



OPENING OF WORSHIP ()

*CALL TO WORSHIP

L: God's people have been called to gather.

**P: From breast-feeding infants to aged grandparents,
all are welcome.**

L: God's people have been called to repent.

**P: From those who wear their faults on their sleeves,
to those whose secret hearts are broken,
all are welcome.**

L: God's people have been called to be reconciled to our God.

**P: From those who have turned away,
to those whose pain whispers in the night,
all are welcome.**

*SONG OF GATHERING

Lord, Who Throughout These Forty Days 269

OPENING PRAYER (unison)

God with whom we walk this Lenten path,

Bless us this day as we begin the long journey to the cross.

Come to this place and remember your covenant with us.

Remember the promise you made with us mere mortals
to remain with us despite our dust.

Shower your Spirit upon us for we need direction on this long road ahead.

Care for us, your children, as we weather this winding road,
following the faithful path of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

HYMN

Take Time to Be Holy 395

LESSON I Joel 2:1-2. 12-17

Blow the horn in Zion;

give a shout on my holy mountain!

Let all the people of the land tremble,

for the day of the Lord is coming.

It is near—

2 a day of darkness and no light,

a day of clouds and thick darkness!

Like blackness spread out upon the mountains,

a great and powerful army comes,

unlike any that has ever come before them,

or will come after them in centuries ahead.

- ¹² **Yet even now, says the Lord,
return to me with all your hearts,
with fasting, with weeping, and with sorrow;**
- ¹³ **tear your hearts
and not your clothing.
Return to the Lord your God,
for he is merciful and compassionate,
very patient, full of faithful love,
and ready to forgive.**
- ¹⁴ **Who knows whether he will have a change of heart
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for the Lord your God?**
- ¹⁵ **Blow the horn in Zion;
demand a fast;
request a special assembly.**
- ¹⁶ **Gather the people;
prepare a holy meeting;
assemble the elders;
gather the children,
even nursing infants.**
- Let the groom leave his room
and the bride her chamber.**
- ¹⁷ **Between the porch and the altar
let the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep.
Let them say, "Have mercy, Lord, on your people,
and don't make your inheritance a disgrace,
an example of failure among the nations.
Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"**

Liturgist: May God add a blessing to this reading.

*LESSON 2

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

"Be careful that you don't practice your religion in front of people to draw their attention. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

² "Whenever you give to the poor, don't blow your trumpet as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets so that they may get praise from people. I assure you, that's the only reward they'll get. ³ But when you give to the poor, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing ⁴ so that you may give to the poor in secret. Your Father who sees what you do in secret will reward you.

⁵ “When you pray, don’t be like hypocrites. They love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners so that people will see them. I assure you, that’s the only reward they’ll get. ⁶ But when you pray, go to your room, shut the door, and pray to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees what you do in secret will reward you.

¹⁶ “And when you fast, don’t put on a sad face like the hypocrites. They distort their faces so people will know they are fasting. I assure you that they have their reward. ¹⁷ When you fast, brush your hair and wash your face. ¹⁸ Then you won’t look like you are fasting to people, but only to your Father who is present in that secret place. Your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

¹⁹ “Stop collecting treasures for your own benefit on earth, where moth and rust eat them and where thieves break in and steal them. ²⁰ Instead, collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don’t eat them and where thieves don’t break in and steal them. ²¹ Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

L: This is the Word of God for all people.

P: Thanks be to God.

MESSAGE

“What exactly was I promised?”

SIGNS OF REPENTENCE (As part of the message - explained not given)

*CLOSING SONG

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian 402