

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
MIDWEEK ADVENT SERVICE**

December 2, 2020

Online Order of Worship

P O Lord, open my lips,

C **and my mouth will declare Your praise.**

P Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

C **make haste to help me, O Lord.**

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;**

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be

forever. Amen. Praise to You, O Christ, king who comes to save us.

Psalm

Psalm 80:1–7 (antiphon: v. 7)

P Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!

C **You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.**

P Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,

C stir up your might and come to save us!

P Restore us, O God;

C **let your face shine, that we may be saved!**

P O LORD God of hosts,

C **how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?**

P You have fed them with the bread of tears

C **and given them tears to drink in full measure.**

P You make us an object of contention for our neighbors,

- C **and our enemies laugh among themselves.**
- P Restore us, O God of hosts;
- C **let your face shine, that we may be saved!**

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 64:1–9

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at your presence—
as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
and that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome things that we did not look for,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your
presence.

From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you,
who acts for those who wait for him.

You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,
those who remember you in your ways.

Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be
saved?

We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.

We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

There is no one who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.

But now, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Be not so terribly angry, O LORD,
and remember not iniquity forever.
Behold, please look, we are all your people.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle

Romans 5:1–11

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we

have now received reconciliation.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

Luke 1:5–25

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people

prepared.”

And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.” And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.

After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Advent Responsory

LSB 230

P Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch.

C **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

P In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely.

C **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

- P Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.
- C **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

Sermon Text – Isaiah 64:1-9

Theme – “In Our Sins a Long Time”

“Wait till your father comes home!” Perhaps some of us heard those words when we were growing up? “Wait till your father comes home!” If you ever heard those words, you were not looking forward to the time when your father would get home.

We are now in the season of Advent and that word “Advent” means “coming.” Advent has two focuses: the first coming of the baby Jesus at Christmas and the second coming of King Jesus at Judgment Day. Very often we only think of Advent in connection with the joys of Christmas. We can’t wait for Christmas! For that reason we might join the prophet Isaiah as he declares in our sermon text, **“Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down”** (Isaiah 64:1)!

However, as we read Holy Scripture, we discover that both the Old and New Testament connect Advent to Judgment Day. In the New Testament we hear Jesus say, **“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne”** (Matt. 25:31). In the Old Testament, the prophet Isaiah says, **“Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; as destruction from the Almighty it will come! . . . Behold, the day of the LORD comes, ... to make the land a desolation and to destroy its sinners from it”** (Is 13:6, 9). The coming of the

Lord does not sound like something we should be looking forward to. . .

That's because we are sinners. Yes, in our text, Isaiah first sounded quite eager to have the Father come: **"Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down"** (v 1). But then it's almost as if he rethinks what he just prayed for. He says to this God, **"Behold, you were angry, and we sinned; in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?"** (v 5). The more Isaiah thinks about it maybe he is not so eager for the Lord to come..

Even our so-called "good deeds" cannot prevent God's judgment. Isaiah knows he has to admit, **"We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment"** (Isaiah 64:6). Even our attempts at good deeds are sin. Isaiah understands that our sin brings us destruction. He goes on to say, **"We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away"** (Isaiah 64:6).

It all is beginning to sound as if we should look forward to the coming of the LORD as much as we would look forward to the coming of our earthly Father after we had been told: "Wait till your Father comes home!" . . .

But wait a minute! What you have heard in this sermon is only half of the story. It is what we call "the Law." Are you ready to hear the Gospel? There is Good News!

God is just and must deal with sin, but the Bible declares and declares loudly: God is also our loving Father. We can wait for His coming with joy. Listen to what Isaiah tells us in today's sermon text: **"But now, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the**

work of your hand. . . . Remember not iniquity forever. Behold, please look, we are all your people” (Isaiah 64: 8–9).

God is our loving father. He is the potter; we are the clay. We belong to Him. We are the works of His hands. He has personally created us. We are precious to Him. He is our Father who loves us. Sorry for our sin, we humbly go to our Father for forgiveness. What is the assurance of our forgiveness? It is simply this: Advent announces the coming of our loving God in the flesh.

In John 1:14 we read, **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”** **“The Word”** is a title for Jesus. This single verse is John’s commentary on the miracle of Christmas. The eternal Word of God became flesh, became a human being, was born among us. We call this truth of Scripture the “incarnation.” Incarnation means to become flesh. *Carne* is a Latin word for flesh. At Christmas we celebrate that Jesus, the eternal Word, became flesh. He became a flesh-and-blood human being. He did so to become our Savior.

This loving God-in-the-flesh comes to us at Bethlehem’s manger. Look inside that manger. What do we see? We see not just a cute baby boy; we see God in the flesh.

Look upon Calvary’s cross. What do we see? We see God in the flesh paying for our sins.

Look inside that empty tomb on Easter Sunday morning. What do we see? He is not there! He has risen from the dead. He is God in the flesh, victorious over sin, death and the devil. He did this for us!

When the end of the world and Judgment Day comes, what are we going to see? We are going to see Jesus coming in the flesh to take us to heaven.

For that reason we don't have to be afraid of that day. It is just like we shouldn't be afraid of our Father coming home.

It is like this: there was once a boy who came from a poor family. For the most part, the family lived on government assistance. The dad did have a job as a hospital janitor. After a while he desperately needed new work shoes. The ones he was wearing had holes in the soles, and daylight could be seen through the holes. He had been saving money to get new work shoes. At the same time, the boy very much wanted a new baseball glove; it was something the family couldn't afford. But the father put cardboard in his shoes to cover the holes and spent that money for a new baseball glove. The boy loved that glove. His dad taught him to take care of it and told him never to leave it outside in the rain. One day, though, the boy did just that. The leather glove was soaked through. When the boy found it outside he cried. He knew the sacrifice his father had made so that he could have that glove. When his mother saw the glove she uttered those words: "Wait till your father comes home." The boy was not looking forward to his arrival.

When his dad came home, the boy showed him the glove. The boy was expecting the worst, but what happened next completely surprised him. His dad didn't get angry. He knew how sorry the boy was. The boy deserved punishment, but instead his dad showed him how to dry the glove by putting it in the oven at a low heat. He showed the boy how to rub some "mink oil" into the leather to preserve

it. After a couple of days of this, the glove was as good as new. When the father came home, he came home with mercy and forgiveness and love

Advent tells us our Lord is coming. He is coming as the babe in the manger and as the king at Judgment Day. He is holy and just and takes seriously our sin. But he is especially merciful and forgiving and loving. So it's only fitting that at the beginning of Advent we pray the last prayer recorded in Holy Scripture and pray it eagerly: "Come, Lord Jesus!" (Rev 22:20). AMEN

Antiphon

LSB 231

- L Let my prayer rise before You as incense,
- C **and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

Magnificat

LSB 231

- P My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior;
- C **for He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.**
- P For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.
- C **For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;**
- P and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.
- C **He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.**
- P He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and

has exalted the lowly.

C **He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.**

P He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed forever.

C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Stand

Kyrie

LSB 233

C **Lord, have mercy, Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.**

Lord's Prayer

LSB 233

C **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.

Collects

P O Lord, hear my prayer.

C **And let my cry come to You.**

Collect of the Day

P Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Collect for Peace

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

Stand

Benedicamus

LSB 234

L Let us bless the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Benediction

LSB 234

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **Amen.**

Acknowledgments

Vespers from Lutheran Service Book

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