

GETHSEMANE LUTHERAN CHURCH
November 29, 2020

CALL TO WORSHIP

This Advent, we hope and pray for:
joy as we journey together,

Sight for the blind and healing for the sick,
freedom for the prisoners and good news for the poor,

Release for the oppressed with justice for all and love for each other.
and the coming of God's topsy-turvy, inside out, upside-down Kingdom.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Because it is so hard to wait, it is not easy to live through Advent's days. But watch what God does during this time. God waits for us to turn from our old ways to find the right paths; God waits for us to admit what we have done, and failed to do, so we might be forgiven and graced with new life. Let us approach the One who waits - for us!

It is never easy for us to confess our sins, Waiting God.

There are the hurts we have caused to our families and friends, which we would like to forget.

There are those we believe are impossible to love, and so we don't try. There are people who live on the edge of our society, and we ignore their cries for help.
Forgive us, God who comes near to us. When we have lost our way, show us yours.

Lead us in humility down the streets of your kingdom. Teach us your truth, so we might be able to keep your Word, revealed to us in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior.

Silence is kept

God does not remember our sins, but does remember the promises which have been made to us. God does not shame us, but lifts us to new life.

Amen.

GREETING

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

God of deliverance, you rescued Daniel from the mouths of the lions when he was punished for worshiping you. Liberate all who are endangered for the sake of their faith, and rescue us from anything that separates us from worshiping only you, for the sake of the one who made your name known to all people, across land and seas, Jesus Christ, our redeemer. **Amen.**

Daniel 6:6-27

So the presidents and satraps conspired and came to the king and said to him, "O King Darius, live forever! ⁷ All the presidents of the kingdom, the prefects and the satraps, the counselors and the governors are agreed that the king should establish an ordinance and enforce an interdict, that whoever prays to anyone, divine or human, for thirty days, except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions. ⁸ Now, O king, establish the interdict and sign the document, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and the Persians, which cannot be revoked." ⁹ Therefore King Darius signed the document and interdict.

¹⁰ Although Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he continued to go to his house, which had windows in its upper room open toward Jerusalem, and to get down on his knees three times a day to pray to his God and praise him, just as he had done previously. ¹¹ The conspirators came and found Daniel praying and seeking mercy before his God. ¹² Then they approached the king and said concerning the interdict, "O king! Did you not sign an interdict, that anyone who prays to anyone, divine or human, within thirty days except to you, O king, shall be thrown into a den of lions?" The king answered, "The thing stands fast, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be revoked." ¹³ Then they responded to the king, "Daniel, one of the exiles from Judah, pays no attention to you, O king, or to the interdict you have signed, but he is saying his prayers three times a day."

¹⁴ When the king heard the charge, he was very much distressed. He was determined to save Daniel, and until the sun went down he made every effort to rescue him. ¹⁵ Then the conspirators came to the king and said to him, "Know, O king, that it is a law of the Medes and Persians that no interdict or ordinance that the king establishes can be changed."

¹⁶ Then the king gave the command, and Daniel was brought and thrown into the den of lions. The king said to Daniel, "May your God, whom you faithfully serve, deliver you!" ¹⁷ A stone was brought and laid on the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his

own signet and with the signet of his lords, so that nothing might be changed concerning Daniel. ¹⁸ Then the king went to his palace and spent the night fasting; no food was brought to him, and sleep fled from him.

¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king got up and hurried to the den of lions. ²⁰ When he came near the den where Daniel was, he cried out anxiously to Daniel, “O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God whom you faithfully serve been able to deliver you from the lions?” ²¹ Daniel then said to the king, “O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions’ mouths so that they would not hurt me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no wrong.” ²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God. ²⁴ The king gave a command, and those who had accused Daniel were brought and thrown into the den of lions—they, their children, and their wives. Before they reached the bottom of the den the lions overpowered them and broke all their bones in pieces.

²⁵ Then King Darius wrote to all peoples and nations of every language throughout the whole world: “May you have abundant prosperity! ²⁶ I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel:

For he is the living God,
enduring forever.

His kingdom shall never be destroyed,
and his dominion has no end.

²⁷ He delivers and rescues,
he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth;
for he has saved Daniel
from the power of the lions.”

SERMON

Advent Creed

We believe in God the Father, creator of heaven and earth.

**The one who is full of patience,
who is not afraid of silence,**

who does not need to fill each moment with activity and noise.

**The one who is beyond bluster and flurry,
and who does not jostle for attention.**

**We believe in God the Son, Savior of creation,
who slipped into Bethlehem one night, mostly unnoticed,
who lived thirty years without headlines or hurry,
who frequently took time alone with his patient Father,
who waited for the right time to become the suffering servant,
who stood quietly before the noise of his accusers,
whose silence overpowered their words,
who died, then rose again on a quiet Sunday morning.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens, empowers, renews and refreshes,
sometimes arriving with obvious power,
sometimes with the quiet breath of a whisper.**

**We believe in one God
who patiently waits for us,
and who longs for us to do the same. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

We seek the mighty God in the most unlikely places as a child in a stable, and in an empty tomb. May God hear these prayers, which come from the unlikely corners of our lives.

A brief silence.

God, we pray that you deliver the church from hypocrisy, timidity, and judgmentalism; increase our trust in your Spirit, active in our words and deeds. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, we pray that you deliver creation from exploitation and destruction; lift up advocates and protectors of the wild places of the world. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, we pray that you deliver the nations from violence and injustice; grant wisdom and compassion to all leaders of tribes and peoples. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, we pray that you deliver those battling loneliness and fear; help us to see the hidden needs of our neighbors and to reach out in love and grace. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, we pray that you deliver those enduring illness and disease; rain down your healing power upon all those who need it. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, we pray that you deliver us from apathy and lethargy; grant us boldness of speech and action on behalf of the Gospel. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God, we give you thanks for all those who have gone before us and whose lives have proven your great faithfulness and deliverance. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give us ears to hear, O God, and eyes to watch, that we may know your presence in our midst during this holy season of joy as we anticipate the coming of Jesus Christ. Amen.

HOLY COMMUNION

Jesus spreads a table of blessing before us and feeds us with his very presence.

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.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

BENEDICTION

May starlight guide your steps towards this place of wonder. May angels sing their news as you travel to the manger. May promise fill these days as we watch at the edge of birth. and may faith tell you, Emmanuel will be with us soon, in human skin.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Watch for Emmanuel, God-with-us.
Thanks be to God.

Call to Worship: posted on **Third Space**. <http://third-space.org.uk/>

Confession and Forgiveness: written by Thom Shuman, and posted on **Lectionary Liturgies**.
<http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.ca/>

Prayer of the Day: WorkingPreacher.org

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