



EMBRACE
MYSTERY

HOPE
PEACE
JOY
LOVE

November 29, 2020. 1st Sunday of Advent. Narrative Lectionary week 12 of year 3.

GATHERING OF THE PEOPLE

Prelude

Greeting

Lighting of the Advent Candle of HOPE

How do we embrace the mystery? How do we embrace the mystery of hope? We remember Daniel, captive in a foreign country, surrounded by foreign gods. We remember his faith expressed through daily prayer. In times of uncertainty we too can choose a faithful way. As we light our first candle we remember to fall to our knees or sit quietly in a chair, on a rock a tree stump; sing a hymn or read a prayer; read scripture or discuss our beliefs.

Hope is a mystery. Hope defies all evidence and logic. Hope is a single candle in the dark. No matter how dark its surroundings, the brightness is undeniable and cannot be put out. On the first Sunday of Advent God meets us in the mystery and fills us with hope. Thanks be to God.

Hanging of the Chrismon

Hymn #211 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" v 1,4,6,7

Pastoral Prayer and Lord's Prayer

Musical Offering "O Day of Peace That Dimly Shines"
Heatherlyn

PROCLAMATION OF THE WORD

Daniel 6:6-27 (CEB)

Dick Lee

So these officers and chief administrators ganged together and went to the king. They said to him, "Long live King Darius! All the officers of the kingdom, the ministers, the chief administrators, the royal associates, and the governors advise the king to issue an edict and enforce a law,

that for thirty days anyone who says prayers to any god or human being except you, Your Majesty, will be thrown into a pit of lions. Now, Your Majesty, issue the law and sign the document so that it cannot be changed, as per the law of Media and Persia, which cannot be annulled." Because of this, King Darius signed the document containing the law.

When Daniel learned that the document had been signed, he went to his house. Now his upper room had open windows that faced Jerusalem. Daniel knelt down, prayed, and praised his God three times that day, just like he always did. Just then these men, all ganged together, came upon Daniel praying and seeking mercy from his God. They then went and talked to the king about the law: "Your Majesty! Didn't you sign a law, that for thirty days any person who prays to any god or human being besides you, Your Majesty, would be thrown into a pit of lions?"

The king replied, "The decision is absolutely firm in accordance with the law of Media and Persia, which cannot be annulled."

So they said to the king, "One of the Judean exiles, Daniel, has ignored you, Your Majesty, as well as the law you signed. He says his prayers three times a day!"

When the king heard this report, he was very unhappy. He decided to rescue Daniel and did everything he could do to save Daniel before the sun went down. But these men, all ganged together, came and said to the king, "You must re-



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alize, Your Majesty, that the law of Media and Persia, including every law and edict the king has issued, cannot be changed.”

So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and hurled him into the pit of lions.

The king said to Daniel: “Your God—the one you serve so consistently—will rescue you.”

A single stone was brought and placed over the entrance to the pit. The king sealed it with his own ring and with those of his princes so that Daniel’s situation couldn’t be changed. The king then went home to his palace and fasted through the night. No pleasures were brought to him, and he couldn’t sleep. At dawn, at the first sign of light, the king rose and rushed to the lions’ pit.

As he approached it, he called out to Daniel, worried: “Daniel, servant of the living God! Was your God—the one you serve so consistently—able to rescue you from the lions?”

Then Daniel answered the king: “Long live the king! My God sent his messenger, who shut the lions’ mouths. They haven’t touched me because I was judged innocent before my God. I haven’t done anything wrong to you either, Your Majesty.”

The king was thrilled. He commanded that Daniel be brought up out of the pit, and Daniel was lifted out. Not a scratch was found on him, because he trusted in his God. The king then ordered that the men who had accused Daniel be brought and thrown into the lions’ pit—including their wives and children. They hadn’t even reached the bottom of the pit before the lions

overpowered them, crushing all their bones.

Then King Darius wrote the following decree:

To all the peoples, nations, and languages inhabiting the entire earth: I wish you much peace. I now issue this command: In every region of my kingdom, all people must fear and revere Daniel’s God because:

He is the living God.

God stands firm forever. His kingship is indestructible.

God’s rule will last until the end of time.

He is rescuer and savior;

God performs signs and miracles in heaven and on earth. Here’s the proof: He rescued Daniel from the lions’ power.

Sermon “Daniel’s Hope” - Rev. Robb McCoy

RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE

Hymn #209 “Blest Be the God of Israel”

Invitation to Embrace Hope

Hymn #249 “There’s a Song in the Air”

Postlude



Pastor

Robb McCoy, mccoy@tworiversumc.org

Lay Leader
Susan Lorenzen

Church Custodian
Ellen Martin

Program Staff

Director of Music
Mark Swessinger, mswess@mchsi.com

Support Staff
Church Office Manager
Brianna Pollock, office@tworiversumc.org

Camp Milan Caretaker
Kent Hessman

Organist
Michael Smith

Volunteer Financial Secretary
Charlotte Peterson

Two Rivers United Methodist Church
1820 5th Ave. Rock Island, IL 61201

Organist Emeritus
Judith Litherland

Office Phone: (309)788-9384

Ministers

All of us

Nursery Attendants
Divera Mpawenayo
Autumn Glass

Email: office@tworiversumc.org



WEEKLY GPS

GROW

PRAY

STUDY

Coming Next:

Dec. 6	Turn to God	Joel 2: 12-13, 28-29
Dec. 13	The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me	Isaiah 61:1-11
Dec. 20	Annunciation	Luke 1:26-45
Dec. 24	Christmas Eve	

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THE WEEK: Daniel 6:16

"[God] delivers and rescues, [God] works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth; for [God] has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

Monday	Daniel 2:31-45 & Psalm 25:1-10	Longing for God
Tuesday	Daniel 3:19-28a	Hope
Wednesday	Psalm 90	Not Here
Thursday	Daniel 7:1-14	Vision of Daniel
Friday	Daniel 9:20-27 & Psalm 80:1-3, 14-19	Desolate but not Hopeless
Saturday	Daniel 2:20-23	Wisdom

CARING CONVERSATIONS or REFLECTIONS

- **Thinking About This Week's Story:** Daniel was in a scary place. When were you scared or nervous today? When did you feel brave?
- **Getting Ready for Next Week's Story:** Joel reminds us to turn our hearts to God, who is merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. When have you shown love today? When have you been angry?