



Call to worship Psalm 100 : Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

Hymn STF271 – Come, wounded healer. Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8C-x-GSjs0>

Come, wounded Healer,
your sufferings reveal --
the scars you accepted,
our anguish to heal.
Your wounds bring such
comfort
in body and soul
to all who bear torment
and yearn to be whole.

Come, hated Lover,
and gather us near,
your welcome, your teaching,
your challenge to hear:
where scorn and abuse
cause rejection and pain,
your loving acceptance
makes hope live again!

Come, broken Victor,
condemned to a cross --
how great are the treasures
we gain from your loss!
Your willing agreement
to share in our strife
transforms our despair into
fullness of life

Bible Readings:

John 11:25-27

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

2 Corinthians 1:17-18

Was I fickle when I intended to do this? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say both "Yes, yes" and "No, no"? But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No."

Message : The Transformative Power of God in Hopelessness.

Today, we gather to explore the incredible transformative power of God, especially in times when all seems lost. When all seems dead.

We see this power magnificently demonstrated in the story of Lazarus in John 11, where Jesus raises him from the dead, turning despair into hope. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. He came for us all that we may have eternal life.

Just as in biblical times, God's power continues to work wonders in seemingly hopeless situations today.

Jesus died but on the third day he rose from dead. Our hope for a new life , new beginnings is in Jesus Christ.

1. The Story of Lazarus:

In John 11, we find the story of Lazarus, a close friend of Jesus, who has fallen ill and died. By the time Jesus arrives, Lazarus has been in the tomb for four days. This period marks a point of no return, where hope for life is considered gone. Yet, it is in this setting of hopelessness that we see God's power unfold. He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

2. Jesus' Arrival and Martha's Faith:

Upon His arrival, Jesus is met by Martha, Lazarus's sister. Despite her grief, Martha expresses her faith, saying, "If you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask." Her faith amidst despair sets the stage for a remarkable miracle.

Jesus is still at work with his mighty power to create new things and demonstrate his power over every situation.

3. The Miracle – Lazarus Raised:

Jesus responds, declaring that He is "the resurrection and the life." Approaching the tomb, Jesus calls out to Lazarus, who emerges, alive and well. This miracle is a profound demonstration of God's transformative power over death itself, altering the course of an irreversible situation. Jesus Christ overcome death when he rose from the dead on the third day. He has power over everything.

4. The Example of an Emerging Theologian:

Gissendaner Kelly was once on death row, facing the consequences of her actions. During her imprisonment, she encountered God's transformative love and grace, pursuing theological studies and inspiring other inmates with hope and the message of redemption. Her life, once marked by hopelessness, turned into a testament to God's redemptive power, illustrating how faith can transform even the direst circumstances.

5. God's Transformative Power in Our Lives:

The stories of Lazarus and Kelly remind us that God's transformative power is not confined to biblical times. It is active here and now. Whether we face personal struggles, broken relationships, or deep despair, God's power can renew and restore. Our role is to remain open in faith and trust in His timing and purpose.

We are called to trust in God's transformative power in our own lives. Let us not be discouraged by seemingly insurmountable challenges. Just as Jesus brought Lazarus to life and transformed Kelly's heart, God can work miracles in our lives.

Let us embrace His power and allow it to move through us, giving us the courage to rise from hopeless situations with renewed strength and faith.

In concluding, let us remember that hope endures in God's transformative power. Through faith, we can witness miracles, as God brings life and light into the darkest places. May we leave here today with renewed faith, trusting God to work powerfully in our lives and the lives of those around us. **Amen**

Hymn STF286 – What kind of love is this Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTsfZnOIReo>

What kind of love is this,
that gave itself for me?

I am the guilty one,
yet I go free.

What kind of love is this?

A love I've never known.

I didn't even know his name,

what kind of love is this?

What kind of man is this,
that died in agony?

He who had done no wrong
was crucified for me.

What kind of man is this,

who laid aside his throne

that I may know the love of

God?

What kind of man is this?

By grace I have been saved;
it is the gift of God.

He destined me to be his son,
such is his love.

No eye has ever seen,

no ear has ever heard,

nor has the heart of man

conceived

what kind of love is this.

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for your transformative power that turns despair into hope. Help us to trust you wholly, even in our darkest moments. Guide us to be witnesses of your love and power in the world. Amen.

Hymn STF306 - Love is come again. Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=En28Je8ehDs>

Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

Forth He came at Easter, like the risen grain,
Jesus who for three days in the grave had lain;
Quick from the dead the risen One is seen:
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

In the grave they laid Him, Love who had been slain,
Thinking that He never would awake again,
Laid in the earth like grain that sleeps unseen:
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

When our hearts are wintry, grieving, or in pain,
Jesus' touch can call us back to life again,
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been:
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

The Lord Prayer : Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name; your kingdom come; your will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn STF277 - My song is love unknown Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWRcAa-nFIA>

My song is love unknown,
my saviour's love for me;
love to the loveless shown
that they might lovely be:
but who am I, that for my sake
my Lord should take frail flesh
and die?

Sometimes they crowd his way
and his sweet praises sing,
resounding all the day
hosannas to their king:
then 'crucify' is all their breath,
and for his death they thirst and
cry.

They rise and they must have
my dear Lord done away;
a murderer they save,
the prince of life they slay!
Yet willingly, to shame he goes
that he his foes, from this,
might free.

He came from heaven's throne
salvation to bestow;
but they refused, and none
the longed-for Christ would
know:
this is my friend, my friend
indeed,
who at my need his life did
spend.

Why, what has my Lord done
to cause this rage and spite?
he made the lame to run,
and gave the blind their sight:
what injuries! yet these are why
the Lord most high so cruelly
dies.

Here might I stay and sing
of him my soul adores;
never was love, dear King,
never was grief like yours!
This is my friend in whose sweet
praise
I all my days could gladly spend.

Blessings

The peace of the Lord be with us all. Amen.