

1. Dear congregation,
A week ago we truly experienced winter, with lots of snow, icy roads, and cold winds. Buses and trains were not running, schools and events were canceled. The cold, the wind, the storm caused us problems. At times, though, we may also have felt like going for a walk in the snow, feeling the cold on our faces, looking at and photographing the snowy landscape.

أيها الأحباء في الجماعة،

1.
قبل أسبوع عشنا شتاءً حقيقيًا، مع الكثير من الثلوج والطرق الزلقة والرياح الباردة.

2. Afterwards, we were glad to be back in our heated homes and enjoyed our “warm nest.” In winter, when it is cold outside, our need for warmth, security, and a pleasant place of retreat increases. The Letter to the Hebrews writes of a winter in a figurative sense. It is addressed to a congregation that has grown weary through exclusion.

2.
توقفت الحافلات والقطارات عن العمل، وأُغيت
المدارس والأنشطة.

3. “Strengthen the weary hands and the weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. ... See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God, and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.” (Hebrews 12:12–13, 15)

3.
جلب لنا البرد والرياح والعواصف الكثير من
الصعوبات.

4. “Weary hands, weak knees.”
Perhaps the challenges of aging and illness are in our bones. Perhaps making progress toward a secure stay in Germany is endlessly slow, and every single step forward costs a great deal of strength. Or perhaps the amount of work overwhelms us, and we hardly have time for anything else.

4.
ومع ذلك، كنا أحياناً نستمتع بالمشي في الثلج،
ونشعر بالبرد على وجوهنا، ونتأمل جمال الطبيعة
ونلتقط الصور.

5. “That no one falls behind.” Some of the migrant Christians who used to come to our congregation frequently are now hardly to be seen. Are work and family completely taking up their time? Is the Christian faith no longer as important in an orderly daily routine, or are they living it in a different way now?

5.
بعد ذلك كنا سعداء بالعودة إلى البيت الدافئ
والاستمتاع بـ«عشنا الدافئ».

6. Fewer new people are coming to our congregation because it has become difficult for refugees to come to Germany. “A shoot from a poisonous root.” Many have been coming to our congregation for a long time or are now living here in the building for several months.

6. في الشتاء، عندما يكون الجو باردًا في الخارج، يزداد احتياجنا للدفع، وللأمان، ولمكان جميل نلجأ إليه.

7. When people know one another better, tensions sometimes arise. Those who have experienced a great deal also carry disappointments. It is important that these do not turn into lasting bitterness, but that the soul finds peace again and people discover new paths together. Added to this are worries about the situation of our world.

7.
عن شتاءٍ بمعناه الرمزي يتحدث أيضًا كتاب
العبرانيين، موجَّهًا كلامه إلى جماعة تعبت بسبب
التهميش.

8. Trump and other right-wing radicals are dividing Western countries and threatening what is good and has been good about them: the rule of law, democracy, openness to the world. Much is being negotiated about Ukraine, but the war continues through this winter. In Iran, protest against the Islamist regime is growing: will it bring only brutal violence from those in power, or one day liberation from their dictatorship?

8. «قوّوا الأيدي المتعبة والركب الضعيفة، واصنعوا لأقدامكم طرقاً مستقيمة، لكي لا يتعثر الضعيف بل يُشفى.»

9. Thus, in our often gray and cold times, the need for security grows in an insecure world. We long to be strengthened in body and soul. We desire healing for our wounds and disappointments. We seek togetherness in a time when many are alone. What helps us here? The Letter to the Hebrews encourages us from God, from Jesus, from the heavenly world.

9. «احرصوا أن لا يتخلف أحد فيفقد نعمة الله، ولا تدعوا جذور المرارة تنبت فتسبب الأذى وتسبب الكثيرين.»

10. You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. ... You have come to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood ...”

10. «أيدٍ متعبة وركب ضعيفة» – ربما نشعر بذلك بسبب التقدم في العمر أو المرض.

11. “We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.” (Hebrews 12:22, 23a, 24abc, 28a) The Letter to the Hebrews begins these sentences with “You have come.” We already belong to God. In our insecure world, this gives me security: “You have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” (Hebrews 12:22abc)

11.
ربما تسير أمور الإقامة الجيدة في ألمانيا ببطء شديد، وكل خطوة تتطلب منا قوة كبيرة.

12. And: “We are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken.” (Hebrews 12:28a) Not perhaps, but: we are receiving this kingdom. One thing in our lives is certain: we already belong to the heavenly Jerusalem. On Mount Zion, in this city of God, we are protected.

12.
أو ربما أصبحت كثرة العمل عبئًا ثقیلاً علينا، فلم نعد نجد وقتًا لشيء آخر.

13. The kingdom we receive is unshakable. Everything on earth is shakable, vulnerable, destructible: every good or bad political order, every body and every soul. But the kingdom of God, in which we as Christians already live, is unshakable, invulnerable, and indestructible.

13. «لَکي لَا یَتَخَلَف أَحَد» – بعض المسیحیین المهاجرین
الذین کانوا یأتون کثیرًا إلی جماعتنا لم یعودوا یُرُون
کثیرًا الآن.

14. We must not direct our need for security toward things that are themselves vulnerable, dissolvable, and human-made. Only with God, in his kingdom that cannot be dissolved by anything, am I truly secure.

14.
ربما أخذتهم مشاغل العمل والعائلة بالكامل، أو لم يعد الإيمان يحتل المكان نفسه في حياتهم اليومية.

15.
In our Kreuzkirche congregation we seek cohesion, a community in which we feel alive and safe. As refugees from countries shaped by war and oppression, we seek a new home. We want to belong to a good community, one that supports us and in which we feel at home.

15.
كما أن عدد القادمين الجدد إلى جماعتنا أصبح أقل،
لأن الوصول إلى ألمانيا أصبح أصعب على اللاجئين.

16.

كثيرون يعيشون معنا منذ مدة طويلة أو يقيمون في
بيتنا لعدة أشهر، ومع القرب قد تظهر أحياناً
توترات.

16. It is good, then, that we are part of a worldwide community that even encompasses heaven: “You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.” (Hebrews 12:22d–23ab)

17.

من عاش الكثير مرّ بخيبات أمل أيضاً، ومن المهم
ألا تتحول هذه الخيبات إلى مرارة دائمة، بل إلى
سلام داخلي.

17.

17.
Sometimes we are tired, lame,
disappointed, or perhaps even bitter.
Then we long for strengthening of body
and soul, for healing and inner peace.
Where do we go with this? The Letter
to the Hebrews says: “You have come
to Jesus, the mediator of a new
covenant, and to the sprinkled blood.”
(Hebrews 12:24abc)

18. We are connected to Jesus, the source, the water of life: we cast our weariness, weakness, disappointment, and bitterness into this river of life in prayer. We entrust them to the one who is always awake for us, full of strength, the God of love and peace.

18. تضاف إلى ذلك هموم العالم: الانقسام السياسي، الحروب المستمرة، والاضطرابات في بلدان كثيرة.

19. From his source flow courage, strength, confidence, and the willingness for reconciliation back into our lives. With firm steps, with new hope and peace in our hearts, we continue on our way.

19.
لهذا يزداد في زمننا البارد والرمادي الشوق إلى
الأمان، وإلى الشفاء، وإلى الانتماء الحقيقي.

20. Jesus strengthens our body and our soul; he is our healing power. His community, which gives cohesion, transcends the boundaries of countries and times, heaven and earth. And God gives a security that no idea, no system, no human being can give us—a security that cannot be shaken. Amen.

20. ويؤكد لنا الإيمان: نحن ننتمي إلى مدينة الله، إلى ملكوت لا يمكن أن يتزعزع، وفي الله وحده نجد الأمان الحقيقي. آمين.