

St. John's Lutheran Church — Walhalla, SC  
Second Sunday of Advent — December 6, 2020  
Worship at St. John's in the Courtyard, weather permitting  
(also on Facebook) — 9AM

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets 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.

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**GATHERING SONG** — "*Prepare Ye The Way of the Lord/Emmanuel*" —*Medley*      *see next page*

**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.**

**THE APOSTOLIC GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

**THE PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Leader: Let us pray . . . 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.

**People: Amen.**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH - "*Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah*" (Verses 1 & 2)**

*see next page*

**ADVENT 2 PRAYER**

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

**THE SCRIPTURE READINGS**

*see next page*

**THE MESSAGE**

Pastor Rachel L. Connelly

**HYMN OF RESPONSE —**

*“Blessed Be the god of Israel”*

*see next page*

**THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate and was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 INTERCESSION**

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

*A brief silence.*

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission.

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

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise.

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

Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above.

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

Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst.

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

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace.

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

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work. Make their generous lives an example for all.

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. **C Amen.**

**SONG OF PREPARATION**

*“We Are an Offering”*

*see next page*

**THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

**THE LORD’S PRAYER**

**THE 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 —**

*“He Came Down”*

*see next page*

**DISMISSAL**

P Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **C Thanks be to God.**

## SCRIPTURE READINGS

### OLD TESTAMENT READING: Isaiah 40:1-11

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>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!"

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>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.

### Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

<sup>1</sup>You have been gracious to your land, O LORD; you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins.**

<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>**Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you, that your glory may dwell in our land.**

<sup>10</sup>Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

<sup>11</sup>**Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

<sup>12</sup>The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase.

<sup>13</sup>**Righteousness shall go before the LORD and shall prepare for God a pathway.**

### GOSPEL READING: Mark 1:1-8

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; <sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,"" <sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

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

## **SONGS FOR WORSHIP**

### **Prepare Ye, The Way of The Lord/Emmanuel**

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

Emmanuel, Emmanuel,  
his name is called Emmanuel;  
God with us, revealed in us;  
his name is called Emmanuel.

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

*Text and music: Bob McGee*  
*Text and music © 1976 C.A. Music*

### **Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah**

Light one candle to watch for Messiah:  
let the light banish darkness.  
He shall bring salvation to Israel,  
God fulfills the promise.

Light two candles to watch for Messiah  
Let the light banish darkness.  
He shall feed the flock like a shepherd,  
gently lead them homeward.

*Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954*  
*Music: Yiddish folk tune*

### **Blessed Be the God of Israel**

Bless'd be the God of Israel who comes to set us free  
And raises up new hope for us: a Branch from David's tree.  
So have the Prophets Long declared that with a mighty arm  
God would turn back our enemies and all who wish us harm.

With promised mercy will God still the covenant recall,  
The oath once sworn to Abraham, from foes to save us all;  
That we might worship without fear and offer lives of praise,  
In holiness and righteousness to serve God all our days.  
My child, as prophet of the Lord you will prepare the way,  
To tell God's people they are saved from sin's eternal sway.  
Then shall God's mercy from on high shine forth and never  
cease  
To drive away the gloom of death and lead us onto peace.

*Text: Carl P. Daw, Jr. b. 1944*  
*Music: English folk tune, arr. Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872-1958*

### **We Are An 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.

*Text: Dwight Liles, b. 1957 Music: Dwight Liles*  
*Text and music © 1984 Word Music, LLC*

### **He Came Down**

He came down that we may have love;  
He came down that we may have love;  
He came down that we may have love;  
Hallelujah for ever more.

He came down that we may have light;  
He came down that we may have light;  
He came down that we may have light;  
Hallelujah for ever more.

He came down that we may have peace;  
He came down that we may have peace;  
He came down that we may have peace;  
Hallelujah for ever more.

He came down that we may have joy;  
He came down that we may have joy;  
He came down that we may have joy;  
Hallelujah for ever more.

*Text: Cameroon traditional*  
*Music: Cameroon traditional; arr/ John L. Bell, b. 1949*

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