deeds foretold
Is all fulfilled while ages roll,
As traced on the prophetic scroll.**

**Abiding, steadfast, firm, and sure,
The teachings of the Word endure.
Blest all who trust this steadfast Word;
Their anchor holds in Christ, the Lord.**

READING from the EPISTLES: 1 Peter 1:22–25

**²²Since you have purified your souls by obeying the truth, resulting in sincere brotherly love, love one another constantly from a pure heart. ²³For you have been born again, not from perishable seed but from imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God. ²⁴For: All flesh is like grass,
and all its glory is like a flower of the field.
The grass withers, and the flower falls,
²⁵but the word of the Lord endures forever.
And this is the word that was preached to you.**

♪ “How Precious Is the Book Divine” (CW 284)

**How precious is the Book divine,
By inspiration giv’n!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine
To guide our souls to heav’n.**

**Its light, descending from above
Our gloomy world to cheer,
Displays a Savior’s boundless love
And brings his glories near.**

**It shows to us our wand’ring ways
And where our feet have trod
But brings to view the matchless grace Of a forgiving God.**

**This lamp through all the dreary night
Of life shall guide our way
Till we behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day.**

READING from the GOSPELS: Luke 13:6–9

⁶He told them this parable: “A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard. He came looking for fruit on it, but he did not find any. ⁷So he said to the gardener, ‘Look, for three years now I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and I have found none. Cut it down. Why even let it use up the soil?’ ⁸But the gardener replied to him, ‘Sir, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put fertilizer on it. ⁹If it produces fruit next year, fine. But if not, then cut it down.’”

♪ **“Leaning on the Everlasting Arms”** (LA�PPY: 173)

What a fellowship, what a joy divine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
What a blessedness, what a peace is mine,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Refrain: Leaning, leaning,
Safe and secure from all alarms,
Leaning, leaning,
Leaning on the everlasting arms.

Oh, how sweet to walk in this pilgrim way
Leaning on the everlasting arms;
Oh, how bright the path grows from day to day
Leaning on the everlasting arms. *Refrain*

What have I to dread, what have I to fear,
Leaning on the everlasting arms?
I have blessed peace with my Lord so near,
Leaning on the everlasting arms. *Refrain*

SERMON: Deuteronomy 33:26-29

There is no one like the God of Jeshurun,
who rides through the heavens to help you.
In his majesty he rides through the clouds.
The everlasting God is a dwelling place,
and his eternal arms are under you.

**He drove out the enemy in front of you,
and he said, "Destroy!"
So Israel settled down in safety.
Jacob dwelt in security
in a land of grain and fresh wine,
and, yes, its heavens dropped down dew.
How blessed are you, O Israel!
Who is like you?
You are a people saved by the LORD,
the shield who gives you help,
the sword who gives you majesty.
Your enemies will come cringing before you,
and you will trample on their high places.**

**A TIME TO LOVE:
We give our offerings of money and prayers**

THE OFFERING

PRAYER

C: 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**A TIME TO BUILD:
We Receive our Lord's Body and Blood**

M: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

M: We lift up our hearts.

C: We lift them up to the Lord.

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

♪ **“Lamb of God, Pure and Holy”** (*CW: 268*)

**Lamb of God, pure and holy,
Who on the cross did suffer,
Ever patient and lowly,
Yourself to scorn did offer.
All sins you carried for us,
Else had despair reigned o’er us: Have mercy on us, O Jesus!**

**Lamb of God, pure and holy,
Who on the cross did suffer,
Ever patient and lowly,
Yourself to scorn did offer.
All sins you carried for us,
Else had despair reigned o’er us: Have mercy on us, O Jesus!**

**Lamb of God, pure and holy,
Who on the cross did suffer,
Ever patient and lowly,
Yourself to scorn did offer.
All sins you carried for us,
Else had despair reigned o’er us:
Your peace be with us, O Jesus!**

DISTRIBUTION OF THE LORD’S SUPPER

♪ **“Jesus Sinners Does Receive”** (*CW 304*)

**Oh, how blest it is to know, Were as scarlet my transgression,
It shall be as white as snow By your blood and bitter passion,
For these words I do believe—Jesus sinners does receive.**

M: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

A TIME FOR PEACE
We Receive the Blessing of the LORD



M: The grace of our Lord + Je - sus Christ and the love of God



and the fellowship of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.



C: A - men.

♪ “Abide with Me” (CW 588)

**Abide with me; fast falls the eventide.
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide.
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!**

**Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away.
Change and decay in all around I see;
O thou who changest not, abide with me!**

**I fear no foe with thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness.
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still if thou abide with me.**

**Hold thou thy cross before my closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.
Heavn's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!**



“For everything there is an appointed time.”