

PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICE – week 1

First week of Lent – [Readings are from Wednesday, February 24th](#)

Welcome

Opening song

Singer will be the only one unmuted but feel free to sing along wherever you are!



Litany of Repentance

LEADER: We ask forgiveness for our complicity in the violence and suffering present in our world and we repent of the violence and selfishness present in our own hearts.

Our first response will be, “Forgive us we pray.”

For hardness of heart... **ALL: “Forgive us we pray.”** (Repeat after each line.)

For wasting our gifts...

For wanting too much...

For wounding the earth...

For neglecting the poor...

For trusting in weapons...

For ignoring racial injustice...

For refusing to listen...

For exporting arms...

For desiring dominance...

For wanting to win...

For lacking humility...

For failing to risk...

For failing to trust...

For failing to act...

For failing to negotiate...

For failing to hope...

For failing to love...

For our arrogance...

For our impatience...

For our cowardice...

For our pride...

For our silence...

For our complicity...

Our next response will be, “Change our hearts.”

That we learn compassion... **ALL: “Change our hearts.”** (Repeat after each line.)

That we embrace nonviolence...

That we act in justice...

That we live in hope...
That we might be strong...
That we do your will...
That we might be peace...

ALL: Amen.

First reading: From the book of Jonah...

The word of God came to Jonah a second time:
“Set out for the great city of Nineveh,
and announce to it the message that I will tell you.”
So Jonah made ready and went to Nineveh,
according to God’s bidding.
Now Nineveh was an enormously large city;
it took three days to go through it.
Jonah began his journey through the city,
and had gone but a single day’s walk announcing,
“Forty days more and Nineveh shall be destroyed,”
when the people of Nineveh believed God;
they proclaimed a fast
and all of them, great and small, put on sackcloth.

When the news reached the king of Nineveh,
he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe,
covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in the ashes.
Then he had this proclaimed throughout Nineveh,
by decree of the king and his nobles:
“Neither person nor beast, neither cattle nor sheep,
shall taste anything;
they shall not eat, nor shall they drink water.
Humans and beasts shall be covered with sackcloth and call loudly to God;
every person shall turn from their evil ways
and from the violence they have in hand.
Who knows, God may relent and forgive, and withhold the blazing wrath,
so that we shall not perish.”
When God saw by their actions how they turned from their evil ways,
God repented of the evil that God had threatened to do to them;
God did not carry it out.

The word of God. **ALL: Thanks be to God.**

Gospel reading: From the gospel of Luke...

While still more people gathered in the crowd, Jesus said to them,
“This generation is an evil generation;
it seeks a sign, but no sign will be given it,
except the sign of Jonah.
Just as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites,

so will the Human One be to this generation.
At the judgment
the queen of the south will rise with those of this generation
and she will condemn them,
because she came from the ends of the earth
to hear the wisdom of Solomon,
and there is something greater than Solomon here.
At the judgment the people of Nineveh will arise with this generation
and condemn it,
because at the preaching of Jonah they repented,
and there is something greater than Jonah here.”

The gospel of our God. **ALL: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

A reflection from this year’s Lenten reflection booklet – Suzanne and Brayton Shanley of the Agape Community: The Shanleys will read their reflection and offer a few additional words to expand it to include the context we’re living in today.

Nineveh was going to be destroyed, and the evil ways, not of its leader, but of its people, did this city in. The story of Nineveh illustrates the force of social sin as opposed to individual sin and should be a wakeup call for the United States. The people’s values were a contradiction to God. “Poor Nineveh,” we might say, but is there any similarity between the sin of the people of Nineveh and us Americans? What values are modeled in our media, television, and our work places? Money comes first, and we are vainly obsessed with how things look.

In the United States today, people can become calloused and indifferent to people in need. We largely ignore the desperate plight of Syrians and fear Muslims moving into “our country”, but nine billion dollars a year are spent on cosmetics. The gun corporations profit from scanty gun laws, but 11,000 people a year are murdered with guns that are too easily purchased. Mass killings like the ones in Las Vegas or Orlando become commonplace. We are looking and acting like Nineveh, and we need to embrace scriptural solutions. Jonah saved Nineveh by preaching, “Repent and change now!”, and Luke suggests that we will be saved through Jesus’s command to live without violence..

Silent reflection

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's readings and reflection, and to consider this Lenten question from the Shanleys: **Can we honestly and prayerfully make an inventory of our society’s values that contradict Jesus’s call to love?**

After our prayer service is over, we encourage you if you are with others, to share your answer to tonight's question. If you aren't with others but would like to share in a small group after tonight's prayer, we'll send everyone into breakout rooms with a few other people to share. We'll take now just about 3-4 minutes of silence to reflect quietly.

(In preparation for the Prayers of the Faithful, feel free to enter into the chat any prayers you have that you want those of us on this call to lift up over the coming week.)

Prayers of the faithful

Our response is: God of peace, hear our prayer.

Closing prayer

Jesus, Our Tortured Brother Today

Jesus, our Tortured Brother,

In this world, so many are forced to walk your path today -
the suffering and pain, the humiliation, sense of betrayal and abandonment,
for those with power, the Romans of today, continue to condemn others to modern crosses.
You said what was done to the least of these was done to you and so each day,
You are tortured anew.

Jesus our Guardian of the Wounded and Tortured,

Bid us to look into the secret prisons - the unmarked graves -
the hearts and minds of torture survivors,

Bid us to wipe the tears of the families of those whose
decapitated bodies were cast into the open sea,

Bid us to embrace the open wounds of the tortured.

Jesus, Guiding Spirit,

Teach us to be in solidarity with those who hang from these crosses,

Call out to those who torture, "Know the evil you have done and repent."

Call out to the rest of us, "What meaning does love have
if you allow torture to continue unopposed?"

In the name of all the tortured of the world, give us the strength, give us the courage,
give us the will to bring this horror to an end, in the name of love, justice and the God of us all.
Amen.

*(In 1-2 minutes everyone who wants to stay on the call will be sent to
breakout rooms to discuss tonight's reading, reflection and Lenten
question. Breakout rooms will automatically close after 20 minutes.)*