



THE
LUTHERAN
WORLD
FEDERATION

A Communion
of Churches

lutheranworld.org

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

Monday Morning Prayer, Ecumenical Centre

World Council of Churches – Lutheran World Federation

Call to Worship

L: In the beginning the Spirit God danced over the void.

C: It was a dance of creation, of joy, of freedom of wholeness, of power.

..

L: And God, knowing that all that is good is shared,

C: held the Earth tenderly and yearned for relationship.

L: And humanity was born in the yearning of God.

C: We are born to share the earth.

(adapted from: Blessing the Earth, Carter Heyward, USA)

Sing: Schweige und höre ~ Thuma Mina 23

Schweige und höre, neige deines Herzens Ohr, suche den Frieden (3 times) or in English:

Silent be and listen, and incline your heart's ear, pursue and live peace. (3 times)

A litany of violence against women from the Bible

L: This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live.

(Deuteronomy 30:19)

When Shechem son of Hamor the Hivite, prince of the region, saw Dinah, he seized her and raped her. (Gen 34:2)

C: Choose life. (Deut. 30.19)

L: But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. (Judges 19:25)

C: I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10)

L: But he refused to listen to Tamar, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

On the day that Amnon raped Tamar, Absalom decided to kill him.

(2 Samuel 13:14; 32)

C: I have set before you life and death.

L: On Zion and everywhere in Judah our wives and daughters are being raped.

(Lamentations 5:11)

C: I came that they may have life.

L: Let me send out my daughter instead. She's a virgin. And I'll even send out the man's wife. You can rape them or do whatever else you want, but please don't do such a horrible thing to this man. (Judges 19:24)

C: Choose life. (Deut. 30.19)

Sing: Fais taire nos voix ~Thuma Mina 23

Fais taire nos voix, ouvre nos vies à la foi, donne nous ta paix. (2 times) or in English:

Silent be and listen, and incline your heart's ear, pursue and live peace. (2 times)

Please rise holding your stone in your hand as we listen to the gospel of Christ.

Gospel reading John 8:2-10

Early in the morning Jesus came again to the temple. All the people came to him and he sat down and began to teach them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them, they said to him, 'Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of

committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?' They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, 'Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.' And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders; and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.'

Sing: Gloria à Dios ~ Thuma Mina 56

Prayer of confession and laying down of stones

(After each prayer a stone is laid down, at the end of the formal confession everyone is invited to come forwards and lay down their stone in a communal act of confession. If you wish to say a word of confession aloud you are welcome to do so.)

L: God of heaven and earth before you we confess our sin.
 God of transformation, hear our prayer.

♪ **Nkosi, nkosi**

G. M. Kolisi: South Africa

In 'ne-nce-ba' the middle syllable, 'nce,' is pronounced by making a 'tsch' sound that a mother uses to reprimand a child, with the addition of a nasalized beginning.

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L: We confess the terrible physical and sexual violence that so many women and girls across the globe are subjected to.
God of transformation, hear our prayer.

♪ **Nkosi, nkosi**

L: We confess how even into our own time scripture has been used to justify violence against women and their exclusion from a full role in society.
God of transformation, hear our prayer.

♪ **Nkosi, nkosi**

L: We confess a violent culture which turns women's bodies into sexualised commodities and sees women as part of the spoils of war and commerce.
God of transformation hear our prayer

♪ **Nkosi, nkosi**

L: We confess the structural violence of our institutions including the church which too often exclude women from decision-making, power or authority.
God of transformation hear our prayer

♪ **Nkosi, nkosi**

(Please move forwards to lay down your stones.)

Assurance of forgiveness and transformation

L: There appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment". When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. *(Luke 13:11-13)*

Let us stand to listen to words we can trust, words which help us and our societies to stand up straight, be transformed and walk humbly in God's paths. *(Please rise.)*

Behold says God I am making all things new.
I will wipe every tear from their eyes. *(Rev. 21:5, 4)*

For the mountains may depart
and the hills be removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,
says the Lord, who has compassion on you. *(Isaiah 54:10)*

In the name of Christ we are forgiven,

C: Alleluia, amen!

♪ **Stand, O stand firm (sung three times)**

Traditional, Cameroon

Traditional, Cameroon

All:

Stand, O stand firm; stand, O stand firm;
O gar - de - toi bien; ô gar - de - toi bien;
Steh und halt stand, steh und halt stand
Fuer - za y va - lor; fuer - za y va - lor;
Fir - mes, con - fian - do; fir - mes, con - fian - do;

stand, O stand firm and see what the Lord can
ô gar - de - toi bien et vois ce que Christ peut
steh und halt stand und sieh auf das, was Gott tun
fuer - za y va - lor que el Se - ñor nos sos - ten -
fir - mes, con - fian - do, ve - re - mos o que Deus

Leader:

do. O my sis - ter, stand ve - ry firm!
faire. O ma soeur, gar - de - toi bien!
kann! Mei - ne Schwes - ter, steh und halt stand!
drá. ¡Mi her - ma - na fuer - za y va - lor!
faz! Mi - nha ir - mã, con - fi - a em Deus!

Original text and music: Cameroon traditional. German: Dieter Trautwein © Strube Verlag, Pettenkofenstr. 24, D-80336 Munich, Germany.
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Meditation

♪ **Stand, O stand firm (sung three times)**

Prayers

L: Great God we give you thanks that you call us out of silence to name hidden and domestic violence.

Today we pray for all those women who despite suffering from violence, continue to care for family and children, to grow and prepare food, carry water, earn a living and offer support to others.

We pray for women who are trafficked as domestic or sex workers; for women who are raped and do not know how to find words to name their pain or a way into the future.

We pray for transformation of our societies which often find it easier to judge the victims of violence than to solve the problems of injustice

We pray that women's voices may be heard and taken into account in all peace and reconciliation work.

We pray for a transformation in the violent way many men act towards and think about women.

We pray for right and just relations between women and men that together we may transform and overcome violence in all its forms and learn to celebrate our diversity and interdependence

We look forward to the age of peace, when violence is banished, both women and men are able to love and to be loved, and the work and wealth of our world is justly shared.

Silence or free prayer

Lord's Prayer *(in our various languages)*

Benediction

L: May the God of Eve teach you to dance.
May the God of Hagar bring you comfort in the desert.
May the God of Miriam bring companions to you when you struggle.
May the God of Deborah teach you courage for your battles.
May the Christ who knew Mary and Martha show you the way of balance.
May the Christ who healed the bent-over woman heal your pain.
May the Christ of Mary Magdala send you out to proclaim your story.
In the name of Christ who is the memory, hope and authority of the future.

♪ **Amen**

South African traditional

Energetically

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two systems of music. The first system has two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff. The treble staff contains a series of chords, with some notes beamed together and others held over. The bass staff contains a similar series of chords, also with some notes beamed together. The lyrics 'A - - men, a - - men,' are written below the first system. The second system also has two staves. The treble staff continues the chordal pattern, ending with a double bar line. The bass staff continues the chordal pattern, also ending with a double bar line. The lyrics 'a - - men, a - - men, a - - men.' are written below the second system.

Words: traditional liturgical. Music: South African traditional, transcribed by John L. Bell at the Sunrise Hospice, Themba.

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Blessed are those who refuse to violate women, for they have chosen life

But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. (Judges 19:25)

This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live. (Deuteronomy 30:19)

The Bible text in Judges 19:22-30 tells a terrible story of gang rape. Do the men inside the house listen to the woman's screams as they last through the night or do they sleep? Do they pray for her or for themselves? Do they fear that she may not make it through the night and that the gang will come back to use them in the same way? If the gang comes knocking again, should they offer the virgin daughter of the host in order to protect their male honour?

Well, she was only a concubine. Not a real wife. And she's only a woman...

As terrible as the shrieks and violence during rape may be, terrifying too is the silence often imposed on women - by others or by themselves afterwards. Dare we speak and name what has happened?

There is a thumping sound next door, muffled shouts and cries. My neighbour is hitting his oldest daughter. He has been drinking. She is pregnant. How will his sons learn that this is not the way to treat the women in their lives?

And it's called "domestic violence" as if it were something tame. It is not.

The word "home" sounds so safe yet it can be a place of terror for many women. To "choose life" is to campaign against everything that treats women as objects rather than as equal human beings. Choosing life is about longterm work with individuals, families and societies which examines the root causes of violence in sexism and the feelings of disempowerment.

Across generations, class, race and nations it is time to clearly say that violence in the private sphere is also unacceptable. We have the right to be safe in our homes. We choose life.

Jane Stranz