

A Service of Prayer and Lament

In the wake of the mass shooting at Michigan State University on Feb. 13, 2023

A resource from St. Luke Lutheran Church – Haslett, MI

About this service

Brothers and sisters in Christ,

"Jesus wept." (John 11:35)

Sometimes there are no words, only tears. This is a moment where there are no words, but only tears. We weep for those who have died in the events at Michigan State University. We weep for those who were injured. We weep for those who are traumatized, distressed, and were in harm's way. We weep for the entire MSU community, their families, and all who are hurting from this.

Jesus wept. However, Jesus did not only weep. In the midst of death and hurt and pain, Jesus brought life and peace, calm and healing.

Even as we mourn – even as we try to understand things beyond our comprehension – God invites us to come before Him in prayer, that we would find peace and power in the cross of Jesus Christ.

This service is designed for devotional use by individuals, families, and congregations. May it help you keep your eyes on Jesus in the midst of pain and loss.

+ The service may begin with a time of silent prayer and contemplation +

Opening hymn: "O Lord, Hear My Prayer" (LSB 780)

O Lord, hear my prayer; O Lord, hear my prayer; When I call answer me.

O Lord, hear my prayer; O Lord, hear my prayer; Come and listen to me.

(Repeated 2X)

L: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

L: In the morning, O Lord, You hear my voice;

C: In the morning I prepare a sacrifice for You and watch.

L: My mouth is filled with Your praise,

C: And with Your glory all the day.

L: O Lord, open my lips,

C: And my mouth will declare Your praise.

L: Glory be to the Father and to the Son

C: And to the Holy Spirit;

L: As it was in the beginning,

C: Is now, and will be forever. Amen.

First reading: Psalm 42

As a deer pants for flowing streams, 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? My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation 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. Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. I say to God, my rock: "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

[Time of silent prayer]

L: Let us pray. Almighty God, indeed our souls are cast down this day. We are cast down by our own sin, and the sin of others that has led to the tragic loss of life at Michigan State University. And yet, O Lord, we place our hope in You. As a deer pants for flowing streams, so our souls thirst for You, the living God. Be near us this day in the midst of things we cannot understand. Be near us this day, as we grieve. Be near us this day, as we begin to heal, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

Hymn: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" (LSB 770)

1. What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer!
Oh, what peace we often forfeit; Oh, what needless pain we bear –
All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer!
2. Have we trials and temptations? Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged – take it to the Lord in prayer.
Can we find a friend so faithful who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our ev'ry weakness – take it to the Lord in prayer.
3. Are we weak and heavy laden, Cumbered with a load of care?
Precious Savior, still our refuge – Take it to the Lord in prayer.
Do thy friends despise, forsake thee? Take it to the Lord in prayer.
In His arms He'll take and shield thee; Thou wilt find a solace there.

Second reading: Psalm 43

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me! For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. Why are you cast down, O

my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

[Time of silent prayer]

L: Let us pray. O Lord, in You alone do we find refuge. In You alone do we find peace and protection. Comfort those who mourn. Heal those who are injured. Send out your light and your truth; let them lead us through this dark hour into the eternal light of Your Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn: "Jesus, Grant That Balm and Healing" (LSB 421, v. 1, 4, 5)

1. Jesus, grant that balm and healing in Your holy wounds I find,
Ev'ry hour that I am feeling pains of body and of mind.
Should some evil thought within tempt my treach'rous heart to sin,
Show the peril, and from sinning keep me from its first beginning.

4. Ev'ry wound that pains or grieves me by Your wounds, Lord, is made whole;
When I'm faint, Your cross revives me, Granting new life to my soul.
Yes, Your comfort renders sweet ev'ry bitter cup I meet;
For Your all-atoning passion has procured my soul's salvation.

5. O my God, my rock and tower, Grant that in Your death I trust,
Knowing death has lost its power since You crushed it in the dust.
Savior, let Your agony ever help and comfort me;
When I die be my protection, Light and life and resurrection.

Third reading: John 1:1-14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

[Time of silent prayer]

L: Let us pray. Blessed Jesus, the Light of the World, You came to earth to dwell in the midst of human brokenness. You know our faults. You know our frailty. You know our suffering, our pain, and even death itself. And yet, O Lord, You bring light. You are the true light that conquers darkness, that all who believe in Your name are rightly called children of God. Dwell in our midst this day and always. Point us always to the peace and power of Your cross. **C: Amen.**

Hymn: "The Lamb" (LSB 547)

1. The Lamb, the Lamb, O Father, where's the sacrifice?
Faith sees, believes God will provide the Lamb of price!

*Refrain: Worthy is the Lamb whose death makes me His own!
The Lamb is reigning on His throne!*

2. The Lamb, the Lamb, One perfect final offering.
The Lamb, the Lamb, Let earth join heav'n His praise to sing. *Refrain*

3. The Lamb, the Lamb, As wayward sheep their shepherd kill
So still, His will on our behalf the Law to fill. *Refrain*

4. He sighs, He dies, He takes my sin and wretchedness.
He lives, forgives, He gives me His own righteousness. *Refrain*

5. He rose, He rose, My heart with thanks now overflows.
His song prolong, till ev'ry heart to Him belong. *Refrain*

The Litany

L: O Lord, **C: Have mercy.**

L: O Christ, **C: Have mercy.**

L: O Lord, **C: Have mercy.**

L: O Christ, **C: Hear us.**

L: God the Father in heaven, **C: Have mercy.**

L: God the Son, Redeemer of the world, **C: Have mercy.**

L: God the Holy Spirit, **C: Have mercy.**

L: Be gracious to us. **C: Spare us, good Lord.**

L: Be gracious to us. **C: Help us, good Lord.**

L: From all sin, from all error, from all evil; from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from sudden and evil death; from pestilence and famine; from war and bloodshed; from sedition and from rebellion; from lightning and tempest; from all calamity by fire and water; and from everlasting death:

C: Good Lord, deliver us.

L: By the mystery of Your holy incarnation; by Your holy nativity; by Your baptism, fasting, and temptation; by Your agony and bloody sweat; by Your cross and passion; by Your precious death and burial; by Your glorious resurrection and ascension; and by the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter: **C: Help us, good Lord.**

L: In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity; in the hour of death; and in the day of judgment: **C: Help us, good Lord.**

L: We poor sinners implore You, **C: To hear us, O Lord.**

L: To rule and govern Your holy Christian Church; to preserve all pastors and ministers of Your Church in the true knowledge and understanding of Your wholesome Word and to sustain them in holy living; to put an end to all schisms and causes of offense; to bring into the way of truth all who have erred and are deceived; to beat down Satan under our feet; to send faithful laborers into Your harvest; and to accompany Your Word with Your grace and Spirit:

C: We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

L: To raise those who fall and to strengthen those who stand; and to comfort and help the weakhearted and the distressed: **C: We implore You to hear us, good Lord.**

L: To give to all peoples concord and peace; to preserve our land from discord and strife; to give our country Your protection in every time of need; to direct and defend our president, governor, first responders, and all in authority; to bless and protect our magistrates and all our people; to watch over and help all who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation; to protect and guide all who travel; to grant all women with child, and all mothers with infant children, increasing happiness in their blessings; to defend all orphans and widows and provide for them; to strengthen and keep all sick persons and young children; to free those in bondage; and to have mercy on us all:

C: We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

L: To forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers and to turn their hearts; to give and preserve for our use the kindly fruits of the earth; and graciously to hear our prayers,

C: We implore You to hear us, good Lord.

L: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, **C: We implore You to hear us.**

L: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, **C: Have mercy.**

L: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, **C: Have mercy.**

L: Christ, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, **C: Grant us Your peace.**

L: O Christ, **C: Hear us.**

L: O Lord, **C: Have mercy.**

L: O Christ, **C: Have mercy.**

L: O Lord, **C: Have mercy. Amen.**

Luther's Morning Prayer

All: I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

L: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

L: The Lord Almighty bless us and direct our days and our deeds in His peace.

C: Amen.

