

Second Sunday of Advent

December 8, 2024

10:15 am

Prelude

Introduction

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the LORD of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon. **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection

God of mercy, **we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

God of might, **we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.**

God in our midst, **we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through ✚ Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: ELW #253 "He Came Down"

- 1. 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 forevermore.**
- 2. 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 forevermore.**
- 3. 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 forevermore.**
- 4. 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 forevermore.**

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Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings & Psalm

First Reading: Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined.

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Psalm: Luke 1:68-79

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us. (Lk. 1:78)

⁶⁸ Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel,
you have come to your people and set them free.

⁶⁹ **You have raised up for us a mighty Savior,
born of the house of your servant David.**

⁷⁰ Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies,

⁷¹ **from the hands of all who hate us,**

⁷² to show mercy to our forebears,
and to remember your holy covenant.

⁷³ **This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham:**

⁷⁴ to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship you without fear,

⁷⁵ **holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.**

⁷⁶ And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,

⁷⁷ **to give God's people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.**

⁷⁸ In the tender compassion of our God
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

⁷⁹ **to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death,
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

Second Reading: Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord. All flesh shall see the salvation of God.
Alleluia. (Luke 3:4, 6)

Gospel: Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: ELW #249 "On Jordan's Bank the Baptists Cry"

1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry announces that the Lord is nigh; awake and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings!

2. Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin; make straight the way for God within, and let us all our hearts prepare for Christ to come and enter there.
3. We hail you as our Savior, Lord, our refuge and our great reward; without your grace we waste away like flow'rs that wither and decay.
4. Stretch forth your hand, our health restore, and make us rise to fall no more; oh, let your face upon us shine and fill the world with love divine.
5. All praise to you, eternal Son, whose advent has our freedom won, whom with the Father we adore, and Holy Spirit evermore.

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The Apostle's Creed

Prayers of Intercession

Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Peace

Offering

Offering Hymn: ELW #686 "We Give Thee But Thine Own"

1. We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.

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Offering Prayer

Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Blessing

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, ✝ bless and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: ELW #631 "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

1. Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of Heav'n, to earth come down! Fix in us they humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown, Jesus thou are all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art; visit us with thy salvation, , enter ev'ry trembling heart.
2. Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit into ev'ry troubled breast; let us all in thee inherit; let us find they promised rest. Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be; end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

3. Come, Almighty, to deliver; let us all thy life receive; suddenly return, and never, nevermore thy temples leave. Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above, pray and praise thee without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.

4. Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be; let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee! Changed from glory into glory, till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love and praise!

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Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

✚ Thank You Eric Henderson for leading worship today.

✚ Calvary is looking for a volunteer (or volunteers) to represent Calvary on the Welcome Committee, which is where Calvary and four other Mankato ELCA churches are sponsoring a family of four from Nicaragua. Ariac and Andrea Cruz and their two boys have been in Minnesota almost two years. This committee meets monthly at Bethlehem Lutheran Church. Contact Bob Diesch or Jolene Anderson for more information on the committee. Also, please see the updated flier on the Cruz family. Copies are on the table next to the offering plates.

✚ Prayers: Please continue to keep our members and loved ones in your prayers, including Arlen, Lan-Shiang, Vivian, Ken, Deb, Ruth, Barry, Monica, Chloe, Jeff, Jenny, Dennis, Caroline, Jane, Paul and Jeannie at the loss of her sister.

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