

**LENTEN VESPERS 5
PREPARING FOR EASTER:
“WALKING THROUGH THE FIRE”**



† In the Name of Jesus †

Prayer before Worship: O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works proceed, give Your servants that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments, and also that we, being defended by You from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Office of Vespers
Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary: p. 120

Hymn of Invocation: 285, *Jesus Christ, Our Lord Most Holy*

C: Jesus Christ, our Lord most holy, Lamb of God so pure and lowly,
Blameless, blameless, on the cross art offered,
Sinless, sinless, for our sins hast suffered.

Weep now, all ye wretched creatures, As ye view His gracious features.
Jesus, Jesus, on the cross is dying,
Nature, nature, in dark gloom is sighing.

Christ, His last word having spoken, Bows His head as life is broken.
Mournful, mournful, stands His mother weeping,
Loved ones, loved ones, silent watch are keeping.

The great veil was torn asunder, Earth did quake mid roars of thunder,
Boulders, boulders, into bits were breaking;
Sainted, sainted dead from death were waking.

As His side with spear was riven, Blood and water forth were given.
Jesus, Jesus, sinners' only Savior.
Mercy, mercy, grant to us forever.

Versicles: pp. 120 (*BOTH Alleluias AND Gloria Patris are silent until Easter*)

P: O Lord, open my lips.

C: And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

P: Make hast, O God, to deliver me.

C: Make hast to help me, O Lord.

Psalm 16

Tone 3



Antiphon: He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He op`ened not His mouth:/ And the Lord has laid on Him the iniqui`ty of us all.

Psalm: Preserve `me, O *God*,/ for in You `I put my trust.

²O my soul, you have said to the LORD, `“You are my Lord,/ My goodness is nothing `apart from You.”

³As for the saints who `are on the earth,/ “They are the excellent ones, in whom is `all my delight.”

⁴**Their sorrows shall `be multiplied/ who hasten after `another god;**

Their drink offerings of blood I `will not offer,/ Nor take up their `names on my lips.

⁵**O LORD, You are the portion of my inheri`tance and my cup;/ You `maintain my lot.**

⁶The lines have fallen to me in `pleasant places;/ Yes, I have a good `inheritance.

⁷**I will bless the LORD who has giv`en me counsel;/ My heart also instructs me in `the night seasons.**

⁸I have set the LORD al`ways before me;/ Because He is at my right hand I `shall not be moved.

⁹**Therefore my heart is glad, and my glo`ry rejoices;/ My flesh also `will rest in hope.**

¹⁰For You will not leave my `soul in Sheol,/ nor will You allow Your Holy One to `see corruption.

¹¹**You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is `fullness of joy;/ At Your right hand are pleasures `forevermore.**

Antiphon: He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth:/ And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

First Lection: *Daniel 3:1-30*

In those days Nebuchadnezzar the king made an image of gold, whose height was sixty cubits and its width six cubits. He set it up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon. And King Nebuchadnezzar sent word to gather together the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces, to come to the dedication of the image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. So the satraps, the administrators, the governors, the counselors, the treasurers, the judges, the magistrates, and all the officials of the provinces gathered together for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up; and they stood before the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Then a herald cried aloud: “To you it is commanded, O peoples, nations, and languages, that at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, you shall fall down and worship the gold image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace.” So at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the horn, flute, harp, and lyre, in symphony with all kinds of music, all the people, nations, and languages fell down and worshiped the gold image which King Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Therefore at that time certain Chaldeans came forward and accused the Jews. They spoke and said to King Nebuchadnezzar, “O king, live forever! You, O king, have made a decree that everyone who hears the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, shall fall down and worship the gold image; and whoever does not fall down and worship shall be cast into the midst of a burning

fiery furnace. There are certain Jews whom you have set over the affairs of the province of Babylon: Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego; these men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.” Then Nebuchadnezzar, in rage and fury, gave the command to bring Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. So they brought these men before the king. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying to them, “Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the gold image which I have set up? Now if you are ready at the time you hear the sound of the horn, flute, harp, lyre, and psaltery, in symphony with all kinds of music, and you fall down and worship the image which I have made, good! But if you do not worship, you shall be cast immediately into the midst of a burning fiery furnace. And who is the god who will deliver you from my hands?” Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego answered and said to the king, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.” Then Nebuchadnezzar was full of fury, and the expression on his face changed toward Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. He spoke and commanded that they heat the furnace seven times more than it was usually heated. And he commanded certain mighty men of valor who were in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, and cast them into the burning fiery furnace. Then these men were bound in their coats, their trousers, their turbans, and their other garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Therefore, because the king’s command was urgent, and the furnace exceedingly hot, the flame of the fire killed those men who took up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego. And these three men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace. Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished; and he rose in haste and spoke, saying to his counselors, “Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire?” They answered and said to the king, “True, O king.” “Look!” he answered, “I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire; and they are not hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.” Then Nebuchadnezzar went near the mouth of the burning fiery furnace and spoke, saying, “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, servants of the Most High God, come out, and come here.” Then Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego came from the midst of the fire. And the satraps, administrators, governors, and the king’s counselors gathered together, and they saw these men on whose bodies the fire had no power; the hair of their head was not singed nor were their garments affected, and the smell of fire was not on them. Nebuchadnezzar spoke, saying, “Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego, who sent His Angel and delivered His servants who trusted in Him, and they have frustrated the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they should not serve nor worship any god except their own God! Therefore I make a decree that any people, nation, or language which speaks anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego shall be cut in pieces, and their

houses shall be made an ash heap; because there is no other God who can deliver like this.”
Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in the province of Babylon.

P: O Lord, have mercy upon us.

C: **Thanks be to You, O Lord.**

Hymn: 304, *Upon the Cross Extended*, sts. 1-6

C: **Upon the cross extended, See word, thy Lord suspended;
Thy Savior yields His breath.**

**The Prince of Life from heaven Himself hath freely given
To shame and blows and bitter death.**

**Come hither now and ponder, 'Twill fill thy soul with wonder,
Blood streams from ev'ry pore.**

**Through grief whose depth none knoweth,
From His great heart their floweth Sigh after sigh of anguish o'er.**

**Who is it that hath bruised Thee? Who hath so sore abused Thee
And caused Thee all Thy woe?**

**While we must make confession Of sin and dire transgression,
Thou deeds of evil dost not know.**

**I caused Thy grief and sighing By evils multiplying
As countless as the sands.**

**I caused the woes unnumbered With which Thy soul is cumbered,
Thy sorrows raised by wicked hands.**

**'Tis I who should be smitten, My doom should here be written:
Bound hand and foot in hell.**

**The fetters and the scourging, The floods around Thee surging,
'Tis I who have deserved them well.**

**The load Thou takest on Thee, That pressed so sorely on me,
It crushed me to the ground.**

**The cross for me enduring, The crown for me securing,
My healing in Thy wounds is found.**

Second Lection: *The Passion History of Our Lord Jesus Christ – St. Luke 23:44-56*

Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.' " Having said this, He breathed His last. So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified

God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!" And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things. Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

P: O Lord, have mercy upon us.

C: Thanks be to You, O Lord!

Hymn: 304, *Upon the Cross Extended*, sts. 7-12

**C: A crown of thorns Thou wearest, My shame and scorn Thou bearest,
That I might ransomed be.**

**My Bondsman, ever willing, My place with patience filling,
From sin and guilt hast made me free.**

**Thy cords of love, my Savior, Bind me to Thee forever,
I am no longer mine.**

**To Thee I gladly tender All that my life can render
And all I have to Thee resign.**

**The cross I'll place before me, Its saving pow'r be o'er me,
Wherever I may be;**

**Thine innocence revealing Thy love and mercy sealing,
The pledge of truth and constancy.**

**How God at our transgression To anger gives expression,
How loud His thunders roll,
How fearfully He smiteth, How sorely He requiteth, –
All this Thy suff'rings teach my soul.**

**When evil men revile me, With wicked tongues defile me,
I'll curb my vengeful heart.**

**The unjust wrong I'll suffer, Unto my neighbor offer
Forgiveness for each bitter smart.**

**Thy groaning and Thy sighing, Thy bitter tears and dying,
With which Thou wast oppressed, –
They shall, when life is ending, Be guiding and attending
My way to Thine eternal rest.**

Sermon: *Walking Through the Fire*

Magnificat: 47, *My Soul Doth Magnify the Lord, sts. 1-5*

**C: My soul doth magnify the Lord; My spirit shall in God rejoice,
My low estate He did regard, Exalting me by gracious choice.**

**Henceforth all men shall calle me blest, For great things He hath done to me.
The mighty God is now my Guest; The Holy One hath set me free.**

**His mercy is on all who fear, Who trust in Him from age to age.
His arm of strength to all is near; The proud He scatt'reth, though they rage.**

**The strong He casteth from their seat And raiseth men of low degree.
To hungry souls He giveth meat; The rich depart in poverty.**

**He helped His servant Israel, Remembering His eternal grace,
As from of old He did foretell To Abraham and all his race.**

Kyrie & Lord's Prayer: pp. 124-125

**C: Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us.
Lord, have mercy upon us.**

Our Father...

Collects (spoken)

P: Merciful and everlasting God, You did not spare Your only Son, but delivered Him up for us all that He might bear our sins upon the cross, grant that our hearts may be so fixed with steadfast faith in Him that we may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

P: O God, Your Son protected faithful Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace of the king: grant us protection in our time of testing that we would boldly confess Your Name, reject all false worship, and live and die in confidence, knowing that we are safe in Your Son, Jesus Christ; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Abide with us, Lord, for it is toward evening and the day is far spent. Abide with us and with Your whole Church. Abide with us in the end of the day, in the end of our life, and in the end of the world. Abide with us with Your grace and goodness, with Your holy Word and Sacrament, with Your strength and blessing. Abide with us when the night of affliction and temptation comes upon us, the night of fear and despair when death shall come. Abide with us and with all the faithful through time and eternity; You who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Benedicamus & Benediction: p. 127

P: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

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

C: Amen.

Dismissal Hymn: 297, *Stricken, Smitten, and Afflicted*

C: Stricken, smitten, and afflicted, See Him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ by man rejected; Yes, my soul, 'tis He! 'tis He!
'Tis the long-expected Prophet, David's Son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it: 'Tis the true and faithful Word.

**Tell me, ye who hear Him groaning, Was there ever grief like His?
Friends through fear His cause disowning, Foes insulting His distress;
Many hands were raised to wound Him, None would interpose to save;
But the deepest stroke that pierced Him Was the stroke that Justice gave.**

**Ye who think of sin but lightly Nor suppose the evil great
Here may view its nature rightly, Here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the Sacrifice appointed, See who bears the awful load;
'Tis the WORD, the LORD'S ANOINTED, Son of Man and Son of God.**

**Here we have a firm foundation; Here the refuge of the lost;
Christ's the Rock of our salvation, His the name of which we boast.
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded, Sacrifice to cancel guilt!
None shall ever be confounded Who on Him their hope have built.**