

Lenten Vespers

Home Edition

Wednesday, March 3, 2021

(Please light a candle and place it in your midst as we gather)

OPENING

LENT DIALOGUE

Behold, now is the acceptable time;
now is the day of salvation.
Turn us again, O God of our salvation,
that the light of your face may shine on us.
May your justice shine like the sun;
and may the poor be lifted up.

HYMN OF LIGHT

The Day You Gave Us, Lord, Has Ended



1 The day you gave us, Lord, has end - ed;
2 We thank you that your church, un - sleep - ing
3 As to each con - ti - nent and is - land
4 The sun, here hav - ing set, is wak - ing
5 So be it, Lord; your realm shall nev - er,



the dark - ness falls at your be - hest.
while earth rolls on - ward in - to light,
the dawn leads on an - oth - er day,
your chil - dren un - der west - ern skies,
like earth's proud em - pires, pass a - way;



To you our morn - ing hymns as - cend - ed;
through all the world its watch is keep - ing,
the voice of prayer is nev - er si - lent,
and hour by hour, as day is break - ing,
but stand and grow and rule for - ev - er,



your praise shall hal - low now our rest.
and nev - er rests by day or night.
nor dies the strain of praise a - way.
fresh hymns of thank - ful praise a - rise.
till all your crea - tures own your sway.

Text: John Ellerton, 1826–1893, alt.
Music: ST. CLEMENT, Clement C. Scholefield, 1839–1904

THANKSGIVING FOR LIGHT

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

We give you thanks, O God,
for in the beginning you called light into being,
and you set light in the sky to govern night and day.
In a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night
you led your people into freedom.

Enlighten our darkness by the light of your Christ:
may your Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path;
for you are merciful, and you love your whole creation,
and with all your creatures we give you glory,
through your Son Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
now and forever.

Amen.

PSALMODY

PSALM 121

I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?

**My help comes from the Lord,
the maker of heaven and earth.**

The Lord will not let your foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

**Behold, the keeper of Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep;**

the Lord watches over you;
the Lord is your shade at your right hand;

**the sun will not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

The Lord will preserve you from all evil
and will keep your life.

**The Lord will watch over your going out and your coming in,
from this time forth forevermore.**

(Please observe a long moment of silence for contemplation)

EVENING CANTICLE

To You, Before the Close of Day



1 To you, be - fore the close of day, Cre - a - tor of the
2 Save us from trou - bled, rest - less sleep, from all ill dreams your
3 A health - y life we ask of you, the fire of love in
4 Cre - a - tor, this we ask be done through Je - sus Christ, your



world, we pray. Your grace and peace to us al - low
chil - dren keep; so calm our minds that fears may cease
us re - new, and when the dawn new light will bring,
on - ly Son, whom with the Spir - it we a - dore,



and be our guard and keep - er now.
and rest - ed bod - ies wake in peace.
your praise and glo - ry we shall sing.
with you, one God for - ev - er - more. A - men.

Text: Compline office hymn, c. 6th cent.; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.
Music: JAM LUCIS, plainsong mode VI

WORD

READING

Acts 4:32-35

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

(Please observe a long moment of silence for contemplation)

DIALOGUE

Long ago God spoke to our ancestors
in many and various ways by the prophets,
but in these last days God has spoken to us by the Son.

VIDEO GUEST

Irene Rogner & Judy Burghart
Spiritual Discipline: Stewardship and Generosity

RESPONSIVE SUNG VERSE

Trumpet and pipes! Loud clashing cymbals!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
Harp, lute, and lyre! Loud humming cellos!
Sing to the Lord a new song!
God has done marvelous things.
I too sing praises with a new song!

GOSPEL CANTICLE

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness



1 My soul pro-claims your great-ness, Lord; I sing my Sav - ior's praise!
2 To all who live in ho - ly fear your mer-cy ev - er flows.
3 To Is - ra - el, your ser - vant blest, your help is ev - er sure;



You looked up - on my low - li - ness, and I am full of grace.
With might - y arm you dash the proud, their schem-ing hearts ex - pose.
the prom - ise to our par - ents made their chil - dren will se - cure.



Now ev - 'ry land and ev - 'ry age this bless-ing shall pro - claim—
The ruth-less you have cast a - side, the low - ly throned in - stead;
Sing glo - ry to the Ho - ly One, give hon - or to the Word,



great won - ders you have done for me, and ho - ly is your name.
the hun - gry filled with all good things, the rich sent off un - fed.
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all a - dored.

Text: *With One Voice*, 1995, based on the Magnificat
Music: KINGSFOLD, English folk tune
Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress

PRAYER LITANY

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy.

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 mercy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the health of the creation, for abundant harvests that all may share, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For public servants, the government, and those who protect us; for those who work to bring peace, justice, healing, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For those who travel, for those who are sick and suffering, and for those who are in captivity, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For deliverance in the time of affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all servants of the church, gathered near and far, and for all people who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord

(A time of silence follows)

Giving thanks for all who have gone before us and are at rest, rejoicing in the communion of all the saints, we commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to you, through Christ our Lord.

To you, O Lord.

O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER



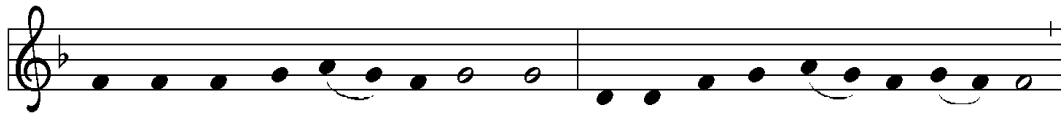
Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,



your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.



Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we



for-give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al



and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,

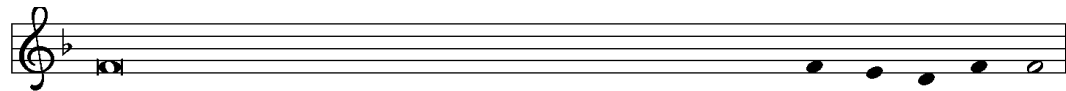


and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

BLESSING



Let us bless the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**



Almighty God, the Father, + the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and pre - serve us.



A - men.

(Please share a greeting of peace with one another)

Spiritual Disciplines

In many varying ways throughout the centuries, people of faith have gathered around certain practices that connect us with God. Prayer, fasting, confession, meditation, acts of service, sacrificial giving, silence, study, and worship are common examples of what are called Spiritual Disciplines. Oftentimes we find that these practices are “nutrient-dense”, and connect us to the depths of divinity that nourish our bodies and spirits. They help us understand what it means to turn back to God (and perhaps recognize God’s turning toward us), which fits appropriately into the Lenten season.

For Lent 2021, our at-home midweek Vespers prayer services will feature short reflections from congregation members that touch upon the richness of a selection of spiritual disciplines. It is our hope that they may inspire you to explore a practice of your own, during Lent and beyond.

What is Lent

Lent is an ancient period of preparation leading up to the springtime festival of the Resurrection of our Lord, commonly called *Easter*. It lasts 40 days, which is modeled after the Gospel story of Jesus fasting and praying in the wilderness for 40 days at the beginning of his ministry. So, we do the same: we fast, we pray, and we prepare for the ministry ahead that God calls us to.

What is Vespers?

Vespers is part of the historic prayer pattern known as *daily prayer offices*. In many monastic communities, faithful members gather together every day for simple prayer services at certain proscribed times throughout the day. These services often include music, readings from the Psalms and other important Scripture passages, and almost always prioritize time for quiet, contemplative reflection. Most importantly, they provide a rhythm to daily life that names God’s persistent presence among us always, and asks us to ponder what that means for us as God’s people.

We as Lutherans have adapted this daily prayer practice for use during the Lenten season. In our tradition, we gather on Wednesdays for the eveningtime prayer office of *Vespers*, which is simply its latin name. There are three prayer offices included in our hymnal:

Matins - morning prayer (“matt-inns”)
Vespers - evening prayer (“vess-purrs”)
Compline - night prayer (“comp-lynn”)

Each time we gather for *Vespers*, the majority of the service will be the same. The same structure, the same responses, the same prayers. Oftentimes, a new scripture reading or musical selection will be offered for contemplation.

We encourage you to embrace the rhythm and contemplative spirit of *Vespers* in this holy season, and open yourself to God’s presence as we continue through Lent.

Messiah Lutheran Church (ELCA), Lyndhurst, Ohio. Lent 2020.
messiahlyndhurst.org

*Text and music based on "Evening Prayer Vespers" from Evangelical Lutheran Worship.
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