

December 1, 2024

“Between a Rock and a Hard Place: How Do We Continue On?”

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

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SEASON OF ADVENT: Together on the Journey!

One of our Mennonite songbooks evokes wonderful images of voices blending in praise as we travel together on a path toward a deeper understanding of faith. The road can be smooth for stretches but also includes rough patches that challenge or discourage. But if we pay attention, we may notice God’s guiding hand directing us.

First Sunday of Advent: Between a Rock and a Hard Place: How Do We Continue On?”

As we journey through life, we inevitably encounter situations where the way forward seems blocked. In these times of trouble, we long to be able to patiently trust and obey God, no matter the risks. This depth of faith grows from daily seeking God’s wisdom and choosing God’s ways as we learn to rely on God

1. GATHERING

Musical Prelude (John)

Call to Worship (Steve)

Leader: Responding to the call of the living God,

People: our rescuer and Savior,

Leader: we welcome the Holy Spirit’s presence,

People: among and within us.

Leader: In the name of Jesus, our risen Lord,

All: we offer ourselves in worship.

“Just as we develop our physical muscles through overcoming opposition - such as lifting weights - we develop our character muscles by overcoming challenges and adversity.” — Stephen Covey

Opening Prayer (Steve)

Congregational Singing (John and Rachel)

Welcome and Passing of the Peace

Leader: May the peace of Christ be with you.

People: And also, with you.

All: Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

Candle lighting



Reader 1: When we find ourselves between a rock and a hard place, we may ask how to continue on.

Reader 2: When Daniel's persistent prayers brought him between opposing laws of the land and the mouths of hungry lions in a stone-covered den, despite the risk, he chose to trust God.

Reader 1: When Jesus found himself faced with persecution and false accusations, he chose forgiveness over self-defense. (first Advent candle is lit)

All: Our path may meander through rocky situations, but we will hold Christ as our center as we journey together.

2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

Scriptures: Daniel 6:6–27 Luke 23:1–5

Luke 23:1 Then the assembly rose as a body and brought Jesus before Pilate. 2 They began to accuse him, saying, "We found this man perverting our nation, forbidding us to pay taxes to the emperor, and saying that he himself is the Messiah, a king." 3 Then Pilate asked him, "So, are you the 'king' of the Jews?" He answered, "If you say so." 4 Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no basis for an accusation against this man." 5 But they were insistent and said, "He stirs up the people by teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee where he began even to this place." 6 When Pilate heard this, he asked whether the man was a Galilean. 7 And when he learned that he was under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him off to Herod, who was himself in Jerusalem at that time.



Sermon: "Perverting Our Nation!" (Steve)

The first accusation brought against Jesus was that he was "perverting our nation." So does that make those of us who wish to truly follow Jesus — "perverts?"

3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

Congregational Singing (John and Rachel)

Response

Joys and Concerns

Offering & Music (John)

Sending (Steve)

Go, borrowing the courage of Daniel,
in the sure and certain hope of God's faithful presence.
May the praise of God be on our lips,
the Holy Spirit at our side,
and the peace of Christ within our hearts. — Amen

"... the world is all messed up. The nation is sick. Trouble is in the land. Confusion all around . . . But I know, somehow, that only when it is dark enough, can you see the stars. And I see God working in this period of the twentieth century in a way that men, in some strange way, are responding — something is happening in our world. The masses of people are rising up." — MLK, Jr.

"No difficulty can discourage, no obstacle dismay, no trouble dishearten the man who has acquired the art of being alive. Difficulties are but dares of fate, obstacles but hurdles to try his skill, troubles but bitter tonics to give him strength; and he rises higher and looms greater after each encounter with adversity." — Ella Wheeler Wilcox