

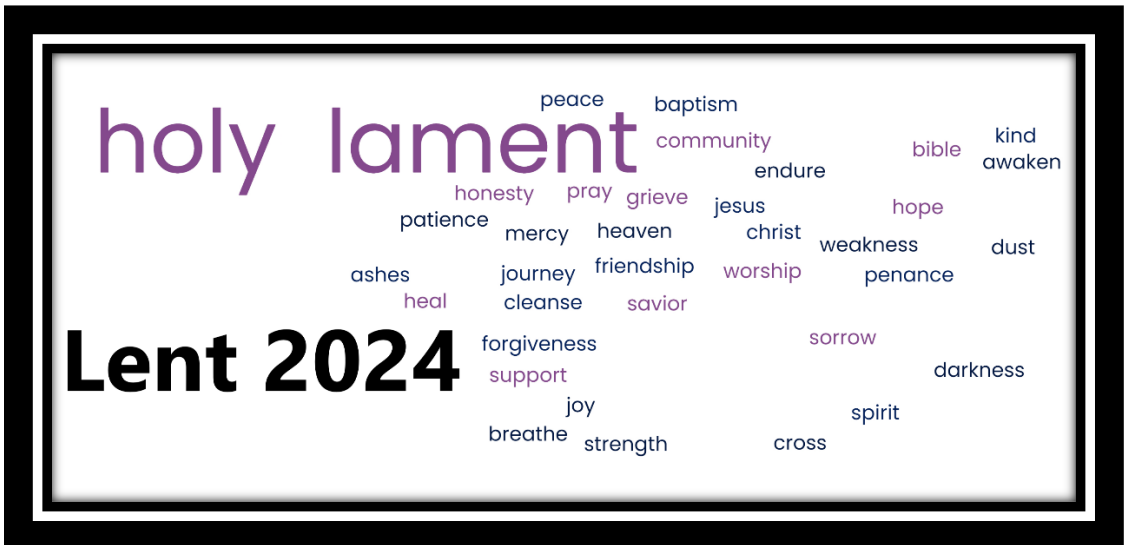
# LENTEN THURSDAY WORSHIP

FEBRUARY 22, 2024

7:00 p.m.

## HOLY LAMENT

### A WORSHIP SERIES FOR LENT



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## OVERVIEW

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.

## OPENING LITANY

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

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

L: As we raise our voices in lament,

**C: comfort us and give us cause for hope.**

L: Bless our worship, our work, and our play.

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

## 324 GATHERING SONG *“In the Cross of Christ I Glory”*

## OPENING PRAYER

L: Loving God, the prophets, psalm writers, and countless other people of faith have given us an example of how to hold our grief before you through songs of lament. Hear our cries this day. Give us the courage to name our deepest sorrow and to hand it over to you. Heal our wounded hearts and give us peace. We ask this in Jesus' name.

**C: Amen.**

## WEEK ONE: WHAT IS LAMENT?

### READING: Lamentations 3:19-26

<sup>19</sup>The thought of my affliction and my homelessness is wormwood and gall! <sup>20</sup>My soul continually thinks of it and is bowed down within me. <sup>21</sup>But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: <sup>22</sup>The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; <sup>23</sup>they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. <sup>24</sup>‘The Lord is my portion,’ says my soul, ‘therefore I will hope in him.’ <sup>25</sup>The Lord is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him. <sup>26</sup>It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.      **C: Thanks be to God.**

## REFLECTION

What is lament? The Bible is filled with examples of faithful people of God offering up sorrowful or even angry prayers to God. Even Jesus laments over Jerusalem and weeps at the death of a friend. To lament, to grieve, to weep—these are all part of the life of faith. Often, we are too quick to push aside the uncomfortable feelings of grief and loss. We have lost, in some ways, the spiritual discipline of lament: acknowledging the grief that is part of everyday life, holding it, and then placing it gently (or forcefully!) in God's hands. This Lent we will explore the laments found in scripture and relearn the discipline and the gift of holy lament.

## QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What comes to mind when you hear the word *lament*? How comfortable are you with the concept of lament, whether as an individual or as a community? Do you feel lament is an important spiritual discipline? Why or why not?

## 808 SONG OF LAMENT AND HEALING “*Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song*” Verse 4

### CORPORATE PRAYERS OF LAMENT AND HEALING

L: Trusting that God hears every cry and promises to wipe away every tear, we offer our prayers and our laments for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

God our Helper, we thank you for keeping our lives always in your care and protection and we pray for any who are in harm’s way.

We pray for those who are struggling with a new challenge or call...

With a major transition in life or livelihood...

with their faith and understanding...

with grief, ancient or new...

Keep in your tender care and mercy, O God, those who are sick in mind, body, or spirit,

Those weighed down by depression or pain...

Those recuperating from surgery or accident...

Be Guardian and Guide, we pray, setting all our feet on your paths of righteousness and peace.

We lift up these prayers and others, either out loud, or in the silence of our hearts. (*Pause*)

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.

**C: Amen.**

### BLESSING

L: The Lord watches over your going out and your coming in. The Lord shields your joys and holds your sorrows. God bless you and keep you this day and always.

**C: Amen.**

### INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS OF LAMENT AND HEALING

L: Living God, through the laying on of hands and anointing, grant comfort in suffering to all who are in need of healing. When they are afraid, give them courage; when afflicted, give them patience; when dejected, give them hope; and when alone, assure them of the support of your holy people. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

*Those who sense the need for God’s healing in any aspect of their lives may come forward at this time to receive prayer, the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. You may kneel, sit, or stand at the communion railing. Those congregants who do not come forward are invited to spend time in silent prayer or lift their voices in song and then depart in peace.*

## 808 SONG OF LAMENT AND HEALING “*Lord Jesus, You Shall Be My Song*” Verses 1-3

**DEPART IN PEACE.**

