

Sunday, December 2, 2012/First Sunday of Advent

Holy Communion

INTRODUCTION

Advent is about the "coming days." God's people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a "righteous Branch to spring up for David." The Thessalonians awaited "the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints." Our Lord's contemporaries hoped for the time "to stand before the Son of Man." With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of our Lord in word and supper.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING HYMN: **"My Lord, What a Morning"** **#438 ELW**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.
Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,
we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

CHOIR ANTHEM: “Peace, Peace”

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14–16

In the Old Testament, "righteousness" often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today's reading, Jerusalem's future name—"The Lord is our righteousness"—proclaims that the Lord is even now working salvation for Israel.

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

PSALM: Psalm 25:1–10

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

**My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

Let none who look to you be put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

Show me your ways, O LORD, and teach me your paths. *R: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.*

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all the day long.

Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting. *R: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.*

Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to
your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.

You are gracious and upright, O LORD; therefore you teach sinners in your way.
You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

**All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithfulness to those who keep your
covenant and your testimonies.** *R: To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.*

GOSPEL: Luke 21:25–36

God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.

There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

HYMN: "Comfort, Comfort Now My People"

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SERMON

OFFERING & OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Filled with expectation and longing, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A time for silent prayer.

Let us pray for the visible unity of the church; for increasing and abounding love among Roman Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant Christians; for our own denomination and its leaders. Strengthen our bonds. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the creation—the sun, the moon, the stars, the roaring seas, the icy streams, the clouds, and all the trees. Heal what we have damaged. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Let us pray for nations in distress; for soldiers and civilians; for world leaders and local governments; for refugees and prisoners; for subsistence farmers and small business owners. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all whose hearts are weighed down with the worries of this life (*especially*). Bring them hope that your redemption is drawing near. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Let us pray for the youth, the working parents, the single persons, the shut-ins, and those anticipating life changes in our congregation. Keep us alert for your coming. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be made.

Let us give thanks for the lives of those who have gone before us in the faith. Keep us in communion with the saints who now see you face to face. Lord, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

Hear the prayers of your people, O God, and in your mercy grant us all we need, for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

CREED

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.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

CLOSING HYMN:

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

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THE WISDOM OF ADVENT WATCHFULNESS

Jesus stirs up our imagination: he promises that within a single generation, events of cosmic proportion will flash before our eyes and we will see signs of God coming into the world with power and great glory.

What a tempestuous time, this new season of Advent! With wariness and utmost respect we watch as God approaches like a strong spring thunderstorm. On edge, we ready ourselves to run from God's dark and mysterious power for fear of being destroyed. Yet, thanks to the warm light of a Savior born and the safe cover he brings, we rejoice. In a mysterious cloud of majesty God comes and will come again, showering us with love and grace to cultivate spiritual fruit in our lives.

Today widespread suffering from war, injustice, and natural disaster are in no short supply. Still, Jesus instructs us not to worry or be led astray but instead to watch and pray. Attuning to the wisdom of Advent watchfulness, we let current events, threats, and impending hardships nurture a keen awareness in us of God's presence. With even the faintest glimpse of God's grace in the moment, we let eternal faith, hope, and love be born in us.

What Advent practices will help you cope with what frightens you? Will you light a candle? Sing a hymn? Kneel in silence? The time is at hand when that which worries us gives way to wonderment and great joy! In the privacy of our homes and in our public lives, with one voice we pray: come now, Emmanuel. Oh, comfort us, sweet Jesus. Though heaven and earth will pass away, your words give life and are here to stay!

THOSE SERVING THIS WEEK OF DECEMBER 2ND, 2012

Organist: Marlys Beavers
Greeters: Doug & Ingrid Trandahl
Ushers: 8:30 Wayne & Janice Olson, 10:00 Darrell Kelly
Lectors: 8:30 Lynn Hansen, 10:00 Carol Bipes
Coffee Servers: Ron & Jan Aho, John & Grace Iverson

RESPONSE TO GOD'S WORD LAST WEEK

Attendance: 8:30 – 99 10:00 – 46

Offering: \$ 3,539.26 Building Fund: \$ 485

\$ 3,077.00 – Weekly amount needed for operating expenses.

\$ 580.00 – Weekly amount (building fund) needed for mortgage payment.

THIS WEEK AT BETHESDA DECEMBER 2ND THRU DECEMBER 8TH, 2012

Mon., Dec. 3 rd	5:30 p.m.	All Church Christmas Dinner at Pine Inn
	7:00 p.m.	AA & Alanon
Tues., Dec. 4 th	9:30 a.m.	Bells
Wed., Dec. 5 th	8:30 a.m.	Bible Study
	9:30 a.m.	Hardanger
	11:00 a.m.	Bible Study
	6:00 p.m.	Choir
	7:00 p.m.	Praise Team
	7:00 p.m.	Confirmation
Thurs., Dec. 6 th	8:00 a.m.	R.O.M.E.O.S.
	9:30 a.m.	Decorate tree, etc.
	1:00 p.m.	Funtimers

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today is **BLESSING BOX SUNDAY** so as you have been blessed, be a blessing. Donation received will be used for Bethesda's Wish List: Working microphones, phone system upgrade, video cameras for sanctuary/fellowship hall, door mats, library furniture, cabinets/shelves for classrooms.

Don't forget **Bethesda Christmas Dinner** at Pine Inn at 5:30 p.m., Monday, Dec. 3rd.

This is the last week to donate to **AITKIN COUNTY OPERATION CHRISTMAS**, deadline is December 9th. The hat & mitten tree is in the Narthex. Everything donated must be new. You can put toys, games & personal items under the tree also, whatever you would like to donate. Any questions, call Bonnie Mickelson 218-927-3485.

POINSETTIA sign up will take place between services today (final sign up). If you would like to purchase a plant in memory or in honor of someone, sign up in the fellowship hall. Cost is \$16.00.

Everyone is invited to come help **decorate for Christmas** on Thursday, December 6th at 9:30 a.m. See you there.

Thanks so much to everyone who signed up to be **COFFEE SERVERS** but we still need servers for December 16th. No servers – no coffee.

Next Sunday, December 9th is Bethesda's **Christmas Cantata** so come join us and enjoy the beautiful music.

Mary Ellen would like to sell her two **Christmas cactus plants** that are on display in the fellowship hall. If you are interested, you can have one for a donation in the collection plate.

Also on December 9th there will be **Quilts and Jelly** sold between worship services. These items would make great Christmas gifts.

OLD LOG THEATER. January 10th. Pick up sign up sheet on table in Narthex. Bus will pick up at Bethesda at 9a.m.

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*Check for additional information on these announcements on the  
Community Bulletin Board.*

**CREATIVE ADVENT RETREAT**, December 7-8, 2012 at Camp Onamia.

**SANTA LUCIA LUNCHEON** at Zion Lutheran Church in Milaca, December 7<sup>th</sup>.

**NEED HELP WITH YOUR ENERGY BILLS?** Contact Lakes & Pines Community Action Council.