

# PAX CHRISTI USA COMMUNITY LENTEN SERVICE – week 5

*Fourth week of Lent – [Readings are from Friday, March 25th](#)*

**Welcome**

**Opening song**

Singers will be the only ones 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 Jeremiah...

I hear the whisperings of many:  
    "Terror on every side!  
    Denounce! Let us denounce him!"  
All those who were my friends  
    are on the watch for any misstep of mine.  
"Perhaps he will be trapped; then we can prevail,  
    and take our vengeance on him."  
But God is with me, like a mighty champion:  
    my persecutors will stumble, they will not triumph.  
In their failure they will be put to utter shame,  
    to lasting, unforgettable confusion.  
O God of hosts, you who test the just,  
    who probe mind and heart,  
Let me witness the vengeance you take on them,  
    for to you I have entrusted my cause.  
Sing to our God,  
    praise God,  
For God has rescued the life of the poor  
    from the power of the wicked!

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

**Gospel reading:** From the gospel of John...

The Judeans picked up rocks to stone Jesus.  
Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from my Abba.  
For which of these are you trying to stone me?"  
The Judeans answered him, "We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy.  
You, a man, are making yourself God."  
Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, 'You are gods'?  
If it calls them gods to whom the word of God came, and Scripture cannot be set aside,  
can you say that the one whom my Abba has consecrated and sent into the world  
blasphemes because I said, 'I am the Son of God'?"  
If I do not perform my Abba's works, do not believe me;  
but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me,  
believe the works, so that you may realize and understand

that God is in me and I am in God.”

Then they tried again to arrest him; but he escaped from their power.

He went back across the Jordan to the place where John first baptized, and there he remained. Many came to him and said, “John performed no sign, but everything John said about this man was true.” And many there began to believe in him.

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

**A reflection from this year’s Lenten reflection booklet – Megan McKenna:** Megan will read her reflection and offer a few additional words to expand it to include the context we’re living in today.

*Jesus answered, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I have said, You are gods’?  
If it calls them gods to whom God’s word was addressed—and  
Scripture cannot lose its force—do you claim that  
I blasphemed when ... I said, ‘I am God’s Son’?” (Jn 10:34-36)*

They have the rocks in hand to stone him. This is the second time they are driven in their rage to harm Jesus, but this time he does not hide or slip away. He faces them down and continues to try to get them to see what they are doing and how their words contradict God’s covenant with them, that their hard-heartedness and blindness (in protecting their own position and ideas) insults God, that they are worshipping the god of violence instead of the God of life and compassion, the God who suffers with all the children of the earth.

Jesus is confronting the other kind of suffering and pain—the kind that we either inflict on others, suffer at the hands of others, or catch in the backdraft of what happens when we refuse to protest or resist unnecessary suffering that is the result of evil. Pain and truth share a strong connection and affect one another intimately. As Barbara Kingsolver writes, “Pain reaches the heart with electrical speed, but truth moves to the heart as slowly as a glacier.” And, sadly, those who speak the truth often incur violence in response. It is the fate of the prophets, and in the early Church, it was the experience of many believers who refused to obey the state’s law, to be a part of the military, or to allow poor people to die in misery and squalor. To be a follower of this Jesus was to draw attention to the truth and the power of Jesus’s God—the God of life, of compassion that was hand-in-glove with both justice and mercy. Jesus’s God—and ours—is the God of good news to those who are poor, oppressed, slaves, prisoners, broken-hearted, or victims of violence—individual, institutional, and systemic. We are the children of God, God’s own. With Jesus we “are in God and God is in us”—all of us.

*Do you believe this, that we are in God and God is in us, all of us?*

### **Silent reflection**

We invite you to quietly reflect on tonight's readings and reflection, and to consider this Lenten question from Megan’s original reflection: ***Do you believe this, that we are in God and God is in us, all of us?***

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 truth, hear our prayer.

### **Closing prayer**

Oh God, we are one with You. You have made us one with You. You have taught us that if we are open to one another, You dwell in us. Help us to preserve this openness and to fight for it with all our hearts. Help us to realize that there can be no understanding where there is mutual rejection. Oh God, in accepting one another wholeheartedly, fully, completely, we accept You, and we thank You, and we adore You, and we love You with our whole being, because our being is in Your being, our spirit is rooted in Your spirit. Fill us then with love, and let us be bound together with love as we go our diverse ways, united in this one Spirit which makes You present in the world, and which makes You witness to the ultimate reality that is love. Love has overcome. Love is victorious. Amen.

*(From Thomas Merton's Asian Journal)*

*(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.)*