

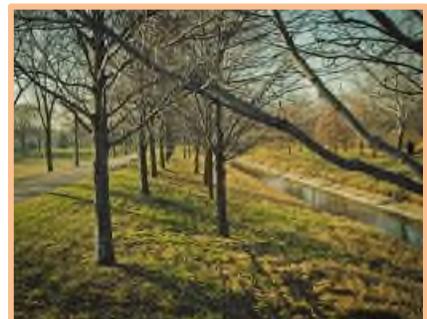
Liturgy for Winter



Music: The Cloud's Veil *Liam Lawton*

Leader: The leaves which once were green are now withered, fallen to the ground. They are still a part of God's plan, containing within them food for new growth. The seed, seemingly without life and yet within it holding the potential for great beauty or fruitfulness.

The nights have drawn in-long summer evenings are but a memory; winter is upon us-and darkness surrounds us.



All: We arise today

In the simplicity of the bare earth;
In the strength of the fierce elements
In the beauty of a cold-clad land.
We arise today
In the deep formation of winter
In the cleansing work of frost
In the life of the One who was buried.

Leader: There is a winter in all of our lives,
a chill and darkness that makes us yearn
for days that have gone
or put our hope in days yet to be.

Reader 1: Father God, you created seasons for a purpose.
Spring is full of expectation
buds breaking
frosts abating and an awakening
of creation before the first days of summer.

Then the sun gives warmth
and comfort to our lives
reviving aching joints
bringing colour, new life
and crops to fruiting.

Autumn gives nature space
to lean back, relax and enjoy the fruits of its labour
mellow colours in sky and landscape
as the earth prepares to rest.

Then winter, cold and bare as nature takes stock
rests, unwinds, sleeps until the time is right.

Reader 2: An endless cycle
and yet a perfect model.
We need a winter in our lives.
A time of rest, a time to stand still.
A time to reacquaint ourselves
with the faith in which we live and breathe.

It is only then that we can draw strength
from the one in whom we are rooted,
take time to grow and rise through the darkness
into the warm glow of your springtime,
to blossom and flourish,
bring colour and vitality into this world,
your garden.

Thank you Father
for the seasons of our lives

Reading 2

Job 37:2-12

2 Listen! Listen to the roar of his voice, to the rumbling that comes from his mouth. 3 He unleashes his lightning beneath the whole heaven and sends it to the ends of the earth. 4 After that comes the sound of his roar; he thunders with his majestic voice. When his voice resounds, he holds nothing back. 5 God's voice thunders in marvellous ways; he does great things beyond our understanding. 6 He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,' and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.' 7 So that everyone he has made may know his work, he stops all people from their labour. 8 The animals take cover; they remain in their dens. 9 The tempest comes out from its chamber, the cold from the driving winds. 10 The breath of God produces ice, and the broad waters become frozen. 11 He loads the clouds with moisture; he scatters his lightning through them. 12 At his direction they swirl around over the face of the whole earth to do whatever he commands them.

Song: Leaves Don't Drop *Carrie Newcomer*

Intercessions

LEADER: Loving God, in this autumn season, as the leaves turn to gold and rust, may our hearts and eyes turn to the concerns of our changing world.

1. For those who are experiencing unemployment, the loss of a loved one, disease in body, or exile from family or home, we pray

All: Compassionate God, hear us.

2. For those who are facing the autumn years of their lives, aware of the magnificence and fragility of human life, we pray,

All: Compassionate God, hear us.

3. For those who are thinking ahead, planning and consolidating with untiring love, we pray,

All: Compassionate God, hear us.

4. For those who are homeless and sleeping on the streets these winter nights.

All: Compassionate God, hear us.

(Add your own petitions here as you may please ...)

LEADER:

Loving God, as the daylight fades in our lives and we need more protection and warmth, we thank you for your unconditional love. Receive our heartfelt prayers this day that we may be more inclined to reach out to those in need with actions.

Amen.

OUR FATHER

Leader: We give a sure foundation to all our prayers, and pray as Jesus taught us:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Leader: O extravagant God, in this ripening, red tinged autumn, waken in me a sense of joy in just being alive, joy for nothing in general and everything in particular.

All: We give praise and thanks for all our days.

Leader: God of the seasons, there is a time for everything; there is a time for dying and a time for rising.

All: We need courage to enter into the transformation process.

Leader: God of autumn, the trees are saying goodbye to their green letting go of what has been. We too, have our moments of surrender, with all their insecurity and risk. Help us to let go when we need to do so. God of fallen leaves lying in colored patterns on the ground, our lives have their own patterns.

All: As we see the patterns of our own growth, may we learn from them.

Leader: God of misty days and harvest moon nights, there is always the dimension of mystery and wonder in our lives. We always need to recognize your power filled presence.

All: May we gain strength from this.

Leader: God of harvest wagons and fields of grain, many gifts of growth lie within the season of our surrender. We must wait for harvest in faith and hope.

All: Grant us patience when we do not see the blessings.

Leader: God of birds going south for another season, your Wisdom enables us to know what needs to be left behind and what needs to be carried forward into the future.

All: We yearn for insight and vision.

Leader: God of flowers touched with frost and windows wearing white designs,

All: May your love keep our hearts from growing cold in the empty seasons.

Leader: God of life, you believe in us, you enrich us, you entrust us with the freedom to choose life.

All: For all this we are grateful.

Closing Prayer:

Companion God,
Your presence is the source of our lives.
In you we live and have our being.
Your love creates, sustains and redeems us.
As we struggle with our fears and anxieties,

you are with us.

All: Come then open our hearts
so that we may find you within us,
alive to what is hidden, powerful in what is fragile
and loving in what is resistant to you.
Grant us wisdom to listen to your voice
and to see you in our dreams.
Amen.

Leader: Go now blessed

In the name of God who forgives,
In the name of God who loves,
In the name of God who daily whispers your name
In the name of God who calls us to care for others
In God's +life-sustaining,
+liberating, and,
+ transforming grace.

Be blessed!

All: Amen (*Music*)