

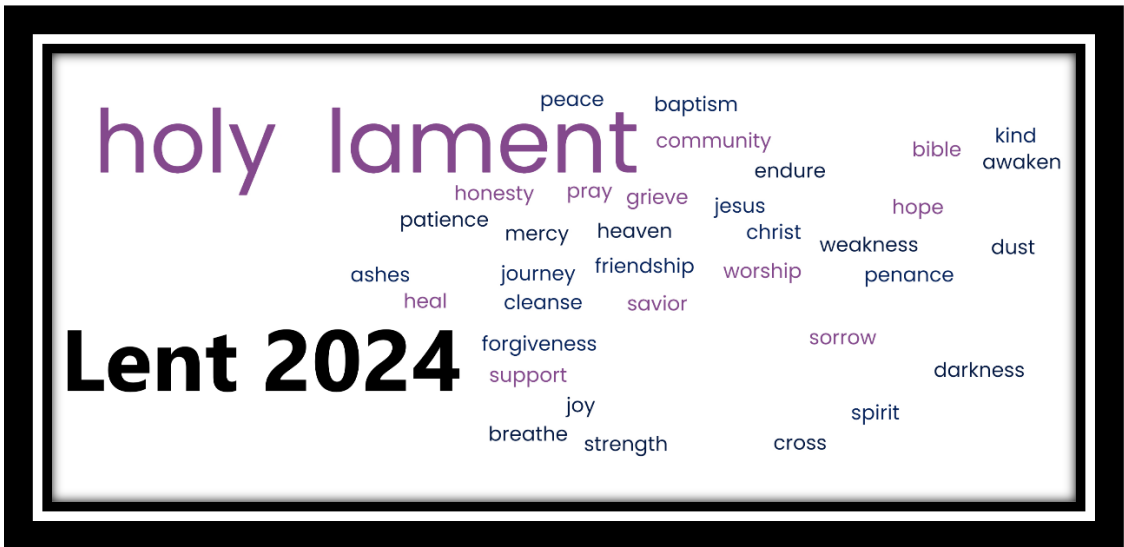
# LENTEN THURSDAY WORSHIP

FEBRUARY 29, 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.**

## 769 GATHERING SONG *“If You But Trust in God to Guide You”*

## OPENING PRAYER

L: Loving God, you are present at every moment of our lives. When we rejoice, you are cheering right along with us. When we weep, you catch our tears as though they were as precious as diamonds. Whether our hurts are small or great, your will for us is healing and transformation. Help us to trust in your steadfast love and in your willingness to walk with us through all that life brings. In Jesus' name we pray.

**C: Amen.**

## WEEK TWO: “LITTLE” LAMENTS

### READING: Psalm 42

<sup>1</sup>As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. <sup>2</sup>My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? <sup>3</sup>My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, ‘Where is your God?’ <sup>4</sup>These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I went with the throng, and led them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. <sup>5</sup>Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help <sup>6</sup>and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

<sup>7</sup>Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your cataracts; all your waves and your billows have gone over me. <sup>8</sup>By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.

<sup>9</sup>I say to God, my rock, ‘Why have you forgotten me? Why must I walk about mournfully because the enemy oppresses me?’ <sup>10</sup>As with a deadly wound in my body, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me continually, ‘Where is your God?’ <sup>11</sup>Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.

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

## **REFLECTION**

This week we turn to so-called little laments, those things we grieve that, in the grand scheme of life, may feel small but still hurt. The truth about these supposedly little laments is that when they start to add up, they are no longer quite so little. Grief can be cumulative. One disappointment over the course of the year may well be within our ability to cope. Many disappointments, one right after another, may stretch our limits. It is also good to consider that the little things give us an opportunity to learn how to embrace and work through our grief and disappointment. When we offer our little griefs to the God of the universe, we discover that God has space even for non-earth-shattering hurts. As we sense God's compassion in those moments, it prepares us to turn over the big laments as well, when those come along.

## **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

What kinds of small disappointments have you experienced? How have you moved through the accompanying sadness that goes along with those disappointments?

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

For those walking in the midst of despair...

For those who are treading a slippery path...

For those exhausted and seeking relief...

For those who face a mountain of worry or debt...

or any other obstacle...

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.**

