

September 12, 2021, A Service for Students and All Other Travelers on the Journey of Life

(Parts of today's service are from Sundays & Seasons, copyright 2013 Augsburg Fortress)

Greeting May the God who created space and time, journeyed with us in human form, and travels with us still, be with you all. **And also with you.** We take a moment of silence to commemorate all who lost loved ones twenty years ago on September 11. We collectively pray, **let there be peace on earth and let it begin with each one of us.** *Moment of silence.*

I was there to hear your borning cry ELW #732 WOV #770

I was there to hear your borning cry, I'll be there when you are old. I rejoiced the day you were baptized to see your life unfold. I was there when you were but a child, with a faith to suit you well: I'll be there to make your verses rhyme from dusk till rising sun. I was there to hear your borning cry, I'll be there when you are old. I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold.

Let us pray: **O God, our beginning and our end, you kept Abraham and Sarah in safety throughout the days of their pilgrimage, you kept the children of Israel in love, as they lived through 40 years in the wilderness, and by a star you led the magi to the infant Jesus. Protect and guide us and our students as we begin this school year. Teach us all to continue growing, so that by the end of this global pandemic, we can say we learned new ways to do justice, new ways to practice kindness and new ways to walk humbly with you. Make our ways safe and our homecomings joyful. In your name we pray, Amen.** (same prayer we prayed on 9/13/2020)!

Psalm 139:1-12 (a brief silence after each reading) GOD, investigate my life; get all the facts firsthand. I'm an open book to you; even from a distance, you know what I'm thinking. You know when I leave and when I get back; I'm never out of your sight. You know everything I'm going to say before I start the first sentence. I look behind me and you're there, then up ahead and you're there, too— your reassuring presence, coming and going. This is too much, too wonderful—I can't take it all in! Is there any place I can go to avoid your Spirit? to be out of your sight? If I climb to the sky, you're there! If I go underground, you're there! If I flew on morning's wings to the far western horizon, You'd find me in a minute—you're already there waiting! Then I said to myself, "Oh, he even sees me in the dark! At night I'm immersed in the light!" It's a fact: darkness isn't dark to you; night and day, darkness and light, they're all the same to you.

Plans and Preparations Ephesians 6:13-17 Be prepared. You're up against far more than you can handle on your own. Take all the help you can get, so that when it's all over but the shouting you'll still be on your feet. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, and salvation are more than words. Learn how to apply them. You'll need them throughout your life. God's Word is an *indispensable* weapon. In the same way, prayer is essential in this ongoing warfare. Pray hard and long. Pray for your brothers and sisters. Keep your eyes open. Keep each other's spirits up so that no one falls behind or drops out.

Dialogue and Prayer

What should we pack as we begin our journey? **What should we bring along?**

The word of God to illumine our path. **The light of Christ to show us the way**

The gifts of the Spirit to share with those we meet. **The love of God to be our compass and guide.**

Let us pray. Oh God, **You are the source of all our beginnings. As we plan for our journeys, strengthen us through your word. Orient our lives toward Christ, the bright Morning Star. Send your Holy Spirit as our companion along the way. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.**

Setting Out Genesis 12:1-9

GOD told Abram: “Leave your country, your family, and your father’s home for a land that I will show you. ²⁻³ I’ll make you a great nation and bless you. All the families of the Earth will be blessed through you.” ⁴⁻⁶ So Abram left just as GOD said, and Lot left with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he left Haran. Abram took his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot with him, along with all the possessions and people they had gotten in Haran, and set out for the land of Canaan and arrived safe and sound.

Dialogue and Prayer

God called to Abraham: “**Go! Set out! And I will bless you.**”

God calls to us: “**Come! Feel the water on your head!**”

Hear the promise of new life. **Spread my love through all the world.**”

Let us pray. God of beginnings, **You called Abraham and Sarah, leading them to unknown places. You are also calling us to situations we have never before experienced. In the waters of baptism, you claim us and send us out as your children. Wash us with your grace and shower us with your spirit, so we journey into the world overflowing with your love. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.**

On the Road Mark 1:35-39

While it was still night, way before dawn, Jesus got up and went out to a secluded spot and prayed. Simon and those with him went looking for him. They found him and said, “Everybody is looking for you.” Jesus said, “Let’s go to the rest of the villages so I can preach there also. This is why I’ve come.”

Dialogue and Prayer On the Galilean road, Jesus stopped to reflect and pray

We, too, long for rest and a balm for our souls

Seeing those in need, Jesus healed, taught and fed.

We are called to live as servants, loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Holding the children close, Jesus blessed them;

for to such as these the kingdom of heaven belongs.

On the road to Bethlehem, the true light came into the world.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory.

Let us pray. God of incarnation, **You entered our world as a tiny baby and you journey with us through each stage of our lives. Be with our children, and especially our students, teachers and all decision makers. Help us all grow in your love. Guide us all as the years and decades pass.**

Send us in the light of your grace and truth. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

When the Way Becomes Hard I Kings 19:4

Dialogue and Prayer

We side with Elijah and say **It is enough O Lord.**

The troubles of life overwhelm our spirits **It is enough, O Lord.**

The way seems too dark; the valleys too deep **It is enough O Lord.**

God, please rescue us from despair, grant us strength, and open our hearts and minds to hear you say **“You are beloved, my precious child. I will never leave you nor forsake you.”**

Let us pray. God of our sorrows, **when the daily reports are often more bad news, the road seems long, lonely and treacherous. Comfort us in our despair, guide us through the wilderness, and enfold us in your loving embrace. Grant your mercy and peace to all those in need. We take a moment of silence to name specific concerns: (pause) In your name we pray, Amen.**

Wherever you are on life’s journey Romans 12:9-21

Love from the center of who you are; don’t fake it. Run for dear life from evil; hold on for dear life to good. Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. Don’t burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don’t quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help the needy; be inventive in hospitality. Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your happy friends when they’re happy; share tears when they’re down. Get along with each other; don’t be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don’t be the great somebody. Don’t hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you’ve got it in you, get along with

everybody. Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. "I'll do the judging," says God. "I'll take care of it." Scriptures tell us that if you see your enemy hungry, go buy that person lunch, or if he's thirsty, get him a drink. Your generosity will surprise him with goodness. Don't let evil get the best of you; get the best of evil by doing good.

Dialogue and Prayer based on John 14-15

Do not let your hearts be troubled. **We believe in God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.**

I go to prepare a dwelling place for you. **You are the way, the truth, and the life**

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you. **Lord, we abide in your love**

You know the way to the place where I am going **Jesus, lead us in the path of your peace**

Let us pray. God of resurrection, **neither death nor life will separate us from your love. Walk with us through this wilderness. Remind us that as we live in the moment with you, we can claim that this too, some day, will pass. Strengthen us to follow the way of the cross and bring us at last into the joy of your heavenly kingdom. In your name we pray. Amen.**

Blessing of One Another Wherever you wander, no matter how dark the night, may the love of your family and friends, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the power of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and forever. Go with God's blessings. May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.** Share peace with your smile and peace sign!

Words of Institution and The Lord's Prayer

Prayer after Communion: **Loving God, by your Spirit we are born anew, and you nourish us like newborns with this holy food, by which we grow to become more and more like you. Give us grace to live as your risen daughters and sons, shining in the world with your compassionate light, until you gather all creation to the table where Christ reigns in glory forever. Amen.**

Blessing: The Lord watch over your going out and your coming in, from this time forth forever more. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Go my children with my blessing ELW # 543 WOV #721

Go my children with my blessing, never alone. Waking, sleeping, I am with you, you are my own. In my love's baptismal river I have made you mine forever. Go, my children, with my blessing, you are my own.

Go in peace. Christ goes with you. **Thanks Be to God!**

Announcements

Thank you to all worship leaders and helpers today!

Tonight is first meeting of LIFE for youth in 6th -12th grades. Meet @ 3:30 p.m. @ Messiah to carpool. Wednesday, September 15 is our first WWW/GIFT meeting at Memorial Park. Meet there at 5:30 pm.

First Lutheran church council meets Thursday, September 16, 9:00 am
Contact Pastor Nancy at 715 209-1100

We are glad you are worshiping with us today! If you are looking for a church home or would like a pastoral conversation, let us know by giving your contact information to an usher or the pastor.

A back-to-school-prayer first prayed on 9/13/20: *Dear God, HELP! Many of us don't know what to do. We want our children safe and yet, we also want them to grow in socialization. We want growth in faith too. Come Holy Spirit, lead and guide us. Remind us that even though we don't know what the future holds, we do know WHO holds our future. Grant special peace to all school leaders, teachers, students and parents. Keep our hearts and minds stayed on you. Guide us and give us peace that passes all understanding. Thank you Jesus! Amen.*