

Lenten Vespers

Home Edition
Wednesday, March 18, 2020

*(Please light a candle and place it in your midst as you gather.
If more than two people are present, consider selecting one person to
read aloud the plain-face type while the remainder respond with the bold-face type.)*

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

O Light Whose Splendor
Listen: youtu.be/VuVBcBwG3mU

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.

WORD

Reflective Scripture

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your staff— they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord my whole life long.

(Please observe a long moment of silence to contemplate the scripture reading)

Evening Cantic

Come Now, O Prince of Peace
Listen: youtu.be/vPF9nDMt8UM

PRAYERS

Prayer

Let us pray. 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.

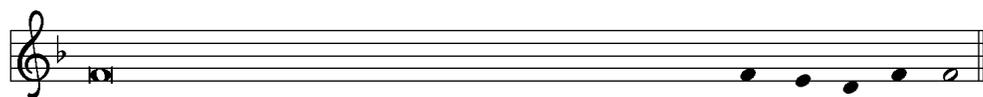
Lord's Prayer

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)

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