

CREATED, SAVED AND GIFTED BY GOD,
WE SEEK, SERVE AND SHARE JESUS CHRIST.



THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

DECEMBER 10, 2023

10:30 A.M.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH

901 EAST STROOP ROAD

KETTERING, OH 45429-4688

(937) 298-0136

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Introduction

John called people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing would get in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

New Beginnings

There are lots of ways to open a story, perhaps most famously "Once upon a time . . ." Similarly, the gospel-writer Mark starts out, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ," even though his narrative lacks the birth, angelic announcements, and childhood stories Matthew and Luke tell about Jesus. And John's gospel starts even farther back, at the beginning of creation, before skipping to Jesus' adult years. What we can take from these varying opening narratives is that the story of Jesus does not have one beginning, but many beginnings—each a new entry point into the old, old story of God's love breaking into the world.

Mark starts with an invitation to baptism, repentance, and forgiveness of sins. Even so, John the baptizer declares that another new start is coming, with the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus will bring. What's more, while his baptism by John is clearly not the first event in Jesus' life, it marks a new beginning just before he heads off to the wilderness and then on to start his public ministry.

We celebrate Advent every year at this time, but each time is a new experience, a new beginning of the church year, a new chance to anticipate grace. What has changed for you since last Advent? What has changed for your family and community? What expectations or hopes do you have for God's presence with us? What new beginning would be a blessing?

Every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection, and each time we take part in confession and forgiveness we experience a fresh start. Mark opens with baptism, which is a new beginning for each of us. Remembering our baptism offers us daily assurance of the new things God is always unfolding around us. Today as we worship, we pray for the Holy Spirit to stir up something new in, with, and among us.

PRELUDE

** Indicates to stand as you are able.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pr. Jamie Vannoy

CALL TO WORSHIP

“Come, Emmanuel” | Chancel Choir

Response, sung during the verses:



Come, O come, Em - man - u - el.

Cantor: Holy God, burning bush, now hear.
Holy God, Moses' courage, hear.
Holy God, Miriam's song, now hear.
Holy God, freeing captives, hear.

All: Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.

Refrain: All



Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall



come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Verse 2

Cantor: Holy God, prophets ever long.
Holy God, exiles waiting long.
Holy God, all in prison long.
Holy God, holy God, how long?

All: Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.

Refrain: All

Verse 3

Cantor: Holy God, swords to plows shall be.
Holy God, greed to grace shall be.
Holy God, strife to peace shall be.
Holy God, earth made whole shall be.

All: Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.

Refrain: All

OPENING LITANY:

In the lonely places,
The wilderness,
Where we stand forlorn,
Windswept and alone,
Your voice calls out:
“Prepare a way for the Lord.”

In the dark places,
The shadows,
Where we hide our fears,
Embrace our tears,
Your voice calls out:
“Prepare a way for the Lord.”

GATHERING SONGS

Prepare Ye the Way

(Music Ministers/**Congregation**)

Prepare ye the way,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.
Prepare ye the way,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

**Prepare ye the way,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.
Prepare ye the way,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.**

Yeshua, You reign on high,
You reign on high.
Almighty God, Your love is like no other.

**Yeshua, You reign on high,
You reign on high.
Almighty God, Your love is like no other.**

Prepare ye the way,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.
Prepare ye the way,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.

Yeshua, You reign on high,
You reign on high.
Almighty God, Your love is like no other.

**Yeshua, You reign on high,
You reign on high.
Almighty God, Your love is like no other.**

Your love is like no other. Yeah!

**Prepare ye the way,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.
Prepare ye the way,
Prepare ye the way of the Lord.**

Emmanuel

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
His name is called "Emmanuel":
God with us, revealed in us,
His name is called "Emmanuel."

CONFESSION

Holy and loving God,

we have dwelt in darkness and preferred it to the light; we have been proud of our accomplishments and despaired over our shortcomings. Make level the mountains of our pride, and raise up the valleys of our doubts. Open a path in the wilderness of our lives that we might find our way to you again. Refine us and prepare us once again for life in your kingdom. Amen.

FORGIVENESS

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all. **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. **By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Praise to you, O God, who gives us courage to start again. You fasten righteousness around your waist and baptize with the Holy Spirit's fire. Bless us as we mirror your mighty fire in these simple flames, and teach us to mirror your justice in the paths we prepare. We ask that peace abound, until none hurt or destroy over all the earth. **Amen.**

Advent Week 1 - December 3

Verse 1

Advent Week 2 - December 10 Verse 1, 2

Advent Week 3 - December 17 Verse 1, 2, 3

Advent Week 4 - December 24 Verse 1, 2, 3, 4

Verses



1. Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish
2. Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish
3. Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish
4. Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish



dark - ness. He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el,
dark - ness. He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd,
dark - ness. Lift your heads, and lift high the gate - way
dark - ness. He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings.



God ful - fills the prom - ise.
gent - ly lead them home - ward.
for the King of glo - ry.
Let your lights be shin - ing!

Refrain



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the dark - ness.



Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gath-ered to-day.

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

WORD

*Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets,
Jesus interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.*

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:1-11

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

A reading from the book of Isaiah.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

Righteousness shall prepare a pathway for God. (Ps. 85:13)

You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.**

I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.

**Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.**

Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

**Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.

**Righteousness shall go before the LORD
and shall prepare for God a pathway.**

SECOND READING

2 Peter 3:8-15a

This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

A reading from the book of 2 Peter.

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

**** GOSPEL READING**

Mark 1:1-8

The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

The Holy Gospel according to Mark.. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

YOUTH MESSAGE

MESSAGE

Pr. Jamie Vannoy

** APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY

GATHERING OF GIFTS

OFFERTORY

OFFERING PRAYER

God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

Lift up your heads; **we lift them up to God.**

Lift up your voices; **we lift them up to God.**

Lift up your hearts; **we lift them up to God.**

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

And so we gather at the table. We come from many different places in life. And as we come together around the table we discover that our differences are not something we just tolerate, but that our differences are indeed a blessing. So come, children of God, just as you are. Wherever you are on this journey of life and faith, you are welcome here - here in this place, here in this community, here at this table. Come, children of God, come and remember. Remember the stories that Jesus' friends tell: Stories of bread broken and shared to feed a multitude; stories of gathering both enemy and friend together around a common table; stories of unlikely guests revealing the face of the sacred.

On a night of both celebration and betrayal Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it; gave it to his disciples and said, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me." Then Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to his disciples saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And so we pray: Lord, bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine. Bless all of us in our eating and drinking that our eyes might be open, and that we might recognize the risen Christ in our midst, indeed in one another.

**** LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together. Come, take your place at the table.

HOLY COMMUNION - *Receiving the Lord's tangible presence.*

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Each person may respond: **Amen.**

Communion Statement ~ *If you believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is your Savior and Redeemer and would like to receive Holy Communion, then come forward to receive the elements. If you would just like to come forward and receive a blessing, then you may do that also.*

NOTE: We invite everyone to come forward for Holy Communion. If you have a gluten allergy, gluten-free wafers are available upon request when receiving Communion. Also, if you prefer not to receive wine at Communion, apple juice is available upon request.

REFLECTION DURING COMMUNION

*As we prepare to receive the sacrament today, may we quietly take this time to center ourselves on Christ, and the amazing gifts of grace and forgiveness that we have been given. As we receive the body and the blood of our Lord, let us reflect upon His sacrifice. Finally, may we take this time to ask the Holy Spirit to enter our hearts, and then to work **in** us and **through** us in the coming days.*

**** TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and always keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**** BLESSING**

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit remain upon you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

You Are Holy (Prince of Peace)

(Music Ministers /All)
You are holy. **You are holy.**
You are mighty. **You are mighty.**
You are worthy. **You are worthy.**
Worthy of praise. **Worthy of praise.**
I will follow. **I will follow.**
I will listen. **I will listen.**
I will love you. **I will love you.**
All of my days. **All of my days.**

(All Men)

I will sing to and worship.
The King who is worthy.
And I will love and adore him,
And I will bow down before him.
And I will sing to and worship
The king who is worthy.
And I will love and adore him,
And I will bow down before him.
You're my Prince of Peace,
And I will live my life for you.

(All Women)

You are Lord or lords. You are King of kings.
You are mighty God, Lord of everything.
You're Emmanuel. You're the great I Am.
You're the Prince of Peace who is the Lamb.
You're the living God. You're my saving grace.
You will reign forever, Ancient of Days.
You are Alpha, Omega - beginning and end.
You're my Savior, Messiah, Redeemer and Friend.
You're my Prince of Peace,
And I will live my life for you.

(Men)

**I will sing to and worship
The King who is worthy.
And I will love and adore him,
And I will bow down before him.
And I will sing to and worship
The king who is worthy.
And I will love and adore him,
And I will bow down before him.
You're my Prince of Peace,
And I will live my life for you.
You're my Prince of Peace,
And I will live my life for you.**

(Women)

**You are Lord of lords. You are King of kings.
You are mighty God, Lord of everything.
You're Emmanuel. You're the Great I Am.
You're the Prince of Peace who is the Lamb.
You're the living God. You're my saving grace.
You will reign for ever, Ancient of Days.
You are Alpha, Omega - beginning and end.
You're my Savior, Messiah, Redeemer and Friend.
You're my Prince of Peace,
And I will live my life for you.
You're my Prince of Peace,
And I will live my life for you.**

**** DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Created, saved and gifted by God, we seek, serve and share Jesus Christ.

Hallelujah! Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE