

Song before: O Lord, the clouds are gathering

O Lord, the clouds are gathering,
the fire of judgement burns,
How we have fallen!
O Lord, You stand appalled to see
Your laws of love so scorned,
And lives so broken.

Have mercy, Lord, (Men)
Have mercy, Lord, (Women)
Forgive us, Lord, (Men)
Forgive us, Lord, (Women)
Restore us, Lord, (All)
Revive Your church again.
Let justice flow (Men)
Let justice flow (Women)
Like rivers, (Men)
Like rivers, (Women)
And righteousness like a never failing stream. (All)

O Lord, over the nations now
where is the dove of peace?
Her wings are broken.
O Lord, while precious children starve
the tools of war increase;
Their bread is stolen.

O Lord, dark powers are poised to flood
our streets with hate and fear;
We must awaken!
O Lord, let love reclaim the lives
that sin would sweep away
And let Your kingdom come.

Yet, O Lord, Your glorious cross shall
tower triumphant in this land,
Evil confounding.
Through the fire Your suffering church
display the glories of her Christ:
Praises resounding!

Call to worship

'Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD; O LORD, hear my voice' (Psalm 130:1-2).

Opening prayer and confession

Gracious Lord, we come with open hearts and open hands before you. You are merciful and kind but also holy. We confess that we have not lived according to your holy ways of justice and love. We confess our own sins and the sins of our nation.

Have mercy on us, O God, in your constant love; in the fullness of your mercy blot out our offences. Wash away all our guilt, and cleanse us from our sin. Forgive our nation for turning its back on you and your ways.

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Therefore to all who truly repent this is his gracious word: 'Your sins are forgiven.'

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Song: Desert Song

This is my prayer in the desert
When all that's within me feels dry
This is my prayer and my hunger in me
My God is the God who provides.

And this is my prayer in the fire
In weakness or trial or pain
There is a faith proved
Of more worth than gold.
So refine me Lord through the flames.

I will bring praise, I will bring praise
No weapon formed against me shall remain
I will rejoice, I will declare
God is my victory and He is here.

And this is my prayer in my battle
When triumph is still on its way
I am a conqueror and co-heir with Christ
So firm on His promise I'll stand.

I will bring praise, I will bring praise
No weapon formed against me shall remain
I will rejoice, I will declare
God is my victory and He is here.

All of my life, in every season
 You are still God.
 I have a reason to sing
 I have a reason to worship
 (x4)

I will bring praise, I will bring praise
 No weapon formed against me shall remain
 I will rejoice, I will declare,
 God is my victory and He is here.

And this is my prayer in the harvest
 When favour and providence flow
 I know I'm filled to be emptied again
 This seed I've received I will sow.

Reading: Lamentation 1:1-7

א (*Aleph*) Alas! The city once full of people
 now sits all alone! The prominent
 lady among the nations
 has become a widow! The princess who
 once ruled the provinces
 has become a forced labourer!

ב (*Bet*)² She weeps bitterly at night;
 tears stream down her cheeks.
 She has no one to comfort her
 among all her lovers. All her friends have
 betrayed her;
 they have become her enemies.

ג (*Gimel*)³ Judah has departed into exile
 under affliction and harsh oppression.
 She lives among the nations; she has
 found no resting place. All who pursued
 her overtook her in narrow straits.

ד (*Dalet*)⁴ The roads to Zion mourn
 because no one travels to the festivals.
 All her city gates are deserted; her priests
 groan. Her virgins grieve; she is in bitter
 anguish!

ה (*He*)⁵ Her foes subjugated her; her
 enemies are at ease. For the Lord
 afflicted her because of her many acts of
 rebellion. Her children went away
 captive before the enemy.

ו (*Vav*)⁶ All of Daughter Zion's splendour
 has departed. Her leaders became like
 deer; they found no pasture, so they
 were too exhausted to escape from the
 hunter.

ז (*Zayin*)⁷ Jerusalem remembers, when she
 became a poor homeless person, all her
 treasures that she owned in days of old.
 When her people fell into an enemy's
 grip, none of her allies came to her
 rescue. Her enemies gloated over her;
 they sneered at her downfall.

This is the Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

Reflection: HOPE IN DESPAIR (1) A Bitter Regret

Song: When the Tears Fall

I've had questions, without answers
 I've known sorrow, I have known pain
 But there's one thing, that I'll cling to
 You are faithful, Jesus You're true.

*When hope is lost, I'll call You Saviour
 When pain surrounds, I'll call You healer
 When silence falls,
 You'll be the song within my heart.*

In the lone hour of my sorrow,
 Through the darkest night of my soul.
 You surround me and sustain me,
 My defender forevermore.

*When hope is lost, I'll call You Saviour
When pain surrounds, I'll call You healer
When silence falls,
You'll be the song within my heart.*

I will praise You, I will praise You
When the tears fall, still I will sing to You.
I will praise You, Jesus praise You.
Through the suffering, still I will sing.

*When hope is lost, I'll call You Saviour
When pain surrounds, I'll call You healer
When silence falls,
You'll be the song within my heart.*

I will praise You, I will praise You
When the tears fall, still I will sing to You
I will praise You, Jesus praise You.
Through the suffering,
still I will sing to You.
Always I'll sing to You,
Jesus I'll sing for You.

When the laughter fails to comfort
When my heart aches, Lord are you
there?
When confusion is all around me
And the darkness is my closest friend
Still, I will praise You
Jesus praise You.

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, we thank you for this book of Lamentations. We pour out our grief to you, just as we read here. In our darkness and distress, in our confusion and pain we thank you for your presence and your righteousness. We praise you that you bore our sins. We cry out to you for the sins of the world. Cause the world to come back to you and follow your holy ways of righteousness and love.

Lord, we give thanks for the love of family and friends. We bring before you our homes, especially where we are not

coping well, where we are struggling in relationships, made worse by the lockdown. We bring before you our homes where tensions exist between parents and their children, between husband and wife. Be close when our home life has fallen apart, that we may turn to you and find hope for the future.

Lord, when we are overwhelmed by the storms of life, in particular the loss of loved ones, the loss of health, the loss of home, the loss of income and employment, the loss of hope. In our despair, anxiety and exhaustion come close, that we may rediscover your love and purpose in our lives.

Lord, when we run out of words and find ourselves empty, would your Spirit intercede for us with groans. For those under the pressure of leadership, great and small, with responsibilities no human wisdom can handle, remind them again of the greater King, the Suffering Servant, the Lord Jesus.

Lord, we are grateful that your word acknowledges the reality of our pain, our grief, and our confusion, that you give us words of lament to pray. You know how fragile we are and we thank you that you listen to us and hold us.

All these things we pray in the name of Jesus, the one who suffered for our sake.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the
glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Holy Communion

We read in Scripture that on the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks, broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' After supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant of my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this in remembrance of me.'

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Therefore, gracious God, with this bread and this cup we remember that our Lord offered his life for us. Believing the witness of his resurrection and ascension, we look for his coming in glory, and our sharing in his great and promised feast. Send now, we pray, your Holy Spirit, that these gifts of bread and wine may be for us the body and blood of Christ and that we may live to your praise and glory with all your saints in light.

Join our prayers and the prayers of all your people on earth and in heaven with the intercession of Christ, our great high priest,
through whom, with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all worship and honour are yours, almighty God and Father, for ever and ever. Amen.

The bread we break is a sharing in the body of Christ. **Christ is the Bread of life.**

The cup we take is a sharing in the blood of Christ. **Christ is the true Vine.**

The Body of Christ broken for you.
The Blood of Christ shed for you.

Prayer after Communion

We praise you, God, for the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation which you give for the life of the world. With this food for our journey bring us with your saints to the feast of your glory. Amen.

Song: Be still my soul

Be still my soul the Lord is on thy side
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain
Leave to thy God to order and provide
In every change He faithful will remain
Be still my soul thy best, thy heavenly friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end

Be still my soul the hour is hastening on
When we shall be forever with the Lord
When disappointment grief and fear are gone
Sorrow forgot love's purest joys restored
Be still my soul when change and tears are past
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last

Closing prayer and blessing

Gracious Lord, as we go, teach us to listen to those in pain, give us ears to hear your Spirit speaking, and transform us with your unending love for the lost and broken; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

And now may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and upon this nation, now and always. Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.