

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT



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APRIL 6, 2025

Peace Lutheran Church



West Seattle, Washington



OUR FOCUS FOR THIS LENT: LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR

There are many examples of ongoing trauma besetting our world. The Christians whose stories we are lifting up on Sundays during Lent—St. Patrick (3/16); St. Oscar Romero (3/23); Harriet Tubman & Sojourner Truth (3/30); and Dietrich Bonhoeffer (4/6)—refused to allow fear to control or silence them. These ordinary people became extraordinary witnesses, telling the truth, breaking down barriers, challenging the status quo, and putting their own lives at risk while leading others to freedom. They embody the saying, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.” 1 John 4:18



We celebrate Christ’s presence in the Sacrament of the Table each week at Peace. Christ, our Host, meets us in this meal of grace and offers himself, fully embodied, in the bread and wine. He invites all to come and meet him in this Holy Meal.

✝ GATHERING ✝

P – *Presider* C – *Congregation* A – *Assisting Minister* L – *Lector*
ELW – *Evangelical Lutheran Worship Hymnal* ACS – *All Creation Sings*

PRELUDE

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Please rise in body or spirit and face the font.

During the season of Lent the font is placed near the entrance to the nave, reminding us that in baptism we enter into fellowship with Christ, and the church. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the service begins.

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

C **Amen.**

P Let us return to God, confessing our sin in the assurance of God’s abiding love.

Silence is kept for reflection

P Compassionate One,

C **you are slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, but our lives do not always reflect your love for the world. We do not show others the tender compassion you have shown to us. We do not welcome others with the radical hospitality you grant to all people. We place our needs and desires above those of others, at great cost to them. We squander the very gifts with which you sustain life on Earth. For all these reasons and others we struggle to name, we seek your forgiveness and the will to begin anew. Transform our lives and guide us again in the way of the cross, in the way of Jesus. Amen.**

P Beloved in Christ, God’s arms are always stretched open wide to welcome wandering ones home. In + Christ your sins are forgiven. You have a place in God’s house forever.

C **Thanks be to God.**

GATHERING HYMN

As We Gather at Your Table

ELW #522



1 As we gath-er at your ta - ble, as we lis - ten to your word,
2 Turn our wor-ship in - to wit-ness in the sac - ra - ment of life;
3 Gra - cious Spir - it, help us sum-mon oth-er guests to share that feast



help us know, O God, your pres-ence; let our hearts and minds be stirred.
send us forth to love and serve you, bring-ing peace where there is strife.
where tri - um-phiant Love will wel-come those who had been last and least.

Nour-ish us with sa - cred sto - ry till we claim it as our own;
 Give us, Christ, your great com - pas - sion to for - give as you for - gave;
 There no more will en - vy blind us nor will pride our peace de - stroy,

teach us through this ho - ly ban - quet how to make Love's vic - t'ry known.
 may we still be - hold your im - age in the world you died to save.
 as we join with saints and an - gels to re - peat the sound - ing joy.

GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
 and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

KYRIE

ELW page 98

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

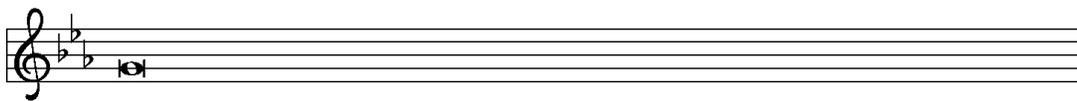
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,

and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray. Creator God, you prepare a new way in the wilderness, and your grace waters our desert. Open our hearts to be transformed by the new thing you are doing, that our lives may proclaim the extravagance of your love given to all through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

+ WORD +

FIRST READING: Isaiah 43:16-21

Vicki Martinez

This prophet of the exile declares that long ago the Lord performed mighty deeds and delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage. Now, the Lord is about to perform another act of deliverance.

This salvation leads the people to praise God.

Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea, a path in the mighty waters,

¹⁷who brings out chariot and horse, army and warrior;

they lie down, they cannot rise, they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:

¹⁸Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.

¹⁹I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

²⁰The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches;

for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, ²¹the people whom I formed for myself so that they might declare my praise.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING: Philippians 3:4b-14

Paul admits that his heritage and reputation could give him more reason than most people to place confidence in his spiritual pedigree. But the overwhelming grace of God in Jesus calls Paul to a new set of values.

If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: ⁵circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; ⁶as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

⁷Yet whatever gains I had, these I have come to regard as loss because of Christ. ⁸More than that, I regard everything as loss because of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and I regard them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but one that comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God based on faith. ¹⁰I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the sharing of his sufferings by becoming like him in his death, ¹¹if somehow I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

¹²Not that I have already obtained this or have already reached the goal but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. ¹³Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.

L The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

LENTEN ACCLAMATION *Please rise in body or spirit to receive the gospel.* **ELW page 103**

Let your stead-fast love come to us, O Lord.

Save us as you prom-ised; we will trust your word.

P The Holy Gospel according to John, the 12th Chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

GOSPEL: John 12:1-4, 6-8

The disciples misunderstand Mary's extravagant act of anointing Jesus' feet with a costly perfume. Jesus recognizes the true significance of her beautiful expression of love and commitment as an anticipation of his burial.

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. ²There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. ³Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. ⁴But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, ⁵"Why was this

perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" ⁷Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. ⁸You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

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

CHILDREN'S TIME

Nicole Klinemeier

SERMON

Rev. Erik Kindem

Time for reflection

HYMN OF THE DAY

By Gracious Powers

ELW #626



1 By gra - cious pow'rs so won - der - ful - ly shel - tered,
 2 Yet is this heart by its old foe tor - ment - ed,
 3 And when this cup you give is filled to brim - ming
 4 Yet when a - gain in this same world you give us
 5 By gra - cious pow'rs so faith - ful - ly pro - tect - ed,



and con - fi - dent - ly wait - ing come what may,
 still e - vil days bring bur - dens hard to bear;
 with bit - ter suf - f'ring, hard to un - der - stand,
 the joy we had, the bright - ness of your sun,
 so qui - et - ly, so won - der - ful - ly near,



we know that God is with us night and morn - ing,
 oh, give our fright - ened souls the sure sal - va - tion,
 we take it thank - ful - ly and with - out trem - bling
 we shall re - mem - ber all the days we lived through
 we live each day in hope, with you be - side us,



and nev - er fails to greet us each new day.
 for which, O Lord, you taught us to pre - pare.
 out of so good and so be - loved a hand.
 and our whole life shall then be yours a - lone.
 and go with you through ev - 'ry com - ing year.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Paul Bliss

A Led by the Spirit, let us turn to God in prayer for the church, the world, and all those in need.

Petitions are offered, ending with the response:

A God, in your mercy, C receive our prayer.

When all petitions have been offered:

P Receive the prayers of your people and draw all things together in your love, in the name of Jesus, who leads us from death to life.

C Amen.

+ MEAL +

SHARING THE PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING

Your financial gifts today support the ongoing ministry of our congregation, cooperative ventures of ELCA congregations throughout Western Washington, and Evangelical Lutheran ministries around the world. We invite you to give generously! You can place your gift in the offering plate, mail in a check, or connect to our secure [Tithe.ly Giving Page](https://www.tithe.ly) via this QR CODE. Whatever size, your gift makes difference—thank you!



OFFERTORY

We Raise Our Hands to You

ELW #690



1 We raise our hands to you, O Lord, like
2 What good and blessing you bestow are
3 Oh, make our barren trees to grow, our



emp - ty ves - sels. Oh, come to us and
free - ly giv - en. Your pow'r will make the
hands to blos - som, and let our lives bring



give us life from springs where liv - ing wa - ters flow.
weak - est strong and bar - ren branch - es start to bud.
forth such fruit that heals our neigh - bor's grief and pain.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

A Let us pray. Gracious Provider,

C you set your immense treasures among us, opening your heart to the world.

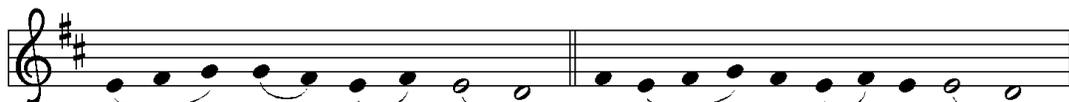
As we prepare to feast on your bountiful love, deepen our commitment to sharing those treasures with others, through our Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

ELW page 107



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.



Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE *Sung by Presider*

♪ *It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:*

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW page 108

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
 pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
 san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
 name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

THE LORD'S PRAYER (*ecumenical*)

P Renew us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

C **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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P All who are hungry, come! The feast of grace is spread.

C **Thanks be to God.**

DISTRIBUTION

We commune at the rail kneeling or standing. Extend your hands to receive bread or a gluten free wafer. Both wine (dark) and grape juice (light) are found in the ceramic cups. Place your empty cup in the box at the end of the front pew on your way back. Children are welcome to receive when their parents believe they are ready, with the support of the pastor. Any who prefer a blessing may cross their hands over their chest as they come forward.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMN

You Satisfy the Hungry Heart

Refrain

You sat - is - fy the hun - gry heart with gift of fin - est wheat.
Come give to us, O sav - ing Lord, the bread of life to eat.

- 1 As when the shep-herd calls his sheep, they know and heed his voice;
- 2 With joy - ful lips we sing to you our praise and grat - i - tude
- 3 Is not the cup we bless and share the blood of Christ out-poured?
- 4 The mys - t'ry of your pres-ence, Lord, no mor - tal tongue can tell:
- 5 You give your-self to us, O Lord; then self - less let us be,

Refrain

so when you call your fam-'ly, Lord, we fol - low and re - jice.
that you should count us wor - thy, Lord, to share this heav'n - ly food.
Do not one cup, one loaf, de - clare our one - ness in the Lord?
whom all the world can - not con - tain comes in our hearts to dwell.
to serve each oth - er in your name in truth and char - i - ty.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION *Please rise in body or spirit.*

A Let us pray. Generous Host, you have shared your feast with us and made us new. Send us now to set tables of love and grace in our communities, that your liberating love might nourish the world into freedom, in the name of the crucified one, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

+ SENDING +

BLESSING

P God our tender parent, God the crucified one, God the reconciling Spirit,
+ bless you now and forever.

C Amen.

SENDING HYMN

Will You Let Me Be Your Servant

ELW #659

1 Will you let me be your ser - vant, let me be as
2 We are pil - grims on a jour - ney, we are trav - 'lers
3 I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night - time
4 I will weep when you are weep - ing; when you laugh I'll
5 Will you let me be your ser - vant, let me be as

Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to
on the road; we are here to help each oth - er
of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you,
laugh with you. I will share your joy and sor - row
Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to

let you be my ser - vant, too.
walk the mile and bear the load.
speak the peace you long to hear.
till we've seen this jour - ney through.
let you be my ser - vant, too.

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Care for others as God cares for you.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE



CONTACT INFORMATION

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Pastor Erik Kindem's email:

Peace Lutheran web page:

Kathleen Keyes Office Admin.

Church Office hours:

206-935-1962

206-930-3172

Pastor@PeaceLutheranSeattle.org

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Tuesday through Thursday 10:00am-3:00pm

SERVING IN WORSHIP

Pastor	Rev. Erik Kindem
Minister of Music	Jon Lackey
Liturgical Assistant	Paul Bliss
Acolyte	Mateo Leon-Stephens
Lector	Vicki Martinez
Children's Sermon	Nicole Klinemeier
Greeters	Corinne Otakie, Shannon Williams
Ushers	Alan Jarvimaki, Barbara Hillier
Altar Care	Naomi Kindem
Communion Assistants	Naomi Kindem, Shannon Williams
Coffee Server	Jean Sides
Production Techs	Alex Wren, Matthew Toso
Counters	Paul Bliss, Jim Lukens
Nursery Attendant	Heidi Coy

OUR FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP

Thank you for your gifts which support God's mission at Peace, in the Northwest region, and internationally through the ELCA!

Offering Income received in March 2025

03/02/25	\$ 3,433.00
03/09/25	\$ 1,968.00
03/16/25	\$ 3,575.00
03/23/25	\$ 2,748.00
03/30/25	\$ 488.00
<u>Electronic</u>	<u>\$16,938.18</u>
Total	\$29,153.18

THIS WEEK'S ACT FOR CREATION

In 2022, households worldwide wasted over 1 billion meals a day, while 783 million people were affected by hunger and a third of humanity faced food insecurity. We often throw out food because we're not certain it's still safe to eat. Perhaps this week, in your own *Forty Ways to Care for Creation* Lenten fast, you can reduce your own food waste! The website *Eat Or Toss* (<https://www.eatortoss.com/>) can help you decide if the food you have on hand is still safe to eat. It also offers Use-It-Up recipes. Just search for the ingredient you want to use.

Pray for Creation: We thank God for storytellers, poets, and artists who help us to recognize and appreciate the connection we have with our kin of land, sea, and sky.

FINAL SOUP SUPPER THIS WEDNESDAY

Come and join others for our last soup supper at 6:00 before we assemble for worship at 7:00 on April 9. Two choices of soup are offered each week (one will be vegetarian), and they are accompanied by bread. We still need a few folks to set up the fellowship hall or clean up after the meal. A sign-up sheet is in the narthex.

THIS SUNDAY IS 1ST SUNDAY FOOD FOR OUR NEIGHBORS

Canned corn and tortillas of all kinds are the featured specials--by request!-- for the April 6 1st Sunday Food for our Neighbors gathering. (Other shelf-stable and fresh produce items are always welcome, too, of course.) Last month we distributed over 120 pounds of your donations to the White Center Food Bank, the Saturday Welcome Table, and our own Little Free pantry on the patio. Thank you! Like to plan ahead? Next month's Special Feature: tab-top canned food of all kinds: ready-to-eat entrees, fruit, vegetables, juice.

LOOKING AHEAD TO HOLY WEEK ~ APRIL 13 - 20

Palm/Passion Sunday, April 13, marks the beginning of Holy Week. The day will begin with a cross-generational exploration at 9:15 am, walking us through the different events of Jesus' final week. There will be stations to explore each major event from the triumphal entry to the cross. A light breakfast will be served. One of the stations will help us create clusters of plants which we will use in place of palm branches this year (see article below.) **The Peace Choir will present the Choral Cantata *Candles of Grace*. Other Services include:**

- April 17, MAUNDY THURSDAY @ 7pm
- April 18 GOOD FRIDAY @ 7pm
- April 19 EASTER VIGIL @ 7pm

CELEBRATE THE RESURRECTION – APRIL 20th!

Our celebration of Christ's resurrection begins with Easter Brunch from 9:00am – 10:00am served by our young people, followed by **Children's activities at 9:45am. Festival Worship begins @ 10:30am**, with special music provided by the Peace Ringers and the Peace Choir.

Consider who you can invite to join you for this celebrative service – Family? Neighbors? Friends? Grab an invitation card from the narthex and hand it or mail it to them. Share the joy!

WHAT? NO PALM BRANCHES?!?

On Palm Sunday this year, instead of palm branches, we will join Christians around the world in waving local plants, grasses and branches to commemorate the opening of Holy Week. Why the change? Many of the palms delivered in the past couple of years were moldy. While the worship team will have a variety of foliage available on Palm Sunday, we encourage *you* to bring plants, grasses or branches from your garden and perhaps decorate them with ribbons and flowers. Even without traditional palms, it promises to be a colorful and celebratory day! *Caution: please avoid bringing foliage that will shake off dust and seeds, such as ferns and dry lavender. Thanks!*

CODE RED BLOOD DONATIONS NEEDED!

More blood is being transfused to local patients than is being donated, and we're running out – fast. Blood donors are urgently needed to combat a severe shortage: less than half of the donors needed in March have signed up to give. Patient need is high locally and requests for emergency shipments of blood are coming in from across the country. We can change that by booking appointments today at **Bloodworks donor centers** and **drives** to donate in the weeks ahead. **How can you help?** We're urging everyone who is **eligible** and feeling healthy to fill immediate appointments at a donor center or blood drive near you. To make your next appointment, visit **BloodworksNW.org**, call **800-398-7888**, or text **BWAPP** to **999-777** to download and book an appointment on the new Bloodworks App.

PRAYER LIST

Please continue to remember the sick and home-bound of our congregation and others who have sought our prayers: Sick/Recovering: Rich Albers; Carrol Andersen; Brittany Baker; Marlen Boivin; Deric Bevier; Jan Burt; Jeff & Dolly Chale; Cortney; Mike & Marsha Davis; Georgine Epley; Jeffrey

Epley; Bob Gaines; Ann Gault; Jon Gault; Caity Gerhardt; Donna Heiland; Ellen Heritage; Maria Iriarte; Beth Jacob-Files; Mary Jacob; Sandy Kaduce; Ken Keyes; Kari Kindem; Gordon Knight; John Lindsay; Jan Madsen; Evelyn Martinez; Pete & Kelly McIntyre; Steve Metzler; Bill Morrell; Kathy Peters; Michelle Pierce; Kelly Renfro; Aaden Smith; Nancy Spannaus; Doug Sprague; Dave Stansbury; Sean Stephens; Sarah Taylor; Michele Tomseth; Megan Kindem Webber; Pam Webber; Roger Wingfield; Audrey Zemke. **Homebound**: Connie Benjamin; Lu Kramer; Marjorie Johnson; Inta Zagars

PROTOCOL FOR PRAYER LIST We will keep people on the prayer list for one month unless otherwise specified or unless you contact the Peace office to extend the time.

RECONCILING IN CHRIST AFFIRMATION OF WELCOME



Christ calls us to reconciliation and wholeness in a world that can be filled with alienation and brokenness. In faithfulness to the Gospel and to our Lutheran heritage, we answer Christ's call to be agents of healing and safety, particularly for people who have been marginalized by our society. As a Christian community, we recognize that our congregation is strengthened by diversity, the embrace of equity, and our commitment to anti-racism. We welcome and celebrate the inclusion of those of any race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression into the life and mission of our congregation. We invite all people to join us as we work to better understand the meaning of grace for our lives.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We respectfully acknowledge that we gather on the ancestral homeland of the DUWAMISH PEOPLE. We recognize the DUWAMISH and other SALISH PEOPLES, the FIRST STEWARDS of this land, who have called this region home—and continue to call it home—from time immemorial. We join with them and with all people who see the Earth, its creatures, watersheds, and habitats, as part of an integral whole reflecting our Creator's intention for wholeness and balance.

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RECYCLE ROUNDUP

SATURDAY, APRIL 26, 9 AM-3 PM

FAUNTLEROY CHURCH PARKING LOT

9140 CALIFORNIA AVE. SW

BRING ANY OF THESE ITEMS FOR FREE, RESPONSIBLE RECYCLING!

Assorted metal	Answering/voicemail machines	A/C chargers
Circuit boards	Batteries (UPS, rechargeable, laptop, cell, lithium, dry-cell NiCad, vehicle)	Amplifiers
Computer mice	Bicycles/foot scooters	Cabling
Computer parts	Cable TV converter equipment	CD players
Docking stations	Calculators & adding machines	Computers
External connectors	Electric toothbrush heads	Dishwashers
Fax machines	Electronic components (mixed)	Disk drives
Filing cabinets	Generators (empty gas & oil)	DVD players
Gaming systems	Lawnmowers (empty gas & oil)	Edgers
Garden tools	Monitors (LCD only)	Hard drives
Garden tractors	PDA/handheld systems	Keyboards
Graphics cards	Printer toner cartridges (put in bag)	Laptops
IT peripherals	Printers & parts (desktop-size only; laser & inkjet)	Microwaves
Lighting equipment	Radios & equipment (two-way, CB, Walkie-Talkie)	Modems
Metal pots	Satellite receivers & dishes	Power tools
Mother boards	Satellite TV equipment	Projectors
Networking switches	Small appliances (coffee makers, blenders, toasters, etc.)	Receivers
Paging equipment	Sound keyboards & mics	Routers
Phones (office, cell)	Tablets (iPad, surface, other)	Scanners
Power supplies	Uninterruptible power equipment	Servers
Remote controls	Weed Eaters (empty gas & oil)	Speakers
Sewing machines		Stereos
UPS systems		VCR players
Video cameras		Typewriters
Water heaters		Vacuums
		Wires

DO NOT BRING THESE ITEMS

Books	Alkaline batteries	Cardboard
Glass	Hazardous waste	Chemicals
Oil	Large appliances	Gasoline
Paint	Other non-metal items	Lightbulbs
Plastics	Toilets/sinks/tubs	Styrofoam
Tires		Televisions

Anything with Freon, inc. water fountains & dehumidifiers

QUESTIONS? INFO@1GREENPLANET.COM OR 425-428-4414

EXTRAORDINARY WITNESSES April 6, 2025

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Theologian, Martyr (1906-1945)



Born: Feb. 4, 1906, Breslau, Germany

Died: April 9, 1945, Flossenburg Prison

Cause of death: Hanging Charge: Treason

There is no doubt Dietrich Bonhoeffer was extraordinary: keen intellect; lecturer at University of Berlin at age 25; learned lover of music, philosophy, literature, nature; pacifist and admirer of Gandhi. Widely regarded as a leader, he would the first to demur, saying he was a follower...of Jesus Christ.

It was as a follower of Jesus Christ that, in 1933, after a post-doctoral year in New York brought him into direct contact with the Black Church in Harlem and the experience of racism, Bonhoeffer abandoned his academic career and denounced on the radio a political system which corrupted a nation and made the Führer its idol and God. It was as a follower of Jesus that Bonhoeffer lived and taught in a clandestine seminary of the Confessing Church. It was as a follower of Jesus that he left the U.S. a second time—against the pleas of friends and colleagues—to take the last ship to Germany. *“I shall have no right,”* Bonhoeffer wrote to Reinhold Niebuhr, *“to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people.”*

On April 5, 1943, Bonhoeffer, his sister and her husband, were arrested by the Gestapo, suspects in a foiled assassination attempt on Hitler. In a letter to his parents from prison in Berlin, Bonhoeffer wrote: *“I am sure of God’s hand and guidance....You must never doubt that I am thankful and glad to go the way which I am being led.”*

On the first day of 1945, the last time he would turn the calendar to a new year, he wrote a poem as a gift to his fellow prisoners which included these words:

*While all the powers of Good aid and attend us
Boldly we’ll face the future, be it what may.
At even, and at morn, God will befriend us,
and, oh, most surely on each new year’s day.*

The entire poem is one of our treasures: *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* hymn 626, *“By Gracious Powers.”*

Bonhoeffer’s last recorded words, the first Sunday after Easter, 1945, as he was being taken from his cell to the gallows, were, *“This is the end, but for me the beginning of life.”*

When Christ calls, he bids us come and die. – Dietrich Bonhoeffer