

REDEEMER'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

Rev. Soren Flessen

Dec. 13, 2020/ Second Sunday of Advent



Introduction

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever. **Amen.**

Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Loving and forgiving God, **we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news:

by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free— free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, ☩ comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

***Gathering Song* "Come, Let Us Worship and Bow Down"**

**Come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the Lord, our God, our maker.
Come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the Lord, our God, our maker.
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand,
and the sheep of his hand.**

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, **stir up the wills of your faithful people, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath~ Three Advent Candles are Lit

Cantors: All creation lies in waiting, in the stillness of the night, with hope anticipating the Advent of Eternal Light.

Litany for Third Sunday of Advent-PREPARE

L: Advent is a time to prepare.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

L: During Advent we prepare our eyes to see the light of Christ.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

L: During Advent we prepare our hearts to receive the Word of Christ.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

L: During Advent we prepare to share the joy of Christ.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

L: During Advent we prepare to embrace the promise of Christ.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

This morning we light three candles. The **first candle** reminds us that Advent is a time to wait upon the Lord. We wait for the unfolding of God's plan in accordance with God's time. The **second candle** reminds us that Advent is also a time to watch. During Advent, we eagerly watch for God's presence and work in our world. As we light the **third candle** we also remember that Advent is a time to prepare. During Advent, we prepare ourselves in heart, soul and strength to welcome our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who was and is, and is to come. Let each of us ask God to prepare us to celebrate the glory of Christmas.

Congregation sings:

**We prepare in hope for the morning Light,
for the love of Christ to illuminate the night.**

We prepare with joy for the Savior's birth;

We prepare in hope for peace on earth, peace on earth.

Prayer

P: God in heaven, as we continue our Advent journey, help us to be people who wait for you, watch for you, and through your Spirit be prepared for you. Continue to shine your light in our lives as we look at all you have done, all you are doing, and all you will do.
Amen.

The First Reading is from the 61st Chapter of Isaiah

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;
³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

The Second Reading is from the 5th Chapter of 1 Thessalonians
Second Reading 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

L: Word of God. Word of Life. C: Thanks be to God.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 1st chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Sermon Hymn **“There’s a Voice in the Wilderness”**

- 1 **There's a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod:
Prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God!
The valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places where God, our God, may go!**

- 2 **O Jerusalem, herald good tidings, ascend to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people the coming of their king.
Like flow'rs of the field we perish, like grass our works decay;
the pow'r and the pomp of nations shall pass like a dream away.**

- 3 **But the word of our Savior is faithful, the arm of our God is strong,
who stands in the midst of the nations and soon will right the wrong.
Lord, feed your flock like a shepherd, the lambs so gently hold;
in pastures of peace now lead them, and bring them to your fold.**

Nicene Creed:

C: We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son He is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

(Open Prayers)

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, ✠ now and forever.

Amen.

Sending song:

“All Earth is Hopeful”

- 1 All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!
Furrows lie open for God's creative task:
this, the labor of people who struggle to see
how God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free.**
- 2 People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel";
she conceived him, "God with us,"
our brother, whose birth
restores hope and courage to children of this earth.**
- 3 Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;
new highways opened, new protocols declared.
Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!
All clear ev'ry gateway, in haste, come out in haste!**
- 4 We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live
in our world; he is present, in neighbors we see
our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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