

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

GATHERING*Congregational Responses in Bold Print***ANNOUNCEMENTS****PRELUDE *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* WHITWORTH**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God, the parent who rouses us from slumber, the shepherd who gathers us on the holy mountain, the deliverer who sets us free. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE SECOND ADVENT CANDLE - *Hope for Those Who Are Weary*

Choir/ensemble sings Christ Be Our Light (ELW 715)

*The Light shines in the darkness,
but the darkness has not overcome it.*

*During Advent our weary souls seek God's daily strength.
The Lord gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.*

*We grow weary when fear overshadows faith.
The Lord gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.*

*We grow weary when destructive actions erupt in the world around us.
The Lord gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.*

*For all of us feeling weary this Advent season:
Grant that we might have the peace of Christ as we wait, the love of Christ as we act, and the grace of Christ as we speak.*

Candle lighting.

This morning we light two candles. The first candle illuminates patience in the areas of our lives where God has called us to wait. The second candle extends the promise of strength to all who feel weary and weak in the shadows of the world. As we continue our Advent journey, may our hope be kindled as the light grows brighter.

Congregation and choir/ensemble sing refrain:

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.

Closing Prayer: *God of mercy and compassion, scripture says that if we draw near to you, you will draw near to us. In a shadowy world where human weakness and weariness reside, we ask for you to draw near and dispel the darkness around us. May the light of this season illuminate our hope, strength, and steadfast endurance as we await the coming Savior. We pray this in the name of Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

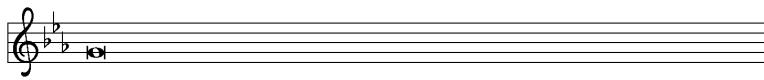
HYMN #250 *Blessed Be the God of Israel* FOREST GREEN

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the refining fire of the Holy Spirit, and the peace of God, which surpasses understanding, be with you all. And also with you.

KYRIE

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mer - cy.
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mer - cy.



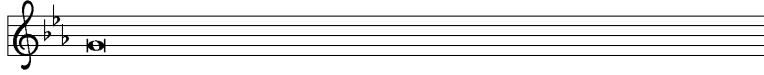
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



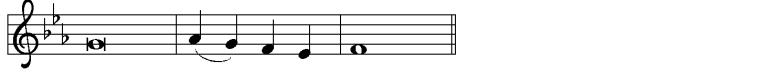
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together. Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 11: 1-10

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

¹A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; ⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his

mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING: Romans 15: 4-13

God's promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God's blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Christ has welcomed them into God's family.

⁴Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

“Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name”;

¹⁰and again he says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people”; ¹¹and again,

“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him”;

¹²and again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.”

¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (8:15)

The musical notation consists of three staves of music. The first two staves are identical, showing a melody in G major (one sharp) with lyrics "Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia," and "al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia." The third staff begins with "Repeat alleluia" and shows a continuation of the melody.

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

HOLY GOSPEL (8:15)

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 3rd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL (8:15) Matthew 3: 1-12

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

¹In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’”

⁴Now John wore clothing of camel’s hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON (8:15) Rev. Christian Dittmar

(10:45) *Kids of the Kingdom*

HYMN OF THE DAY #260 *The King Shall Come* CONSOLATION

NICENE CREED

With voices united, let us confess our faith

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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. 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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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.

THE PRAYERS

Keeping awake as we watch for Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.. (A brief silence.)

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

You hear the cries of our hearts, O Lord. Fill us with hopeful expectation, that in each day and hour we may love and serve our neighbors, in Jesus' name. Amen.

MEAL

INTRODUCTION TO THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. And also with you.

Share the Peace with one another!

OFFERING (8:15) Brass Ensemble *Veni, Veni Emmanuel*
(10:45) Miriam Gibson *He Shall Feed His Flock* HANDEL

OFFERTORY # 692 *We Are an Offering* OFFERING

We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you; we are an offering.
Lord use our voices, Lord use our hands, Lord use our lives, they are yours:
we are an offering.

All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you.
We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you; we are an offering,
we are an offering.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Giver of every good thing, we set before you the gifts that you have already given to sustain our lives and to share with others. Help us to be good stewards of the earth and all that is in it, and let our lives be a testimony to the abundant feast you prepare for all who hunger. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right.....we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of

pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -

san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the

name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCARISTIC PRAYER

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, 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.

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come now with joy to Emmanuel's table. Feast at the banquet of hope and love.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

HYMNS DURING COMMUNION

#272 *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* ES IST EIN ROS

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. God of abundance, we give you thanks that in this holy meal you have invited us to feast with you and one another. May the taste of your love remain with us, and may our words and our work in your name invite others into your bountiful grace. Send us from your table to proclaim your presence, even as we await the glorious coming of Christ our Savior. Amen.

SENDING

BLESSING

May God, who gathers us in love, lead you in pathways of righteousness and justice. May God, who knows us more deeply than we know ourselves, lead you in pathways of forgiveness and freedom. May God, who fills us with good things, lead you in pathways of equity and abundance.

The blessing of the holy Trinity, +one God, be upon you and remain with you forever. Amen.

SENDING HYMN #249 *On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry* PUER NOBIS

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you. Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE *He Came Down* LASKEY