



Unwrapping the

Gifts

The Persecuted Church

Suggested Propers for the Divine Service

“If one member suffers, all suffer together.” 1 Corinthians 12:26 ESV

Given the recent and growing number of Christians killed for the sake of Christ, a congregation might wish to receive the comfort of a Divine Service that specifically meditates upon and intercedes for those persecuted brothers and sisters. LCMS Worship offers the following propers as an aid toward that end.

Opening Hymn

LSB 661 The Son of God Goes Forth to War

Introit (*Psalm 44:22–26; Antiphon, verse 22*)



For your sake we are killed all the | day long;*
we are regarded as sheep to be | slaughtered.
Awake! Why are you sleeping, | O Lord?*
Rouse yourself! Do not reject us for- | ever!
Why do you | hide your face?*
Why do you forget our affliction and op- | pression?
For our soul is bowed down | to the dust;*
our belly clings | to the ground.
Rise up; come | to our help!*
Redeem us for the sake of your | steadfast love!
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son;*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning*
is now and will be for- | ever.**
For your sake we are killed all the | day long;*
we are regarded as sheep to be | slaughtered.

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Kyrie

Possibly use *LSB* 944 or 945

Gloria in Excelsis, omitted

Collect

Almighty God, heavenly Father, Your beloved Son assured His own that they would suffer in this world and yet called them to rejoice in His promise of a life no death could ever take from them. Strengthen all Your children living under persecution and threat of violence; fill them with Your unshakable peace and use their witness to bring salvation even to their persecutors and slanderers and, according to Your gracious will, bring an end to the bloodshed and violence; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Old Testament Reading: Daniel 3:13–30 *or* Daniel 6:20–22

Psalm 83 (or use verses 1–4 as a Gradual)



O God, do not keep | silence;*
do not hold your peace or be still, | O God!
For behold, your enemies make an | uproar;*
those who hate you have | raised their heads.
They lay crafty plans against your | people;*
they consult together against your | treasured ones.
They say, “Come, let us wipe them out as a | nation;*
let the name of Israel be remembered | no more!”
For they conspire with | one accord;*
against you they make a | covenant—
the tents of Edom and the | Ishmaelites,*
Moab and the | Hagrites,
Geba and Ammon and | Amalek,*
Philistia with the inhabi- | tants of Tyre;
Asshur also has | joined them;*
they are the strong arm of the chil- | dren of Lot.
Do to them as you did to | Midian,*
as to Sisera and Jabin at the river | Kishon,
who were destroyed at | Endor,*
who became dung | for the ground.
Make their nobles like Or- | eb and Zeeb,*

all their princes like Zebah and | Zalmunna,
who said, “Let us take possession | for ourselves*
of the pastures | of God.”
O my God, make them like | whirling dust,*
like chaff be- | fore the wind.
As fire consumes the | forest,*
as the flame sets the moun- | tains ablaze,
so may you pursue them with your | tempest*
and terrify them with your | hurricane!
Fill their fac- | es with shame,*
that they may seek your name, | O LORD.
Let them be put to shame and dismayed for- | ever;*
let them perish | in disgrace,
that they may know that you alone,
whose name | is the LORD,*
are the Most High over | all the earth.

Second Reading: Acts 12:1–17 or Romans 8:31–39

Verse

If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. *John 15:20*

Holy Gospel: John 15:18–26

Hymn of the Day

LSB 659 Lord of Our Life

Prayer of the Church

Let us pray for the whole church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Brief silence

For the holy church throughout the world, that faithful pastors would be sent into the harvest to preach the Gospel in its purity and administer the Sacraments according to Christ’s institution; and that saving faith would be created and sustained in many by the Holy Spirit through His precious means of grace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all the baptized, that by the power of the Holy Spirit they would remain steadfast in the faith, clinging to Christ alone for their salvation as long as they dwell in the wilderness of this vale of tears, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the nations of the world and their leaders, that all who receive the sword as Your servants may bear it according to Your command, and that war, hate and bloodshed may be overcome by peace, justice and mercy, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For our Christian brothers and sisters around the world facing persecution and martyrdom [*especially in _____*], that they may, by grace and the power of the Holy Spirit, confess the saving name of Jesus Christ in the face of their persecutors, remembering that He will confess them before His Father in heaven, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For our brothers and sisters who have already been slain for bearing the name of Jesus [*including _____*], let us offer God our praise and thanks, rejoicing that they were faithful unto death and have received the crown of everlasting life; and asking our gracious God that their witness would be remembered in His church and serve to encourage and strengthen our own faith, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For compassionate, gracious and humble hearts, that all Christians would keep their persecuted brothers around the world in their prayers, remembering also our Lord's commands to love our enemies, do good to those who hate us and pray for those who persecute us, so that petitions would also rise for our enemies to be led to repentance and faith in the One who has overcome the world, even Jesus Christ, our Savior, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For a generous, giving spirit in the church, that the baptized would support the ministry and mission of our Lord in their local congregations, church bodies and throughout the world; and that Christian organizations established to assist those in harm's way for bearing the name of Jesus would be emboldened by the Spirit to continue their merciful work and supported by the whole church in prayer and with alms, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all those who have requested our intercessions, [*especially for _____*], commending each into the Father's loving hands and asking for a happy issue out of their troubles, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who approach the holy altar this day to receive the fruits of the holy cross, the very body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Savior, that they would come in repentance and faith and be filled with abundant blessing, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Commemorating all the faithful who have gone before us and are at rest, and giving thanks for their lives and witness, asking that we might come to share at last with them the unending joy of the Kingdom, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. **Amen.**

Preface

It is indeed meet, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who gives His own to drink of the cup of His suffering and to be baptized with the baptism He underwent, that His strength may be perfected in their weakness and that the invincible love of His cross may continue to shine forth in this world; therefore, with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

It is in-deed meet, right, and sal - u - tar - y that we should at all
times and in all places give thanks to You, ho - ly Lord, al - might - y
Fa - ther, ev - er - last - ing God, through Je - sus Christ, our Lord,
who gives His own drink of the cup of His suf - fer - ing
and to be baptized with the baptism He un - der went that His strength may be perfected
in their weak - ness and that the sign of the invincible love of His cross
may con - tinue to shine forth in this world; There - fore with angels and arch -
an - gels and with all the company of heav - en we laud and mag -
nify Your glo - rious name, ev - er - more prais - ing You and say - ing:

Distribution Hymns

LSB 932 Jesus Sat with His Disciples

LSB 658 Preserve Your Word, O Savior

LSB 666 O Little Flock, Fear Not the Foe

Post-communion Canticle or final hymn

LSB 941 We Praise You and Acknowledge You, O God