

Christ Lutheran Church

127 N. Spring St., Klamath Falls, OR 97601

(541) 884-1635 www.lutherankf.org

April 2020

Psalm 42:1-5 – To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of the sons of Korah.

¹ As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? ³ My tears have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, "Where is your God?" ⁴ When I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast. ⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance.

The title to this psalm indicates that it was written by the sons of Korah. These were Levites who were in charge of worship music in the temple. This psalm is a lament of a Levite who has been taken into exile by the enemies of God's people. His enemies taunt him all day long saying, "Where is your God?" as he longs to be in God's house and fellowship with His people again. With tears, he remembers: "For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast."

These days, as our nation deals with effects of the coronavirus (COVID 19), people are anxious for a variety of reasons. One reason is a feeling of separation from other people. As we are asked to keep social distance and limit public activity to that which is most essential, it is easy to feel shut in – even exiled. We miss the ability to carry on freely with certain activities, and to gather with others in certain settings.

This also has affected our church life. In line with government regulations, we temporarily have suspended worship services. We continue to provide worship materials. We have our radio program Sunday mornings at 8:30 am (KAGO 1150 AM). We post weekly sermons and worship bulletins on our website (www.LutheranKF.org) and send these by e-mail / mail to our members. We continue to provide individual ministry in Word and Sacrament.

But it is just not the same. Like the psalmist, we long to be in God's house with His people, in regular visible fellowship – for "we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" (Romans 12:5). In the spirit of the psalm, we long to come together for mutual encouragement in the faith, as it says in Colossians 3:16: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."

But what is it that we long for most? In such anxious and uncertain times, what is the most essential need of our soul? The psalmist says it: "As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?"

Augustine of Hippo wrote in his *Confessions*: "Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee." What we need most is to rest our souls in the living God – the gracious God, who forgives all our sins and looks on us with His favor; the almighty God, who saves us from our enemies and all that threatens; the understanding God, who hears us as we bring our anxieties to Him in prayer; the loving God who cares for our needs each day; the eternal God, before whom we shall come and appear at last, together with all His people, in joyful heavenly fellowship.

All this is ours through faith in God's Son, Jesus Christ. All this is promised to us daily in His Word. In Christ, the living God has saved us from the worst enemies that threatened us – sin, Satan, and death. In Christ, God has forgiven us all our sins, redeemed us for His own Kingdom, and given us eternal life. He promises that no matter what evil surrounds us, no matter what sickness threatens our life, no matter how alone we feel, He is with us as our loving God and Savior, caring for us to the end. In Matthew 11:28, we hear our living God and Savior inviting us: *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."* We rest our hearts and souls in Him.

This is the living God and Savior to whom the psalmist looked in faith. It is His Word to which he clung, even now, when he could not be in God's house. For that was the focus of all the worship in Israel that was centered in the temple at Jerusalem. That was the focus of all the pilgrim feasts for which the psalmist longed. It all pointed to God's promise of salvation in Christ. It all pointed to the sacrifice of the Lamb of God, who would die for our sins and rise again for our eternal salvation.

It was about this time of year, every year, that the faithful in Israel would join the multitudes in joyful procession, making their way to the house of God in the pilgrim feast of the Passover. That feast, like all the others, featured sacrifice. In this particular feast, it was the sacrifice of the Passover lamb. A lamb was slain. Its blood was shed in remembrance of the blood that covered God's people when He redeemed them from Egypt (Exodus 12). Its flesh was eaten in each household.

That lamb pictured Christ: *"For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us"* (1 Corinthians 5:7). He is *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"* (John 1:29). At the time of Israel's Passover, He was slain on the cross. His blood, shed for us, covers all our sins and cleanses us in the sight of God. By His blood, we are redeemed as the people of God – set free from all our enemies, set free from all that threatens, set free from Satan, sin, and death. The crucified and risen Lamb says: *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day"* (John 6:54). We partake of His flesh and blood by faith. We partake of His true flesh and blood in the Feast of His Holy Supper. We are cleansed and covered by the blood of the Lamb in Holy Baptism. We are God's people.

Therefore we join the psalmist, and all the faithful of God in Christ through the ages. No matter what form exile may take, no matter what enemy may threaten our life, no matter how lonely and troubled we may feel – we say: *"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance."* We look to our living God and Savior, we turn to His Word that speaks His peace and promise to us daily. And we rest our hearts and souls in His loving care.

Until we are able to gather in our regular schedule of worship, feel free to speak with me in person or by phone for pastoral care. For those wishing to receive Holy Communion, I am in the office through the week and can schedule a visit.

In His daily loving care,
Pastor Glenn Smith

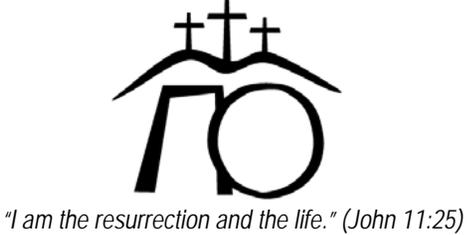
A Prayer

"Almighty God, You forgive all our iniquities and heal all our diseases, and have proclaimed Your name to be the Lord who heals us and You have sent Your well-beloved Son to bear our sicknesses: Look in mercy upon Your unworthy servants, pardon and forgive us our transgressions, and of Your lovingkindness remove the plague of sickness which You have allowed to come upon us. This we ask according to Your will, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

(From "Prayers for the Sick and Dying," Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary, p. 172)

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>Due to restrictions related to the coronavirus, our services have been temporarily suspended.</i></p> <p>Sunday radio messages, sermons, and bulletins may be accessed at www.LutheranKF.org.</p>			<p>1</p> <p>Youth Catechism 4:00 PM</p>	<p>2</p> <p><i>Happy Birthday Eric Anderson</i></p>	<p>3</p> <p><i>Happy Birthday Maria Smith</i></p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5 <i>Palm Sunday</i></p> <p>Radio Program 8:30 am on Radio KAGO 1150 AM</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Youth Catechism 4:00 PM</p>	<p>9</p> <p><i>Maundy Thursday</i></p> 	<p>10</p> <p><i>Good Friday</i></p> 	<p>11</p>
<p>12 <i>Easter Sunday</i></p> <p>Radio Program 8:30 am on Radio KAGO 1150 AM</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Youth Catechism 4:00 PM</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19 <i>Easter 2</i></p> <p>Radio Program 8:30 am on Radio KAGO 1150 AM</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p><i>Happy Anniversary Bill & Ana Jay</i></p> <p>Youth Catechism 4:00 PM</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Youth Catechism 4:00 PM</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26 <i>Easter 3</i></p> <p>Radio Program 8:30 am on Radio KAGO 1150 AM</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Youth Catechism 4:00 PM</p>	<p>30</p>		

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