

March Newsletter

To our Zion Family,

At Sunday's service, Kelli Watson played two traditional hymns whose words and melodies are imprinted in my memory: A Mighty Fortress is Our God and The Old Rugged Cross (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JS9P8d2iOc>). While listening, I was transported back to sitting in the sanctuary with all of you at different times as we sang these hymns together. (I can hear Bob Hunter make the key change in the final verse and feel the guaranteed stir of emotion within me.) During our Sunday morning worship—either on Zoom, livestreamed, or while reading the Service of the Word, I hope you, too, hear and feel the sense of community we have shared, do now in the best way possible, and will again in the future.

Announcements and updates:

-Our Feb. 28th service will be offered remotely (via Zoom, livestream, and Service of the Word) and NOT in-person. Although the rate of positive tests taken yielding evidence of COVID-19 for Oneida County have remained relatively low (below 3%) for most of the past two weeks, we do not yet have enough members of our Zion congregation prepared to return to the sanctuary. Based on the poll taken during the Sunday service's "joyful chaos" two weeks ago and the very limited responses received via email and calls to the church office, only about 10 members of our congregation stated that they were ready to return to the sanctuary. Several congregants indicated that, once they have received both doses of the vaccine, they would be ready to return. The health and safety of our congregation remains our highest priority. We are planning in-person worship for Palm Sunday (March 28th) and Easter (April 4th). Assuming the infection rates remain low and enough Zion members are ready to return, we'll look forward to gathering together on those upcoming Sundays in Holy Week.

-As a result, this Sunday we will continue with our remote worship practice, offering the opportunity to attend the service via Zoom, livestreamed on Facebook, or by using the printed Service of the Word, which you will find later in this mailing.

To join this Sunday's service via Zoom, same log-in as last week:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwwSTBER2lNb1o1Qzd6WGxDdz09>

Meeting ID: 843-5484 0714, Password: 022654. Or by PHONE, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654# US (New York). If you would prefer to view the service via livestream on our YouTube channel, you can do so by visiting our page at: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzOtbfcE2z7-bIPvxp62lA>.

-Members of Zion are invited to attend the Wednesday Evening Lenten Service series at Our Saviour Lutheran Church. These services will be led by our transition pastor, Anita Mohr, starting Feb. 24th. The service is offered by Zoom at 7:00 PM using this link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89925845055> Meeting ID: 899 2584 5055. One tap mobile +19292056099,,89925845055# US (New York). The service will utilize the Holden Evening Service booklet. Copies can be picked up from the bin outside the front door at Zion or call/email Sara and she will mail one to you. You can attend the entire series or single services; it is not necessary to attend all if your schedule does not permit.

-Zion congregants are also invited to attend the Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Holy Week services at Our Saviour. These services will be offered remotely. Zoom links will be provided as we move closer to Holy Week. Several Zion congregants attended the Ash Wednesday Zoom service at Our Saviour. We are grateful to Pastor Anita and the Our Saviour congregation for their gracious invitation to join them.

This past Sunday's gospel reading was taken from Mark 1: 9-15, telling of Jesus's baptism in the Jordan by John, followed by 40 days in the wilderness where he was tempted by Satan, surrounded by wild animals, and attended

to by angels. (Patsy reminded us that the Israelites spent 40 years wandering the desert. Karen Toepp followed with, “Well, one down, 39 to go!” Thanks for the chuckle, Karen!) Rev. Janet’s sermon took us from that gospel passage to Maurice Sendak’s children’s book, *Where the Wild Things Are*, and Max sailing off to face the “wild things” in his world. Rather than cower in fear, Max looked his “wild things” in the eye, facing them head-on. Max’s “wild things” became less threatening and they eventually befriended one another. Rev. Janet brought this wonderful thread full circle, encouraging us to look the “wild things” of our day—the anxiety, frustration, fears, sadness—in the eye and, supported by the “angels” in our lives, face the challenges we face and not have them win the day. We are fortunate to be surrounded by so many “angels” here at Zion. Let us continue to support one another, one day at a time, as we make our way through the current “wilderness” to a brighter day.

Mary Lou Millar, a long-time and beloved member of our Zion congregation, turns 90 years old on March 1st. Mary Lou is active on Zion's Facebook page. A staff member from Lutheran Care reached out to us because they started a “90 Cards for the 90th Birthday” campaign and hope to get as many friends as possible to send cards. The address is:

Mary Lou Millar
115 Jay Street Rear Ent.
Chittenango, NY 13037

The peace of Christ be with us all!
Mark Thompson, church council president



SERVICE OF THE WORD – February 28, 2021
GATHERING

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, the keeper of the covenant, the source of steadfast love, our rock and our redeemer. **Amen.** God hears us when we cry, and draws us close in Jesus Christ. Let us return to the one who is full of compassion.

Fountain of living water,

Pour out your mercy over us. Our sin is heavy, and we long to be free. Rebuild what we have ruined and mend what we have torn. Wash us in your cleansing flood. Make us alive in the Spirit to follow in the way of Jesus, as healers and restorers of the world you so love. Amen.

Beloved, God’s word never fails. The promise rests on grace: by the saving love of Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God, your sins are forgiven, and God remembers them no more. Journey in the way of Jesus. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn: *God Loved the World vs. 1 & 5 Hymn #323 –Kelli Watson*

Vs. 1 God loved the world so that he gave his only Son the lost to save, that all who would in him believe should everlasting life receive.

Vs. 5 All glory to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Three in one! To you, O blessed Trinity, be praise now and eternally!

Prayer of the Day

O God, by the passion of your blessed Son you made an instrument of shameful death to be for us the means of life. Grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may gladly suffer shame and loss for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16

Second Reading: Romans 4:13-25

Gospel: Mark 8:31-38

Sermon: -Rev. Jennifer DeWeerth

This is a difficult scripture, this teaching of Jesus about losing our lives. This teaching about taking up a cross. That's what I'm going to talk about, but *I'll be going the long way round.* Bear with me.

For many years~this is going back ten or 15 years ago~ my favorite moment of the week was when **This I Believe** was broadcast on Mondays on National Public Radio. For four years I enjoyed those three minute spoken essays. Then **StoryCorps** took its place, but on Friday mornings. These few minutes of radio seemed to me even better because, instead of carefully crafted essays, you feel like you're "listening in to America" as you hear conversations between family members and people whose lives intersected at critical moments. I've heard sons interview their moms, soldiers and war veterans talking to loved ones, people who came to this country decades ago explaining to grandchildren what it's like to be an immigrant, adults interviewing the high school teacher who changed their life, and more.

Always about three minutes of deep questions and answers. People sit in a recording booth and ask their best friend or their grandfather or their neighbor: Do you have regrets? What experience has most changed your life? If you could remember one moment of your life forever what would it be? Usually at the end there is a moment when the two people tell each other something *that we should always say out loud in words but rarely do.* "You changed my life." "You've been my hero since the day you were born." "Mom, you worked three jobs and studied all night to try to give us a better life, and I can never repay you for that." Or, "You're always worried that you're a reminder to me that Johnny died in Iraq but you lived, but really, you are like a son to me now. Now you are my son." Honestly, during those Friday morning StoryCorps broadcasts, I often cry, and I don't believe I am the only one.

Some years ago, I remember, StoryCorps came on, and what I heard was a little unusual. It wasn't a regular American doing the interviewing. The interview didn't take place in the story corps booth in SF, NYC, or Atlanta, or the mobile sound studio that has driven all over the country. The person interviewed was 18 year old Noah McQueen, who is part of My Brother's Keeper, a White House mentoring program aimed at young men of color. Noah's teen years were rough, including several arrests and brief incarceration. That's all fairly standard fare for StoryCorps. But on that Friday morning, I listened to him being interviewed in the Roosevelt Room by the President of the United States, who wanted to know more about Noah's life. He did not grow up in a stable household. He attended 8-9 middle schools in three years. The President asked Noah about his dad because he also didn't have his dad in his life, and Noah said he struggled to figure out right and wrong on his own and got involved in fighting in school, and that led to the juvenile system. So, Noah says, "I was on the run."

"You were on the run~how so?" The President asks. "From the law," Noah laughs. "Yeah, what had you done?" asks the President. "I believe it was..." "What do you mean, you believe?" President Obama jumps in. "It was something. You know what you did." It was a violation of house arrest, Noah admits. "So you had gotten in repeated trouble," Obama says. "What happened then?" "I went to a Christian retreat," Noah answers.

"Did you say to yourself, 'Man, I need to find something different and go to a Christian retreat?'" Obama says. "Oh no, sir. I didn't want to go at all. My mom forced me." "OK, (you can just hear in the President's voice, now we're getting to it.) "OK," mama intervened. "Lord, please help my knucklehead son, Noah, straighten out," Obama says. "So are you skeptical when you get there?" Noah says yeah, that his problems are different than the other kids. "Like, their problems were, a guy complaining about his mom not buying him the chips he likes, or different things like that. And then, I'm talking about...that my friend was killed the week before, so..."

"What softened you up a little bit?" Obama asks. Noah goes on to talk about how he made a commitment to himself to be accountable for his actions. "*I'm not the same person,*" says Noah, "*not the same creature. Everything about me and my being is different.*" And Obama says, "Obviously you've straightened yourself out. You're sitting here in the White House hanging out with the president." Then they talk briefly about how hard it can be to *stay* on the new path, and not revert back, the

pressure involved in being in public the way that people look at young black men, expecting them to be trouble. “It’s hard,” says Noah, “to always make the right decision.”

“Well, listen,” says the President. “At the age of 18 I didn’t know what I was going to be doing with my life. And you shouldn’t feel like you can’t make some mistakes at this point. You’re 18 years old. I promise you you’re gonna make some more as you go along. But one of the things you’ve discovered is that you have this strength inside yourself. And if you stay true to that voice that clearly knows what’s right and what’s wrong, sometimes you’re going to mess up, but you can steer back and keep going.” He goes on to ask about Noah’s plans to work in education to make a difference to young people, and to tell him how proud he is of Noah and the trajectory his life is now on.

I’ve listened to this conversation many times over the years, and what it reminds me of is the conversation in our gospel lesson between Peter and Jesus. Of course, it is a totally different relationship, context, and these are very different people. But in both conversations, I found myself startled by the bluntness, by the accountability, by the loving rebuke, by the fierce commitment to being honest about the reality and the truth, the unblinking naming of the challenge that you had to give up your own chosen course and be put onto a path you didn’t want to go on, and mostly the sense of one person challenging someone else to take the hard path with courage.

In the President’s voice, I could hear this “Come on Noah, don’t sugar coat it. You know what you did. The point isn’t to be ashamed. The point is to acknowledge it.” And then when Noah gives the short answer of the moment, it all began to change, “the Christian retreat,” the President challenges him again. “How did it turn around, really? You just decided to go to a Christian retreat? You just thought, hey this will help me out? No, someone made you go, someone who loved you and believed in getting on a true path no matter how hard the road. You were trying to get on track, but you didn’t have the wherewithal to get there. You were lost. And someone put you on the road because left to your own devices you weren’t going to ask for a map, and you weren’t going to ask for directions.”

It’s almost what happens between Jesus and Peter: Peter thinking Jesus’ judgment is impaired, and then Jesus saying, “No, it’s your internal GPS that’s broken, man.” It starts like this: When Peter hears Jesus talking about the road he is going on, he rebukes (challenges) Jesus, almost like a campaign manager talking to a candidate who went off script on his stump speech. “Look, you’re not helping your case here. You don’t sound like a strong leader when you talk like that, you’re sounding pathetic. You’re way off base talking about suffering and rejection and being killed and all that. It’s not a winning message.” But then Jesus, of course, rebukes Peter. And what he says, without a doubt, makes up some of the most difficult verses in the Gospels.

Deny yourself. Take up your cross. Lose your life. Who wants to deny oneself anything? Who wants to take up a cross? Who wants to lose their way, let alone their life? We have a natural desire to steer clear of the things that are intense and personal, that involve facing our mortality, our vulnerability. Why else do we avoid prayer and meditation? Why else avoid acknowledging our own mortality? It is natural to want to avoid the things that make us feel at risk, make us feel our own pain. We don’t even want to hear about pain and suffering. But Jesus says, “Get behind me, Satan.” He challenges Peter to stop living in lala land and get real. He challenges him like this: “What you think this is about is not what it’s about. This good news is not about my rising star among the elites or victory over them. It’s about risking and losing, suffering and death, and, if you think that I’m too good for suffering and death, then you’re wrong. God is not above human suffering, God is *with humanity in its suffering*, and if you deny that, then your news is not good, it’s satanic—that is, it is a deceptive and seductive temptation to power and glory.”

Jesus is not taking that route. He says he is going deep into the heart of human loss and suffering and he wants us to follow. And to do that, we need to surrender our own ideal destinations and the perfect plans for getting to where we want to go and the picturesque route we desire to take. Jesus’ rebuke is swift and disorienting. But it is clear. Peter must have been overwhelmed. That’s how I feel every time I read this scripture. Take up your cross and follow me. How can we do this? A couple of ideas for Lent.

First, pray. Personally, I struggle with prayer, especially the confession part. It’s usually raggedy and inept. It seems to me, the more I do it, that real prayer is not especially satisfying on its own terms. *It isn’t asking for what we think we want, but asking to be changed in ways we can’t imagine.* We can’t imagine ourselves forgiven, and yet we are. When it slowly dawns on us in prayer that we are really and truly lost, we can’t imagine ourselves capable of being found. And yet we are.

The other thing we can do is talk with each other about how hard it is to be lost as Jesus calls us to be. No one likes to be lost or get lost. It’s uncomfortable and slightly scary. We need to talk with each other about how hard it is to take spiritual risks—that is, to put ourselves really and truly in God’s hands. How hard it is to be challenged to be more fearless than we want to be, how hard it is to be willing to let God steer our lives when we just want to paddle our own boats. Last week,

someone told me, almost in a passing remark, one of their greatest spiritual challenges. What a gift! All week I thought about how much we need to talk to each other about these matters more, because, if you're carrying a cross behind Jesus, as we are called to do, you're only making it harder by carrying it alone.

We are all going to make mistakes, and for that we have confession and God's mercy and forgiveness. We are constantly stepping away from pain and suffering, wanting an easier, less risky path, wishing for everything to go our way, wishing to avoid difficult, hard things. And then Jesus tells us to pick up a cross. In other words, we are rebuked, and we are challenged. What can we do?

I think of the President's words to Noah: "Sometimes you're going to mess up, but you can steer back and keep going." We're challenged, but we're also embraced. Try, try to come before God in prayer during this Lenten season, and confess, and steer back so you can keep going. Whether you can actually deny yourself or take up a cross and follow, no one knows for sure, but definitely come and pray. Jesus leads us to where we never wanted to go, but he goes with us. Amen.

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.

ANTHEM This is My Father's World, by Franklin L. Sheppard, arr. by Mark Hayes -Kelli Watson

Prayers of Intercession

Relying on the promises of God, we pray boldly for the church, the world, and all in need.

Your gift of grace is for all people. Give confident faith to all the baptized, that they may follow you wholeheartedly. Give new believers joy in your promises; give hope and courage to those who suffer for their faith. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You rule over the nations. Raise up advocates for peace and justice within and between nations. Give life where hope seems dead; call into existence new realities we cannot even imagine. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We await the day of Christ's coming in glory. Lead us by the example of all the saints whom you have called to take up their cross and follow you, that together we may find our lives in you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Listen to the cries of your people waiting patiently for your healing hand and comforting Spirit, especially those who suffer with chronic pain and all cancer patients, Pr. Mary Etta, Gail, Doris, comfort for Patsy, Claudia, Bill & Rusty, Don & Wanda, Rosemary, Jeanette & Kjell and family, Rani and family, Kelly, Claudia & Fran, Edie Marie, Ed and family, prayers for Michael Gilleece and family, Your Neighbors clients, Theresa, and our country, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope, let us pray. **Your mercy is great.**

We entrust ourselves and all our prayers to you, O faithful God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all. In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all glory and honor, now and forever. **Amen.**

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.

Closing Hymn: *Lift High the Cross vs. 1 & 4 Hymn #660 -Kelli Watson*

Vs. 1 Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name. Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod, our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God.

Vs. 4 Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name. So shall our song of triumph ever be: praise to the Crucified for victory!

Blessing

You are what God made you to be: created in Christ Jesus for good works, chosen as holy and beloved, freed to serve your neighbor. God bless you that you may be a blessing, in the name of the holy and life-giving Trinity. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

A special thank you...

Thank you for your prayers, the meals, the phone calls, the cards, and everything that you have done for us. It helps us get through each day. We are so grateful and appreciative of all of you.

Love,

Fran & Claudia King

March Birthdays – Happy Birthday from your Zion family!

Matthew Sowers	1	Jim P. Marscher	20
Mildred Pelrine	1	David Nicholls	20
Mary Lou Millar	1	Brian Gymburch	20
Amelia Roberts	1	Patsy Glista	21
Diane Jecen	5	David Hunter	22
Debra Murdock	5	Laurel McCurdy	23
Matthew Grove	6	Mark Youngkrans	24
Ben Silva	8	Katherine Thompson	24
Pam Wilson	7	Ralph Youngren	26
Eleanor Berkhoudt	10	Cayden Hunter	26
Matthew Schiller	11	Nicole Manino	27
Deena Barbagallo	14	Cole Szemeczko	27
Nicholas Manino	14	Gloria Cifonelli	30
Carol Youngren	14	Bonnie Loomis	30
Etta Head	17		

Lent literally means “springtime”.

Whoever decided to call these weeks before Easter “lent” didn’t live in New York!

-Pr. Janet

Given to the Glory of God

<u>In Memory of:</u>	<u>To:</u>	<u>Given by:</u>
Peggy Joslyn	Memorial Fund	Bob & Bonnie Loomis
Norman Glista	Memorial Fund	Fran & Connie LaGase
Norman Glista	Memorial Fund	Pr. Marie Jerge & Jim Jerge
Norman Glista	Memorial Fund	Stanley & Marie Trzepacz
Peggy Joslyn	Memorial Fund	Fran & Connie LaGase
Peggy Joslyn	Memorial Fund	Linda Bennett
Peggy Joslyn	Lutheran Care Ministries	Ferhun & Kerstin Soykan
Peggy Joslyn John Joslyn	Memorial Fund	Diana Inserra
Peggy Joslyn	Building Fund	Laura Hilt
Peggy Joslyn John Joslyn	Memorial Fund	Harry & Helga Morrison
Peggy Joslyn	Roof Fund	Millie Angevine
Peggy Joslyn	Memorial Fund	David Katz
Peggy Joslyn John Joslyn	Memorial Fund	The Irmer family
Peggy Joslyn	Memorial Fund	The Andrew Aery family
Peggy Joslyn	Memorial Fund	The Curtis Schmidt family
<u>In Honor of:</u>	<u>To:</u>	<u>Given by:</u>
Carol & John Blackburn	"Souper Bowl Sunday"	Bob & Bonnie Loomis

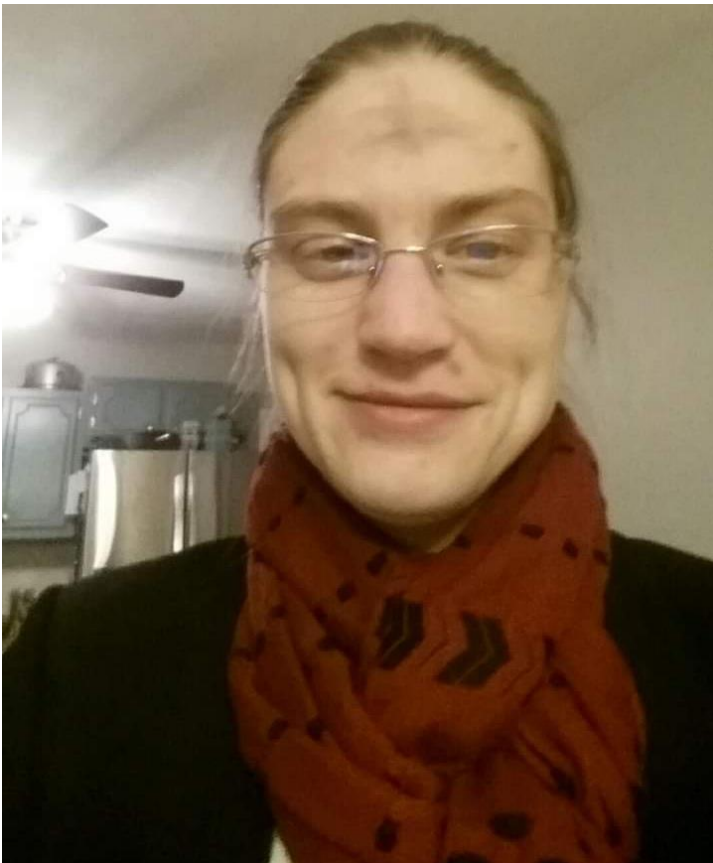
January 2021 Treasurer's Report				
	Jan 2021	Year to Date	Budget	Over/Under Budget
Income				
Giving	\$ 19,118.05	\$ 19,118.05	\$ 13,658.34	\$ 5,459.71
Other Income	\$ 2,310.99	\$ 2,310.99	\$ 2,433.18	\$ (122.19)
Total Income	\$ 21,429.04	\$ 21,429.04	\$ 16,091.52	\$ 5,337.52
Total Expense	\$ 11,434.91	\$ 11,434.91	\$ 18,589.64	\$ (7,154.73)
Net Income	\$ 9,994.13	\$ 9,994.13	\$ (2,498.12)	\$ 12,492.25

Enjoy these photos of the “palm burning” at Zion to get the ashes ready for Ash Wednesday. Many thanks to Bob & Bonnie Loomis for providing last year’s palms. And to the group who got the ashes ready, we are so grateful for your efforts! Laurel McCurdy, Wendy Stevens, Jeanne Gymburch, and Pastor Anita Mohr.





Thank you for sharing your Ash Wednesday journey with us, Kristen Burson!



When Peace Like a River
It Is Well with My Soul 785

1 When peace like a riv - er at - tend - eth my way, when
2 Though Na - tan should suf - fer, though tri - als should come, let
3 He live - oh, the bliss of this glo - ri - ous thought; my
4 Lord, has - ten the day when our faith shall be sight, the

sor - rows like sea bil - lows roll, what - ev - er my lot, thou hast
this best as - sur - ance con - trol, that Christ hath re - gard - ed my
sin, not in part, but the whole, is nailed to his cross and I
clouds be rolled back as a scroll, the trum - pet shall sound and the

taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul,
help - less es - tate, and hath shed his own blood for my soul,
bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!
Lord shall de - scend; e - ven so it is well with my soul.

Refrain G C F C G C
It is well with my soul, it is well, it is well with my soul.

When played in D⁹ major (the original key of the hymn), use the chords shown above at the first fret.