

## ***Tuesday of Holy Week***

*The order of service for this day's worship is an abbreviated version of Evening Prayer (or Vespers). If possible, please light a candle somewhere near you to serve as a sign of the light of Christ.*

### **A Thanksgiving for Light**

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome.  
Stay with us, Lord for it is evening, and the day is almost over.  
Let your light scatter the darkness and illumine your church.

God is our light and our salvation, our refuge and our stronghold.  
From the rising of the sun to its setting, we praise your name, O God.  
For with you is the fountain of life, and your light we see light.

Behold, now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation.  
Turn again, O God of our salvation, that the light of your face may shine upon us.  
May your justice shine like the sun; and may the poor be lifted up.

**An Evening Song**      “O Light Whose Splendor Thrills” (from “With One Voice”)  
*(This is a Greek hymn from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century)*

1. O Light whose splendor thrills and gladdens with radiance brighter than the sun,  
pure gleam of God's unending glory, O Jesus, blest Anointed One:
2. As twilight hovers near at sunset, and lamps are lit, and children nod,  
in evening hymns we lift our voices to Father, Spirit, Son, one God.
3. In all life's brilliant, timeless moments, let faithful voices sing your praise.  
O Son of God, our life bestower, whose glory lightens endless days.

**A Reading**      Psalm 71:1-14      *(From “The Message” by Dr. Eugene Peterson)*

I run for dear life to Yahweh, I'll never live to regret it.  
Do what you do so well and get me out of this mess and up on my feet.  
Put your ear to the ground and listen, give me space for salvation.  
Be a guest room where I can retreat: you said your door was always open!  
You're my salvation—my vast, granite fortress.

My God, free me from the grip of the Wicked, from the clutch of Bad and Buly.  
You keep me going when times are tough—my bedrock, Yahweh, since my childhood.  
I've hung on to you from the day of my birth, the day you took me from the cradle;  
I'll never run out of praise.  
Many gasp in alarm when they see me, but you take me in stride.

Just as each day brims with your beauty,  
my mouth brims with praise.  
But don't turn me out to pasture when I'm old  
or put me on the shelf when I can't pull my weight.  
My enemies are talking behind my back,  
watching for their chance to knife me.  
The gossip is: "God has abandoned him.  
Pounce on him now; no one will help him."

God, don't just watch from the sidelines. Come on! Run to my side!  
My accusers—make them lose face.  
Those out to get me—make them look like idiots  
while I stretch out, reaching for you, and daily add praise to praise.

**A Meditation** (*From "Stories for the Journey" by William White*)

The rabbi sat around a blazing fire with a small number of students late at night. Their meandering conversation was broken by periods of silence when they all gazed at the stars and the moon. Following one of these periods when no one spoke, the Rabbi asked a question:

"How can we know when the night has ended and the day has begun?"

Eagerly one young man answered, "You know the night is over and the day has begun when you can look off in the distance and determine which animal is your dog and which is the sheep. Is that the right answer, Rabbi?"

"It is a good answer," the Rabbi said slowly, "but it is not the answer I would give," he said.

After several minutes of discussion a second student ventured a guess on behalf of the whole group. "You know the night is over and the day has begun when light falls on the leaves and you can tell whether it is a palm tree or a fig tree."

Once again the Rabbi shook his head. "That was a fine answer, but it is not the answer I seek," he said gently.

Immediately the students began to argue with one another. Finally, one of them begged the rabbi, "Answer your own question, Rabbi, for we cannot think of another response."

The Rabbi looked intently at the eager young faces before he began to speak.

"When you look into the eyes of a human and see a sister or a brother, you know that it is morning. If you cannot see a brother or a sister, then you will know that it will always be night."

*You are invited to meditate briefly and silently on this story, and, if someone else is present, to share your reflections and listen to theirs. If you are by yourself, either because of circumstance or choice, think of what this story might mean to you, for you, and for your relationships with others, even and especially those you may consider strangers. . . or enemies.*

**A Song**            “Stay Here”    *From the Taize community; composer: Jacques Berthier*  
*Speak or sing the verse at least three times (or as often as you wish).*  
*You may pause for a brief silent prayer between each repetition*

Stay here and keep watch with me. The hour has come.  
Stay here and keep watch with me. Watch and pray.

### **An Ancient Prayer**

O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works: Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments; and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God forever. Amen.

### **Luther’s Evening Prayer**

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have graciously protected us today. We ask you to forgive us all our sins, where we have done wrong, and graciously to protect us tonight. For into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us so that the wicked foe may have no power over us.

**A Song of Blessing**    “Go, My Children, With My Blessing”

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.

I the Lord will bless and keep you, and give you peace.  
    I the Lord will smile upon you, and give you peace.  
        I the Lord will be your Father, Saviour, Comforter and Brother.  
            Go, my children, I will keep you and give you peace.

*Following immediately upon what he called “The Evening Blessing”, Luther said this:  
“Then you are to go to sleep quickly and cheerfully.”*

May it be so for you this night.