

# 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT



***Welcome to  
St. Paul Lutheran Church  
Child Development Center and Pre-School  
Rev. Dr. George R. Qualley, D.R.S., Ph.D., Pastor***

March 30, 2025



**COME HOME**

**LUKE 15:11-32**

**St. Paul  
Lutheran**



**Taylor, TX  
LCMC**

***Welcome to  
St. Paul Lutheran Church  
Child Development Center and Pre-School***

**Rev. Dr. George R. Qualley, D.R.S., Ph.D., Pastor**

God is love.  
Whoever lives in love  
lives in God, and God  
in them.  
Live in His love.

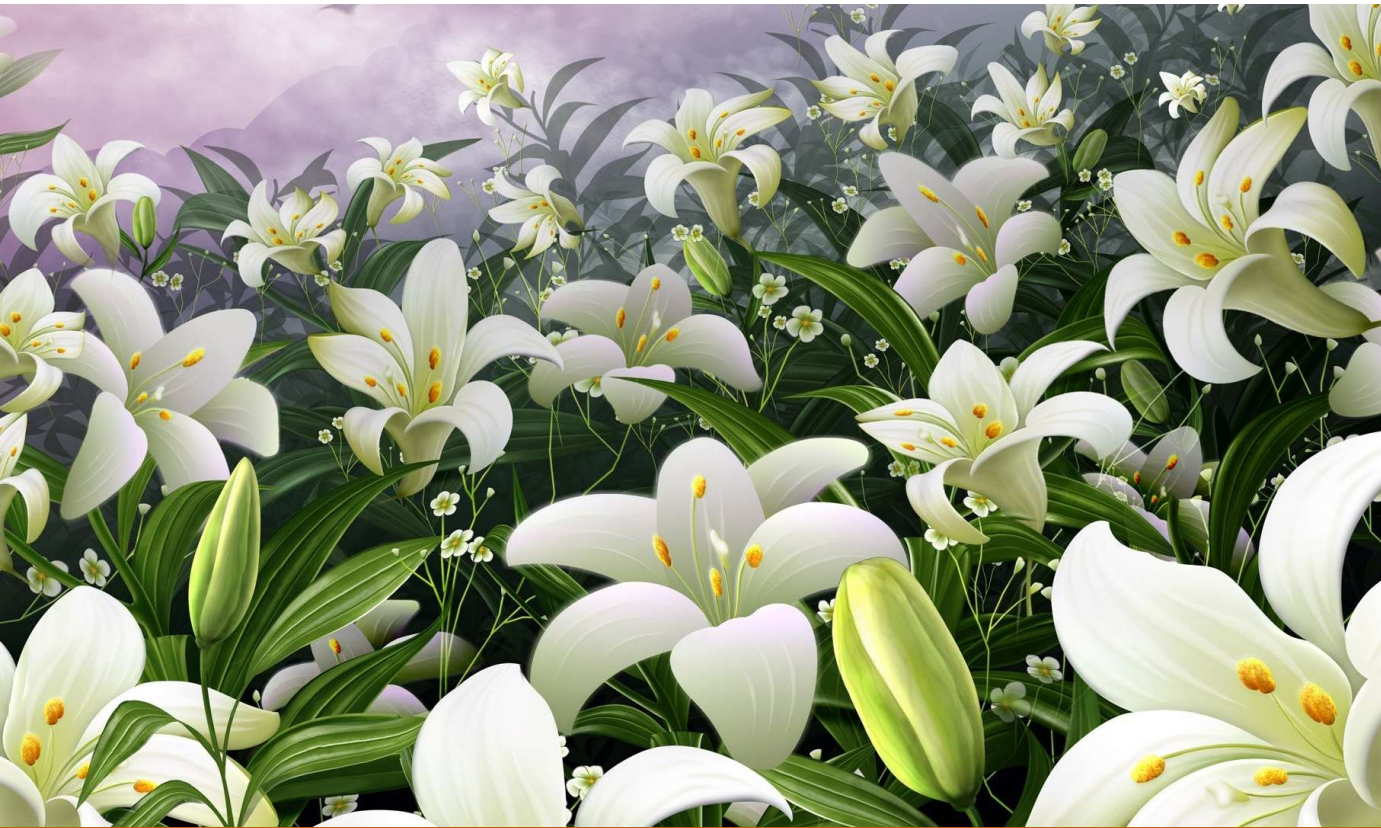


**lcmc**  
Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ

WELCOME

WE'RE GLAD YOU JOINED US





Monday, April 14 is the deadline for ordering Easter Lilies for Easter Sunday.

Order forms are available in the bulletin and on our website under the Announcements section.

## **INTRODUCTION**

*The psalm sets the tone this day: "Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sin is put away!" Happy are those who have "become the righteousness of God" in the merits of Christ Jesus. Happy are those for whom the forgiveness of God has "rolled away . . . the disgrace" of former times. Happy is the father at the return of his prodigal son. Happy are we that our sins are forgiven for Jesus' sake. Rejoice!*

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

**Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Compassionate One,  
**you are slow to anger and abounding in  
steadfast love,  
but our lives do not always reflect you  
and 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 oppress others, even though you have set us free again and again.**

**We squander the abundant gifts of the earth.**

**Transform our lives**

**and guide us again in the way of the cross.**

**Amen.**



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

## **Gathering Hymn**

**“Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing”**

**Hymn # 807**

**1 Come, thou Fount of ev'ry  
blessing,  
tune my heart to sing thy  
grace;**

Hymn # 807

**streams of mercy, never  
ceasing,  
call for songs of loudest  
praise.**

Hymn # 807

**While the hope of endless  
glory  
fills my heart with joy and  
love,**

Hymn # 807



**teach me ever to adore thee;  
may I still thy goodness  
prove.**

Hymn # 807

**2 Here I raise my Ebenezer:  
"Hither by thy help I've  
come";**

Hymn # 807

**and I hope, by thy good  
pleasure,  
safely to arrive at home.**

Hymn # 807

**Jesus sought me when a  
stranger,  
wand'ring from the fold of  
God;**

Hymn # 807

**he, to rescue me from  
danger,  
interposed his precious  
blood.**

Hymn # 807



**Final Oh, to grace how great a  
debtor  
daily I'm constrained to be;**

Hymn # 807

**let that grace now like a  
fetter  
bind my wand'ring heart to  
thee.**

Hymn # 807

**Prone to wander, Lord, I feel  
it;  
prone to leave the God I  
love.**

Hymn # 807

**Here's my heart, oh, take and  
seal it;  
seal it for thy courts above.**

Hymn # 807

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

**And also with you.**



## **Kyrie**

*Kyrie eleison*

***Lord, have mercy.***

*Christe eleison*

***Christ, have mercy.***

*Kyrie eleison*

***Lord, have mercy.***

## **Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray

God of compassion, you welcome the wayward, and you embrace us all with your mercy. By our baptism clothe us with garments of your grace, and feed us at the table of your love, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **WORD**

*FIRST READING: Joshua 5:9-12*

*By celebrating the Passover and eating the produce of the promised land instead of the miraculous manna that had sustained them in the desert, the Israelites symbolically bring their forty years of wilderness wandering to an end at Gilgal.*

<sup>9</sup>The LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away from you the disgrace of Egypt." And so that place is called Gilgal to this day.

<sup>10</sup>While the Israelites were camped in Gilgal they kept the passover in the evening on the fourteenth day of the month in the plains of Jericho. <sup>11</sup>On the day after the passover, on that very day, they ate the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain. <sup>12</sup>The manna ceased on the day they ate the produce of the land, and the Israelites no longer had manna; they ate the crops of the land of Canaan that year.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM: PSALM 32

*Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD. (Ps. 32:11)*

<sup>1</sup> Happy are they whose transgressions are forgiven,  
and whose sin is put away!

<sup>2</sup> **Happy are they to whom the LORD imputes no guilt,  
and in whose spirit there is no guile!**

<sup>3</sup> While I held my tongue, my bones withered away,  
because of my groaning all day long.

<sup>4</sup> **For your hand was heavy upon me day  
and night;  
my moisture was dried up as in the  
heat of summer.**

<sup>5</sup> Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and did not conceal my guilt.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD."

Then you forgave me the guilt of my sin.

<sup>6</sup> **Therefore all the faithful will make their prayers to you in time of trouble; when the great waters overflow, they shall not reach them.**

<sup>7</sup> You are my hiding-place; you preserve me from trouble;

you surround me with shouts of deliverance.

<sup>8</sup> **"I will instruct you and teach you in the way that you should go;  
I will guide you with my eye.**



<sup>9</sup> Do not be like horse or mule, which have no understanding;  
who must be fitted with bit and bridle,  
or else they will not stay near you."

<sup>10</sup> **Great are the tribulations of the wicked;  
but mercy embraces those who trust in the LORD.**

<sup>11</sup> Be glad, you righteous, and rejoice in the LORD;  
shout for joy, all who are true of heart.

## **SECOND READING: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21**

*One way to describe the gospel is the promise that in Christ everything is transformed into newness. All mistakes, all deliberate sins, all old history is reconciled with Christ's resurrection. This is Paul's strong message to the congregation in the city of Corinth.*

<sup>16</sup>From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. <sup>17</sup>So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us.

<sup>20</sup>So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## ***Lenten Acclamation***

***Return to the Lord, your God,  
return to the Lord, your God,  
who is gracious and merciful,  
slow to anger, and abounding  
in steadfast love.***

# GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to  
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

## **GOSPEL:** Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

*Jesus tells a parable about a son who ponders his father's love only after he has spurned it. The grace he receives is beyond his hopes. That same grace is a crisis for an older brother who believes it is his obedience that has earned his place in the father's home.*

<sup>1</sup>Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to [Jesus.] <sup>2</sup>And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, "This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."

<sup>3</sup>So he told them this parable: <sup>11b</sup>"There was a man who had two sons. <sup>12</sup>The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them.



<sup>13</sup>A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living.

<sup>14</sup>When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. <sup>15</sup>So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. <sup>16</sup>He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything.

<sup>17</sup>But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! <sup>18</sup>I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; <sup>19</sup>I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands." ' <sup>20</sup>So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

<sup>21</sup>Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' <sup>22</sup>But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. <sup>23</sup>And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; <sup>24</sup>for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

<sup>25</sup>Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. <sup>26</sup>He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. <sup>27</sup>He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' <sup>28</sup>Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him.

<sup>29</sup>But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. <sup>30</sup>But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' <sup>31</sup>Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.'

<sup>32</sup>But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**



CHILDREN'S  
SERMON

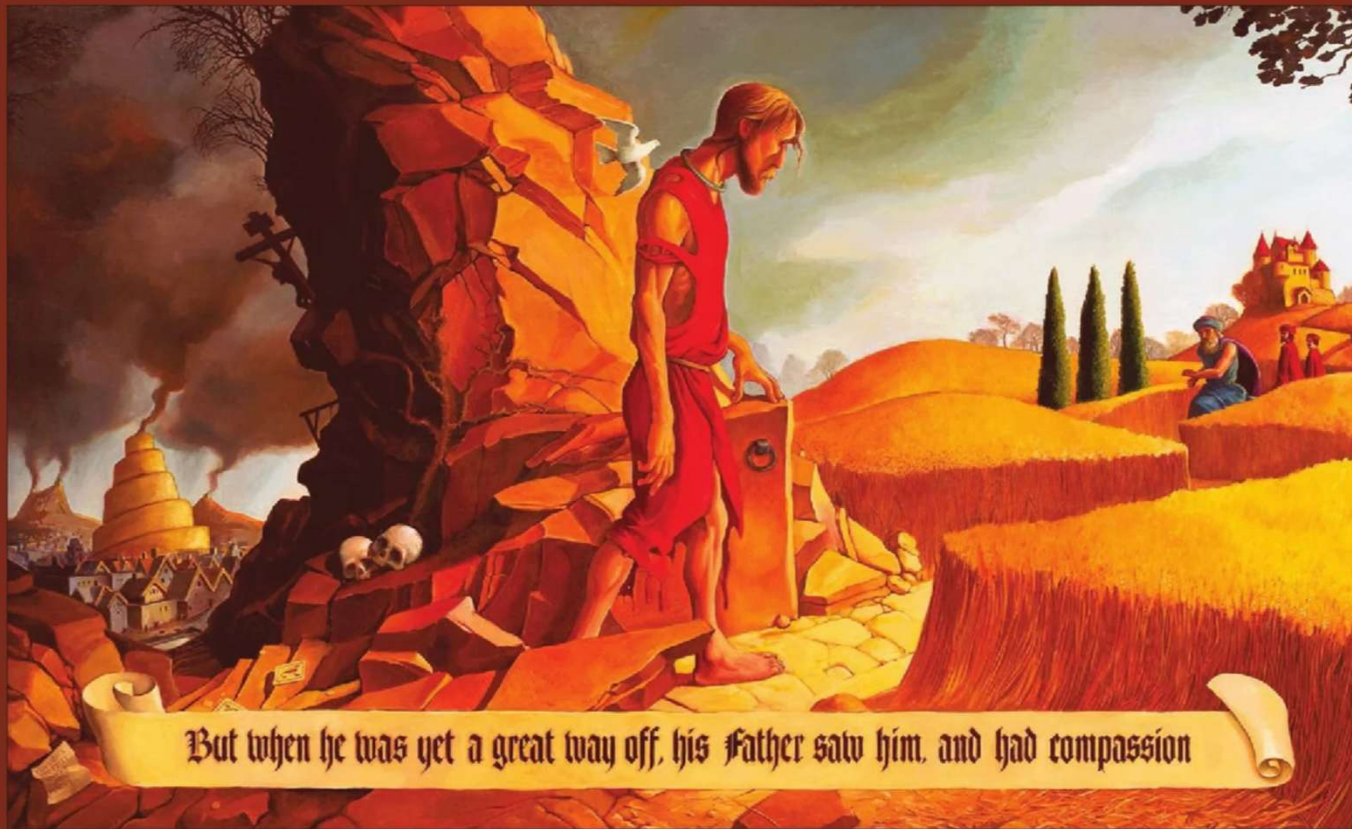
# **Sermon**

Rev. Dr. George R. Qualley



# The Father & His Two Sons

THE ART OF FORGIVENESS



Images of the Prodigal Son from the Larry & Mary Gerbens Collection

## **Hymn of the Day**

**“Softly and Tenderly Jesus Is Calling”**

**Hymn # 608**

**<sup>1</sup> Softly and tenderly Jesus is  
calling,  
calling for you and for me.  
See, on the portals he's waiting  
and watching,  
watching for you and for me.  
[Refrain]**

Hymn # 608

**[Refrain]**

**"Come home, come home!  
You who are weary, come home.'  
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is  
calling,  
calling, "O sinner, come home!"**

Hymn # 608

**2 Why should we tarry when  
Jesus is pleading,  
pleading for you and for me?  
Why should we linger and heed  
not his mercies,  
mercies for you and for me?  
[Refrain]**

Hymn # 608

**[Refrain]**

**"Come home, come home!  
You who are weary, come home.'  
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is  
calling,  
calling, "O sinner, come home!"**

Hymn # 608

**Final Oh, for the wonderful love  
he has promised,  
promised for you and for me!  
Though we have sinned, he has  
mercy and pardon,  
pardon for you and for me.**

**[Refrain]**

Hymn # 608

**[Refrain]**

**"Come home, come home!  
You who are weary, come home.'  
Earnestly, tenderly, Jesus is  
calling,  
calling, "O sinner, come home!"**

Hymn # 608



With the whole church let us confess our faith.

## **CREED**

*Apostles' Creed*

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son,  
our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the  
Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and  
the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

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

A brief silence.

God of faithful promise, make your church a new creation in Christ. As you reconcile us to yourself, guide us also in your way of reconciliation, that through confession and forgiveness, repentance and reparations, your church may bear witness to your love. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

God of new beginnings, restore balance to the earth. Send rain to places of drought and sunshine to places of flooding, that the produce of the land may again support life. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of prodigal grace, unite the nations as fellow members of the human family. Give leaders the courage to put aside pride and ego, to cease squandering lives and time, and to work for the well-being of all. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of boundless love, receive with open arms any in need of compassion. Embrace all who are far from home or estranged from loved ones, and all who live with regret. Embolden your people to offer and to seek forgiveness. Bless and comfort those who are ill, and we remember our friends and family members before you. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

God of radical inclusion, widen human circles to welcome all who are excluded. Bless the work of disability ministries and multicultural ministries; that the welcome of Jesus be extended to all. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**



We pray for all our military, especially those deployed. We keep in our prayers all the Wounded Warriors that have returned home to heal. We pray for our missionaries: for Cheryl Kruckemeyer our missionary in Tanzania, for Jan in the Home Office, serving with the World Mission Prayer League, and for our sister congregation at Faith Lutheran Church in Little Falls, Minnesota

We also celebrate and lift before you the ministry of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Victoria, Texas and their pastor, La Andriamihaja. Bless their work for your Kingdom's sake. Bless and protect all our local nurses, doctors, healthcare workers and first responders, our students, teachers and school administrators. God, in your mercy,  
**receive our prayer.**

God of resurrection life, welcome home all who have died. We thank you for their lives and entrust them into your keeping, where true reconciliation and eternal peace are found. God, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

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.

**Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**Amen.**

## **Canticle of Thanksgiving**

*Refrain* ***Salvation belongs to our God  
and to Christ the Lamb for ever and  
ever.***

***<sup>1</sup> Great and wonderful are your deeds, O God of the universe; just and true are your ways, O Ruler of all the nations.***

***Who can fail to honor you, Lord, and sing the glory of your name?***

*Refrain* **Salvation belongs to our God  
and to Christ the Lamb forever and  
ever.**

***2 For you alone are the Holy One,  
and blessed is the one whose  
name is the Word of God.  
All praise and thanks to you, holy  
God!***



*Refrain* ***Salvation belongs to our God  
and to Christ the Lamb forever and  
ever.***

# **THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Let us pray.

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.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass  
against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom, and the power,  
and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

## **SENDING**

## **BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you peace.

**Amen.**

**Sending Song**

**“My Life Flow On in Endless Song”**

**Hymn # 763**

**<sup>1</sup> My life flows on in endless  
song;  
above earth's lamentation,  
I catch the sweet, though far-  
off hymn  
that hails a new creation.**

Hymn # 763

**[Refrain]**



**[Refrain]**

**No storm can shake my inmost  
calm  
while to that Rock I'm clinging.**

**Hymn # 763**

**Since Christ is Lord of heaven  
and earth,  
how can I keep from singing?**

Hymn # 763

**2 Through all the tumult and  
the strife,**

**I hear that music ringing.**

**It finds an echo in my soul.**

**How can I keep from singing?**

**[Refrain]**

Hymn # 763

**[Refrain]**

**No storm can shake my inmost  
calm  
while to that Rock I'm clinging.**

Hymn # 763

**Since Christ is Lord of heaven  
and earth,  
how can I keep from singing?**

Hymn # 763

**3 What though my joys and  
comforts die?**

**The Lord my Savior liveth.**

**What though the darkness  
gather round?**

**Songs in the night he giveth.**

**[Refrain]**

Hymn # 763

**[Refrain]**

**No storm can shake my inmost  
calm  
while to that Rock I'm clinging.**

**Hymn # 763**

**Since Christ is Lord of heaven  
and earth,  
how can I keep from singing?**

Hymn # 763



**Final The peace of Christ**

**makes fresh my heart,**

**a fountain ever springing!**

**All things are mine since I am**

**his!**

**How can I keep from singing?**

**[Refrain]**

**Hymn # 763**

**[Refrain]**

**No storm can shake my inmost  
calm  
while to that Rock I'm clinging.**

Hymn # 763

**Since Christ is Lord of heaven  
and earth,  
how can I keep from singing?**

Hymn # 763

# DISMISSAL

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

**Thanks be to God.**

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