

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In a world filled with noise and empty words, God comes to us as stillness and silence, even to the point that wind ceases. Today's readings encourage us to keep our words spare and meaningful, lay aside our little faith with its wordy worries, and listen for God, who comes to us as quieting comfort.

With this in mind, I will try to keep today's worship devotions smaller in words and leave more space for God's silence. 😊

### **Let Us Be Gathered**

Show us your mercy, O God,  
and grant us your salvation.  
Give us the joy of your saving help again,  
and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit.  
Amen.

### **Gathering Song**

Silence and listening draws us to open our ears. Let us listen as St. John Episcopal Church in Tallahassee, Florida, joins with neighbors from Temple Israel synagogue to gather us through the Hebrew melody "Open your ears, O faithful people" (ELW #519).

Here is the video link: <https://youtu.be/zlHNxzHlxgo>.

### **Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

O God our defender,  
storms rage around and within us and cause us to be afraid.  
Rescue your people from despair,  
deliver your sons and daughters from fear,  
and preserve us in the faith of your Son,  
Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
Amen.

*A moment for silence.*

### **Let Us Hear God's Word**

*A reading from First Kings:*

<sup>9</sup>At [Horeb, the mount of God,][Elijah] came to a cave, and spent the night there.

Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "What are you doing here, Elijah?" <sup>10</sup>He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away."

<sup>11</sup>He said, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; <sup>12</sup>and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. <sup>13</sup>When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. Then there came a voice to him that said, "What are you doing here,

Elijah?" <sup>14</sup>He answered, "I have been very zealous for the Lord, the God of hosts; for the Israelites have forsaken your covenant, thrown down your altars, and killed your prophets with the sword. I alone am left, and they are seeking my life, to take it away." <sup>15</sup>Then the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus; when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael as king over Aram. <sup>16</sup>Also you shall anoint Jehu son of Nimshi as king over Israel; and you shall anoint Elisha son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah as prophet in your place. <sup>17</sup>Whoever escapes from the sword of Hazael, Jehu shall kill; and whoever escapes from the sword of Jehu, Elisha shall kill. <sup>18</sup>Yet I will leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him." (1 Kings 19)

*The Word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.*

*A reading from the Psalms:*

<sup>8</sup>I will listen to what the Lord God is saying;  
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.  
<sup>9</sup>Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,  
that your glory may dwell in our land. (Psalm 85)

*A moment for silence.*

*The holy gospel according to Matthew.  
Glory to you, O Lord.*

<sup>22</sup>[Jesus] made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side [of the Sea of Galilee], while he dismissed the crowds. <sup>23</sup>And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup>but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. <sup>25</sup>And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. <sup>26</sup>But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup>But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

<sup>28</sup>Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." <sup>29</sup>He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup>But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" <sup>31</sup>Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup>When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup>And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

*The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, O Christ.*

*A moment for silence.*

### **Reflection on the Readings**

In the story from First Kings, Elijah is in trouble, threatened with death. From Matthew, we hear that Peter is in trouble too, drowning in the chaos of the sea. Let these stories reflect our times. We and all our world also know the threat of death and chaos. But then, listen.

God comes to Elijah not in wind, earthquake, or fire. Rather, God comes in the sound of sheer silence and in a voice that gives him a mission. Such sounds may be little in the world, but they are the very presence of God.

And Jesus comes to Peter and the storm-tossed disciples with a word of comfort, “It is I; do not be afraid.” It is I—here I am. Christ comes as the very presence of God, the one named “I AM” in the scripture. This life-giving word from God is not far away, but here, now, in this time of prayer, on our lips and in our hearts.

With the Psalmist, let us say, “I will listen to what the Lord God is saying.” God in Christ is speaking peace to us right now. Then let us undertake the mission to speak that peace also to our neighbors.

*A moment for silence.*

Gently adapted from the poem “Under cover” by Luci Shaw:

*We see God in the shape  
God shows to us. For some, fire.  
For others, holy smoke, oil,  
a running river, sheep’s crook,  
muscular right arm that holds  
against the dark, the dread.*

*It is the oddity of poets  
to not see the world straight on  
but at some slant, under the skin,  
behind the scrim—a scurry  
of leaves, clouds. God speaks  
God’s presence in the wind.*

*Elijah sensed God in the silence.  
I sensed God even in the ink  
warming within the pen before  
these words arrived.*

### **Hymn of the Day**

In the storms of pandemic, deadly explosions, and economic devastation, our fear and doubt match Peter’s. Choir leaders from St. Peter Lutheran Church in New York City lead us in the call to mission and service that arises from such storms as they sing “God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind” (ELW #400).

Here is the video link: <https://youtu.be/mwTsC8WfUvU>.

*A moment for silence.*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Confident of your care and upheld by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all in need, responding to each petition with the words “Save us, we pray.”

*A brief silence.*

For your church throughout the world, we pray: Strengthen the faith of all who believe. Speak to us through your word of power and mercy. Abide with those Christians who are isolated from others. Give wisdom and stamina to all preachers who bring your good news to the world.

*A brief silence.*

Hear us, holy God: Save us, we pray.

For the well-being of your creation, we pray. Protect waterways, forests, lands, and wildlife from exploitation and abuse. Tame the storms that threaten human habitations. Maintain the health of pets.

*A brief silence.*

Hear us, holy God: Save us, we pray.

For those in need we pray. For those who are unemployed, or homeless, or hungry, or hospitalized; for those whose money has run out; for those who are fearful of the future; and for Pat, Valetta, Paul, Vallie, LaVaune, Kathy, Frank, Lisa, Rita, April, Bev, Bob, Beth, Marlene, and all those we name before you now:

*A brief silence.*

Hear us, holy God: Save us, we pray.

For the end to racial injustice we pray. Frustrate all prejudices between peoples that are based on ethnic origin or skin color. Unite into one body politic all who share this land.

*A brief silence.*

Hear us, holy God: Save us, we pray.

We praise you, O God, for all who have died in the faith, for martyrs, for leaders in the struggle for civil rights, for victims of COVID-19, for those dear to us. Bring us at the end with all your saints into your everlasting life.

*A brief silence.*

Hear us, holy God: Save us, we pray.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

### **Offering Prayer**

Let us pray.

God of glory,  
receive the gifts and the offering of our lives.  
As Jesus was lifted up from the earth,  
draw us to your heart in the midst of this world,  
that all creation may be brought from bondage to freedom,  
from darkness to light, and from death to life;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.  
Amen.

### **Let Us Be Sent in Service**

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

O God of justice and love,  
we give thanks to you  
that you illumine our way through life  
with the words of your Son.  
Give us the light we need,  
awaken us to the needs of others,

and at the end bring all the world to your feast;  
through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.  
Amen.

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.  
Save us from the time of trial,  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever.  
Amen.

### **Sending Song**

“No storm can shake my inmost calm.” From a location with palm trees, let us listen as a pre-school/kindergarten teacher with a Lutheran connection sends us into the week ahead with “My Life Flows On in Endless Song” (ELW #763).

Here is the video link: <https://youtu.be/D0mbFedcH20>.

### **Benediction**

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.  
Amen.