

WORSHIP SERVICE PLAN**(Traditional & Online Service)**

Sing a New Song, Part II • Fourth Sunday in Easter

Psalm 22

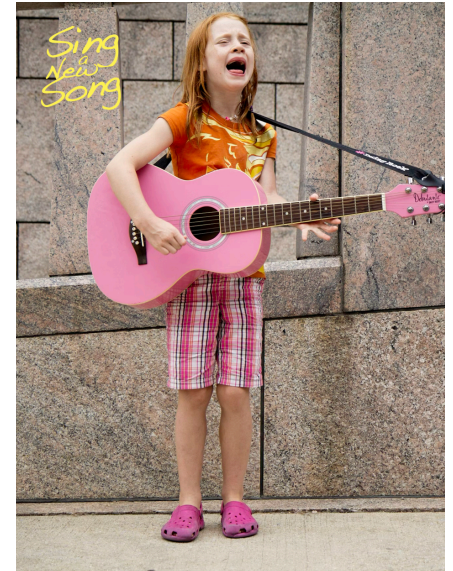
"Sing Trouble"

Songs of sorrow are just as hope-filled as songs of triumph.

(online only) Preparation for Worship

Gather these items for worship. If you don't have a particular item, fret not:

- a piece of white cloth
- an end table or stand
- a plate
- a cup
- a glass or bowl of water
- a lighter/match
- a symbol of your grief
- a computer or internet-accessible device
- a thank you card to God for something this week



For each item you have, thank God for the provision. For each piece you do not have, thank God you don't need it. Place the table/stand in the area you plan to worship. If more than one person will be present, place the table in the middle of where you will be seated. Drape the cloth over it. Arrange the cup, plate, glass of water, and other items on the table. Keep the Bible in front of you.

Questions for the announcement loop*In preparing for Worship, consider the following:*

- Why do you think God cares about our tears?
- How do YOU show you care about someone's grief?
- Why do you think God allows experiences of sorrow?
- What role does music play in your faith?

(10am only) Choral Introit*"Christ Has Arisen, Alleluia"* GTG #251**(10am only) Prelude:***"Come, Christians, Join to Sing* arr. Victor Labenske**Opening Sentence****Psalm 22:19-20 (CEB)**

But you, LORD! Don't be far away!

You are my strength!

Come quick and help me!

Deliver me from the sword.

Deliver my life from the power of the dog.

We are glad to be worshipping with you! We have a few Community Notes for you to consider as we worship throughout the week...

God Empathizes

One of the features of how power works in our culture, how money works, is stratification. The phenomenon that people find themselves suddenly at a distance from one another, divided along the lines of haves and have not. Whether you're talking about power, money, systems, possessions, birthrights, even beliefs, people can experience distance from one another to the point of losing our sense of shared humanity. But God does not do that with us. Despite being God, God is close enough to us to actually empathize with us, even at our most sorrowful. This week find some way to convey to God your deepest hurt, longing or wound. Do this knowing God actually wants to hear it.

[Church Music Fact]

William Booth (1829-1912), the Founder of The Salvation Army, used religious music to attract more people to the church....Booth had a lively band play secular music set with Christian lyrics. He called it "salvation music." Booth's Christian songs include "Onward Christian Soldiers," "O Boundless Salvation," and "Send the Fire."

[We Feature Two Hymnals!]

So our worship together in the Traditional Service is largely governed by our two hymnals. The Celebration Hymnal in burgundy and the Glory to God Hymnal in purple. You can tell which one we're using by the letters CEL and GTG, respectively. Listen for which one we're using for a particular part of the service.

[Congregational Meeting Notice]

On Sunday, April 21st, at 11:00 a.m., in the Sanctuary, the Session is calling for a Congregational Meeting to address a request from the Civitans for the installation of a permanent fence structure and a presentation by the Session on a recommendation concerning the Manse as well as, more broadly, thoughts toward addressing many of other needs throughout our church campus.

[Sing a New Song]

We continue our study with the Follow Me curriculum series from the denomination, as we move through the Easter Season, centered on the theme "Sing a New Song!" The study offers the opportunity to think about music in the life of faith and the power music affords us for sharing what can't always be put into words. As we move through the study, please share with the Spiritual Life Committee (Sam Beaudry, Caroline Massey, Christy Bailey, Alice Ray, Mandy Ealy, Brody Cameron, and David Ealy) your favorite hymns and *why* they're your favorite. The study materials are available from our website, Facebook page, and from the church office. Opportunities to join with others in the study happen on Monday nights and on Sunday mornings (for children and youth). Contact the church office or Mandy Ealy (or Christian Education Director) for more information.

[The Mission Yard Sale!]

Thanks to everyone who helped make our Mission Yard Sale a success! We especially thank the members of the Community Life Committee for organizing it and leading us in the effort.

[Youth Announcement]...**(10am only) Greet one another in Christ!**

(10am only) "He Lives" (CEL #368) (chorus)
He lives, He lives! Christ Jesus lives today!
He walks with me and talks with me
along life's narrow way.
He lives, He lives, salvation to impart!
You asked me how I know he lives?
He lives within my heart!

The key to understanding the resurrection is remembering the faith Jesus put before us.

In this moment, let us take a deep breath, silence our devices, and continue in worship together. As you are able in heart and body, let us stand together...(pause)

(10am only) Call to Worship

God has given us so many gifts!

God has given us hope!

God has given us love!

God has given us provision!

God has given us God's own Spirit!

God has given us music!

Christ is risen!

The Lord is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Let us sing our opening song together...

Sing:

"O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing" (GTG#610)
 (lyrics p.8)

Prayer of Confession/Preparation

Our sorrows can overwhelm and cause us to fail to see God's presence with us. We sometimes don't even acknowledge God's constant help. That's just wrong. It's important to talk about our shortcomings so that we're ready to hear what God has to say. Let us begin with silent prayer...

(Please pray silently...)

Pray: Risen Christ, even as you quote Psalm 22 from the Cross, asking where God is in your moment of crisis, you must ask the same question about us. You must wonder, after everything you've done for us, where are WE? Where are we when you need us? Where are we

when love is required? Where are we when mercy is called for? Where are we when generosity is needed? Where are we when faithfulness is the path but we refuse? And yet you lived, died and rose again for us anyway. Thank you for seeing in us a people worth saving. Help us see what you do, Great God. Gratefully, we pray this; thank you for listening, God. Amen.

(10am only) Assurance of Pardon

God's love can change everything, even the power of our sins over us. And it is God's will that we have this power:

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

(10am only) Gloria Patri (Glory to God)

Glory be to the Father

And to the Son

And to the Holy Ghost

As it was in the beginning

It is now and ever shall be

World without end: Amen, amen.

Reading of Scripture

Say: The Word of God is alive and moving and free because of God's Spirit. Thus God provides the Word of the Lord to us by the power of that same Spirit. Let us be open to this gift of God and ask for help to understand. Let us pray...(everyone sings)

Pray/Sing: "Thy Word Is a Lamp unto My Feet"
(GTG #458) (from Psalm 119)

**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.**

**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet
and a light unto my path.**

Listen closely to the Word of God to us all and our ongoing place in God's story...

Read: Psalm 22 (CEB)

A psalm of David.

¹ My God! My God,
why have you left me all alone?
Why are you so far from saving me—
so far from my anguished groans?
² My God, I cry out during the day,
but you don't answer;

even at nighttime I don't stop.

³ You are the holy one, enthroned.

You are Israel's praise.

⁴ Our ancestors trusted you—
they trusted you and you rescued them;

⁵ they cried out to you and they were saved;
they trusted you and they weren't ashamed.

⁶ But I'm just a worm, less than human;
insulted by one person, despised by another.

⁷ All who see me make fun of me—
they gape, shaking their heads:

⁸ "He committed himself to the LORD,
so let God rescue him;

let God deliver him

because God likes him so much."

⁹ But you are the one who pulled me from the
womb,

placing me safely at my mother's breasts.

¹⁰ I was thrown on you from birth;

you've been my God

since I was in my mother's womb.

¹¹ Please don't be far from me,

because trouble is near

and there's no one to help.

¹² Many bulls surround me;

mighty bulls from Bashan encircle me.

¹³ They open their mouths at me

like a lion ripping and roaring!

¹⁴ I'm poured out like water.

All my bones have fallen apart.

My heart is like wax;

it melts inside me.

¹⁵ My strength is dried up

like a piece of broken pottery.

My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;

you've set me down in the dirt of death.

¹⁶ Dogs surround me;

a pack of evil people circle me like a lion—

oh, my poor hands and feet!

¹⁷ I can count all my bones!

Meanwhile, they just stare at me, watching me.

¹⁸ They divvy up my garments among themselves;

they cast lots for my clothes.

¹⁹ But you, LORD! Don't be far away!

You are my strength!

Come quick and help me!

²⁰ Deliver me from the sword.

Deliver my life from the power of the dog.

²¹ Save me from the mouth of the lion.

From the horns of the wild oxen

you have answered me!

²² I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters;

I will praise you in the very center of the congregation!

²³ All of you who revere the LORD—praise him!
All of you who are Jacob’s descendants—honor him!

All of you who are all Israel’s offspring—stand in awe of him!

²⁴ Because he didn’t despise or detest the suffering of the one who suffered—he didn’t hide his face from me.

No, he listened when I cried out to him for help.

²⁵ I offer praise in the great congregation because of you;

I will fulfill my promises in the presence of those who honor God.

²⁶ Let all those who are suffering eat and be full!
Let all who seek the LORD praise him!

I pray your hearts live forever!

²⁷ Every part of the earth will remember and come back to the LORD; every family among all the nations will worship you.

²⁸ Because the right to rule belongs to the LORD, he rules all nations.

²⁹ Indeed, all the earth’s powerful will worship him;
all who are descending to the dust will kneel before him;
my being also lives for him.

³⁰ Future descendants will serve him; generations to come will be told about my Lord.

³¹ They will proclaim God’s righteousness to those not yet born, telling them what God has done.

One: For the Word of God in Scripture, for the Word of God among us, for the Word of God within us...

All: Thanks be to God!

Children’s Sermon

Adults, you’ll need:

- a bandage
- “Singing Can Heal”*
- (Showing the bandage) Do you know what this is? Yes!...It’s a bandage. How do we use them?...
 - We definitely use them to cover cuts and bruises to help them get better...We also use them to

wrap around places that get sore and need to be kept still...(elaborate as you wish).

- Music is like that. Music can cover our hurts and bruises and help them get better. Music can wrap around places in our life that get sore and need to be kept still. Music is a special way God helps us when we feel things we don’t understand. Music can remind us that God cares about us.
- So when you are around the people who care about you, sing something together and remember God cares.
- Don’t forget to pray!

Anthem: “Love Lifted Me” by Greg Gilpin; Solost: Lora Melton

“Sing Trouble”

One of the challenges of being people of faith is what to say and do when things go wrong. *Really* wrong. How do we talk about God’s provision when we’re worried where the next meal will come from? How do we talk about faith in the face of very real wars being fought and very real lives being lost? How do we count on the promises of God when it seems like those promises are broken? How can we have hope when things seem hopeless?

These questions and more are not aberrations of life, they are a *feature* of human experience. Suffering is not weird or strange or exceptional. Everyone on earth experiences pain. Everyone experiences loss. Everyone has had to face despair. It begs the question: is suffering a part of God’s will for us, a part of the Created order?

In fact, there’s an entire field of study called **Theodicy** that takes on the concept: If God is good and God is all powerful then why is evil here? Why are bad things allowed to happen? Why are we permitted to do bad things?

Before we get too far down the road with this, let’s be clear: nobody has an answer for that. The Book of Job is about the closest we come to an answer and *it doesn’t tell us*. Jesus doesn’t answer it either. In **John 9**, the disciples put the question to Jesus.

Jesus’ disciples asked, “Rabbi, who sinned so that he was born blind, this man or his parents?”

Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents. This happened so that God's mighty works might be displayed in him. While it's daytime, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (John 9:2-5)

Even if we take Jesus' response as cryptic, I think it's instructive. Just as instructive as Jesus asking the question from the Cross by quoting Psalm 22.

(online: Read: Psalm 22:1-19)

When I think about songs like that, I wonder: what's the point? Why sing about such sorrow? Why sing such trouble? Why pour out such music to relive such experience? Isn't that bringing up pains that should be forgotten? Isn't that prolonging how long it takes to get over it? Isn't it just glorifying pain?

Nobody knows, the trouble I've seen
Nobody knows my trouble
Nobody knows, the trouble I've seen
Glory hallelujah

It's not even that the song's content has to be obvious. Just the association with a memory can give a song power, *real* power. That power can be leveraged. Bring up somebody's most deeply set memories in some multi-sensory fashion and you have a recipe for manipulation. Ask anyone profiting in the music industry. But the power of music is measured by more than a bank account. I think one of the most powerful benefits of music is the doorway it gives us for expressing our grief.

But none of that answers the **question: Why?** But I think the Book of Job, John 9, Psalm 22 and other passages like them aren't meant to answer that question. Their presence is meant to turn our attention to something else. The fact that God empathizes.

In the Book of Job, **it hurts God** that Job is hurting. It bothers God that Job's "friends" are actually trying to undermine his faith. In John 9, it bothers God—it bothers Jesus—that the man is not only born blind, but that the man's community hasn't stepped up for him as they should. I think David

could only write Psalm 22 because he believed God would actually listen, that God would actually respond. Jesus quotes Psalm 22 not just because it expresses his own grief, but because he knew it would make a difference with God.

Look closely at Psalm 22. Verse 1, verse 11, verse 19, all point to the same overarching concern: Has God abandoned me? Has God abandoned us? He didn't ask for forgiveness. He didn't sing about longer life. He didn't even ask for more blessings or riches. David poured out his heart to recover a sense of God's *presence*. Our music, like the whole of salvation history, all point to one word, one name: **Emmanuel. God with us.**

(online: Read: Psalm 22:20-31)

I mean, **verse 24 says it all:**

*Because he didn't despise or detest
the suffering of the one who suffered—
he didn't hide his face from me.
No, he listened when I cried out to him for help.*

Y'all, we should always **feel free to ask "Why?"** Why me? Why her? Why them? Why now? Why wait? Why move? Why fight? Why submit? Why?

But we have to be prepared for not getting answers to that completely. It's not because God's holding out on us. Let's face it: with some losses, no reason would ever be good enough, even if we imagine an answer would make the loss easier to take. **The songs, Jesus' statement, all remind us that God walks with us. That it matters to God that we DO suffer. That we are never alone.**

Consider that piece of remarkable grace. The Creator of the universe gives a rip about little ol' you, little ol' me. That God knows the number of hairs (that I have left) on my head and the depth of the pains that I carry. That God actually knows what it is like to carry them. And music is a gift from God that says that trouble does not get to rule over us indefinitely. **That songs of sorrow are just as hope-filled** as songs of triumph, because we can give voice to them *and* it matters to God.

Famously, Jesus told one of the people being crucified alongside him that *that* day he would be

with Jesus in paradise. This isn't just positive thinking. It was speaking the truth of the moment: God was with Christ, and God was with the crucified man, not just later, right then and there. God is not just with us in the hereafter. God is with us now.

The Chancel Choir sang an arrangement of "Love Lifted Me", borrowing from the story of Peter walking out onto the water and finding himself sinking, only to have Jesus reach out a hand to help. Our songs of sorrow, of trouble, of pain, of woeful memories, are all reminders that our suffering matters to God who suffers with us.

So sing. Play your music loudly. Play it softly. Express your griefs to a God who truly can do something about them. And in expressing your pain, make room for the peace God seeks to usher in, at the cost of God's own life.

For Christ is risen!

The Lord is risen indeed! Hallelujah!

Song of Reflection

(10am) "Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah" (GTG #65)

(online) "He Keeps Me Singing" (CEL #746)
(lyrics p.8)

Offering

God chooses to love us, abundantly. We should respond by choosing to be loving, abundantly. This is why we should give and share what we have and who we are. Let us reflect together on what has been given...

Offertory

"How Can I Keep From Singing?" arr. Sally DeFord;
Soloist: Noah Melton

Doxology

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow
Praise God, all creatures here below
Praise God, above you heavenly hosts
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Blessing

**Let there be no doubt, Great God: you love us.
And we are grateful. Let there be no doubt,**

Great God: we should be loving in turn. As we receive the gifts you provide, may the gifts we are meant to be emerge. In the great name of Jesus Christ, we pray this together. Amen.

Prayers of the People

- As we pray together, an opportunity will be given to lift up your personal prayers. Take advantage of it! Let us pray...
- "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (GTG #465)
**What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer.**
- Lord God, there seems to be trouble everywhere. At any and all times trouble seems to find us. Just when we think we're at a place we can coast, something happens. Just when we think we can relax, something else puts us on guard. Just when we think something's resolved, we discover more turmoil. And sometimes, God have mercy, the trouble is our fault.
- But God, you are, in fact, everywhere. At any and all times you not only find us, you redeem us and the trouble in which we find ourselves. You walk with us and bring us peace instead of cheap calm. You bring us real love instead of platitudes. You stay with us when everything and everyone else abandons. The resurrection is a measure of your resolve, Holy God: help us trust you more than we do. Help us hold on to you, especially when trouble comes. And empower us to sing our sorrows, Lord. You gave us song for a reason. You gave *songs* to us.
- Thus, let us be Godly people. Let us sing of compassion and consolation. Let us sing about your grace and mercy and sense of justice. Let us sing about setting aside safety and embracing risk-taking with you. May our songs be healing balms, reaching through us to those around us, especially those on our prayer lists and those we will come to know. Help us sing love and give love. Help us sing mercy. Despite our collective answer of violence, of disdain, of division, of cynicism, to your love, may we truly sing and embrace hope instead...(mention the prayers you want to from the Prayer List and Prayer Notebook...)

- Thank you for believing in us, Thank you for transforming us. Thank you for teaching us, even how to pray when words fail us, saying,
- **Pray: 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 debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Hymn of Sending

(10am) "He Keeps Me Singing" (CEL #746)

Sending & Benediction

Let us say together our benediction...

Songs of sorrow are just as hope-filled as songs of triumph.

(raise your hands and say) "Get up, take heart, Jesus is still calling you..."; Go, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guide your hearts and minds this day and forever more. Amen!

Sing: "To God Be the Glory"

(GTG #634, refrain)

**Praise the Lord, praise the Lord;
let the earth hear his voice!**

**Praise the Lord, praise the Lord;
let the people rejoice!**

**O come to the Father
through Jesus the Son,
and give him the glory:
great things he has done!**

(10am only) Postlude

"O God, Our Help In Ages Past" arr. Victor Labenske

SONGS

"O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing" (GTG#610)

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my dear Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of God's grace!

The name of Jesus charms our fears,
and bids our sorrows cease,

sings music in the sinner's ears,
brings life, and health, and peace.

Christ speaks, and listening to his voice
new life the dead receive;
the mournful waken to rejoice;
the poor in heart believe.

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honors of thy name.

To God all glory, praise, and love
be now and ever given
by saints below and saints above,
the church in earth and heaven.

"He Keeps Me Singing" (CEL #746)

There's within my heart a melody;
Jesus whispers sweet and low:
"Fear not I am with thee; peace, be still,"
In all of life's ebb and flow.

Refrain:

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus -
Sweetest name I know,
Fills my every longing,
Keeps me singing as I go.

All my life was wrecked by sin and strife;
Discord filled my heart with pain.
Jesus swept across the broken strings,
Stirred the slumb'ring chords again. [*Refrain*]

Feasting on the riches of His grace,
Resting 'neath His shelt'ring wing,
Always looking on His smiling face -
That is why I shout and sing. [*Refrain*]

Tho' sometimes He leads thro' waters deep,
Trials fall across the way;
Tho' sometimes the path seems rough and steep,
See His footprints all the way. [*Refrain*]

Soon He's coming back to welcome me
Far beyond the starry sky;
I shall wing my flight to worlds unknown;
I shall reign with Him on high. [*Refrain*]