ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

Second Sunday of Advent



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2023 10 A.M.

INTRODUCTION

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.

PRELUDE

The assembly stands.



CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All make the sign f the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

Congregation (C) Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

- P 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.
- P 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 word and sacrament in 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.
- C Amen.

GATHERING HYMN 2

264 Prepare the Royal Highway

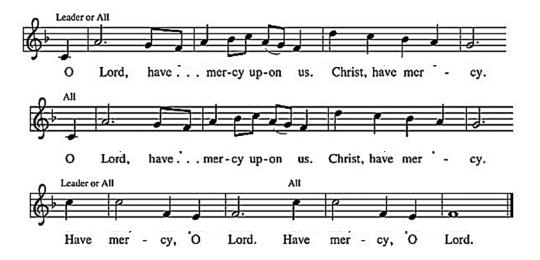


Text: Frans Mikael Francén, 1772-1847; ir Lutieran flook of Warship Music: BEREDEN VAG FOR HERRAN, Swedish folk rune, 17th cent Text O 1978 Justerau flook of Bierdip, admin, Augsberg Fortess,

GREETING

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

KYRIE





B 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.

C Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH ELT

ELW 247



Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope Music: OSOSŌ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947 Text and music ♥ Geonyong Lee.

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S TIME



FIRST READING: FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:1-11

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak 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.

³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every 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. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get 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!" ¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He 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.

Reader The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 We sing the psalm in response to the first reading.



Leader 'You have been gracious to your | land, O LORD; you have restored the good for- | tune of Jacob.

- C ²You have forgiven the iniquity | of your people and blotted out | all their sins.
- L *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.
- C Truly, your salvation is very near to 1 those who fear you, that your glory may dwell 1 in our land.
- L "Steadfast love and faithfulness have I met together; righteousness and peace have I kissed each other.
- C "Faithfulness shall spring up | from the earth, and righteousness shall look | down from heaven.

- L 12The LORD will indeed | grant prosperity, and our land will | yield its increase.
- C ¹³Righteousness shall go be- | fore the LORD and shall prepare for | God a pathway.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

Amen.

SECOND READING: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

- R The Word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

(Sung twice)



GOSPEL: Mark 1:1-8

The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

P The holy gospel according to Mark, the first chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And 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. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He 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. ⁸I 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.

SERMON We encounter the living word of God in the preaching.

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY 256 Comfort, Comfort Now My People



Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635-1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt. Mesic: FREU DICH SEHR, Territe quatre partitiones de David, Geneva, 1831

APOSTLES' CREED

- A Let us confess our faith.
- C I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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

Each petition ends: Merciful God,

Congregational response: receive our prayer.

PEACE

- A The peace of Christ be with you always.
- C And also with you.

We greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

The assembly is seated.



OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

ANTHEM

"My Soul in Stillness Waits" - Haugen

(Refrain)

For you, oh Lord, my soul and stillness waits, truly my hope is in you.

Oh, Lord of Light, our only hope of glory, your radiance shines in all who look to you, come, light the hearts of all in dark and shadow. (R)

Oh, Spring of Joy, rain down upon our spirits, our thirsty hearts are yearning for your Word, come, make us whole, be comfort to our hearts. (R)

Oh, root of life, implant your seed within us, and in your advent, draw us all to you, our hope reborn in dying and in rising. (R)

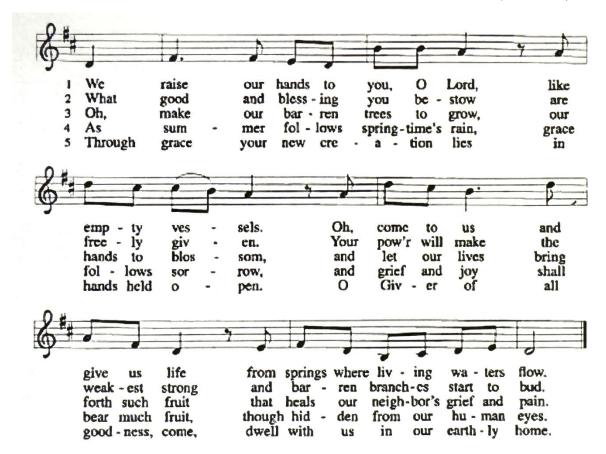
O Key of Knowledge, guide us in our pilgrimage, we ever seek, yet unfulfilled remain, open to us the pathway of your peace. (R)

Come, let us bow before the God who made us, let every heart be opened to the Lord, for we are all the people of his hand. (R)

Here we shall meet the Maker of the heavens, Creator of the mountains and the seas, Lord of the stars, and present to us now. (R) 690

OFFERING HYMN

We Raise Our Hands to You, O Lord (vs. 1 & 5)

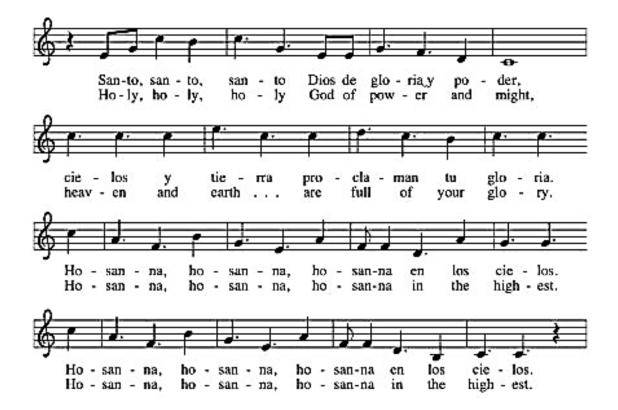


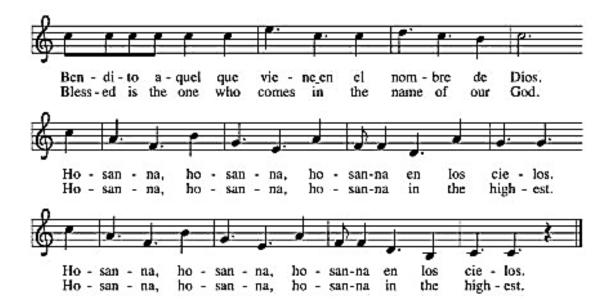
Text: Swim Ellingsen, b. 1929; tr. Hedwig T. Durnbaugh, b. 1929 Music: Trand Kverno, b. 1945 Lt. O Hedwig T. Durnbaugh Music O 2978 North Monit Serlag MERT RECASH ERAV HEXXER IV

GREAT THANKSGIVING

- P The Lord be with you.
- C And also with you.
- P Lift up your hearts.
- C We lift them to the Lord.
- P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- C It is right to give our thanks and praise.
- P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY





The presiding minister continues to give thanks.

P 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.

C Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

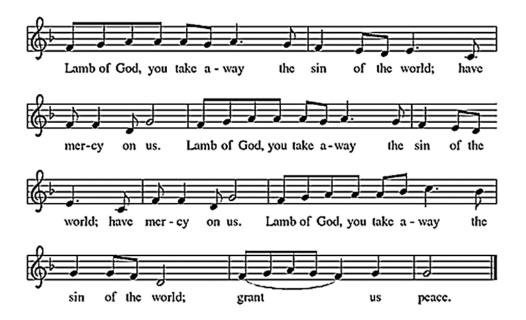
- P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.
- Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Taste and see that the Lord is good.

The assembly is seated.

LAMB OF GOD



DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

As the ushers direct you, come to the altar using the side aisles and return to your seat via the central aisle. The assisting minister offers a pouring cup (wine or grape juice). If you prefer to receive the wine or juice in an individual glass, take one from the tray as you approach the rail. Leave the empty glass on the rail. Wheat-free wafers are available--simply tell the pastor.

COMMUNION HYMNS 266 All Earth Is Hopeful

254 Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

262 Wait for the Lord

The assembly stands.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Let us pray.

O God, in this holy communion you have welcomed us into your presence, nourished us with words of mercy, and fed us at your table. Amid the cares of this life, strengthen us to love you with all our heart, serve our neighbors with a willing spirit, and honor the earth you have made; through Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

+ SENDING +

BLESSING We receive the blessings of the triune God.

- P The holy Three, the holy One increase your hope, strengthen your faith, deepen your love, and + grant you peace.
- C Amen.

The assembly is seated.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING HYMN

249 On Jordan's bank the Baptist's Cry



Text: Charles Coffin. 1676-1749; tr. composite Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Practorius, 1571-1621

DISMISSAL

- A We believe out loud that God's mission for us is:
- C to be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God's call.
- A Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God.

+ + +

Sundays and Seasons v.20220805.1416 Copyright © 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.



Jan and Jerry Harrison dedicate today's altar flowers to the glory of God and in celebration of their 61st wedding anniversary.

Calendar for December 3 - 10						
Dec.	10	Sun.	9:00 am 9:30 am 10:00 am	Book study Choir practice Worship, Second Sunday of Advent		
	13	Wed.	7:00 pm	Choir practice		
	16	Sat.	9:00 am	Decorating the sanctuary		
	17	Sun.	9:00 am 9:30 am 10:00 am	Book study Choir practice Worship, Third Sunday of Advent /Children's program		

Next Sunday's Readings, Third Sunday of Advent:

<u>Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11</u> <u>Psalm 126</u> <u>1 Thessalonians 5:16-24</u> <u>John 1:6-8, 19-28</u>



SERVING EVERY SUNDAY

Pastor Tom, presiding and preaching

Katharine Gossman, piano

Karl Barton, flute

Denise Bookwalter, announcements

Choir: Karl Barton, Melissa Barton, Mark Canning, Judi Duffy, Kirsten Ebbesen, Rita Ford, Martin Guttenplan, Vicki Guttenplan, Ron Hartung, Rudy Hehn, Susan Hehn, Colleen Holdcraft, Pastor Tom Holdcraft, Sandy Ness, Dave Suhrweir, Cassandra White

SERVING TODAY AND ONE WEEK FROM TODAY				
Serving	December 10	December 17		
Assisting Minister	Colleen Holdcraft	Kirsten Ebbesen		
Cup Minister	Audrey Post	Rob Schiffer		
Cantor				
Lector	Stephanie Leitch	Jennifer Buchanan		
Acolyte	Cup Minister - or Colt	on Allen or Graham Reece		
Tech Team	Colin Hackley	Audrey post		
Tech Team	Audrey Post	Cindy Suhrweir		
Ushers	Bob Eshleman	Colin Hackley		
Ushers	Jan Harrison	Patrick Kennell		
	Linda Eshleman	Rita Ford		
Altar Guild	Lawana Lamb-Daniels	Susan Warren		
	Sandy Lamb-Daniels	Susan warren		
Counters	Patricia Handschy	Kirsten Ebbesen		
Counters	Greta Scavone	Rob Schiffer		

PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Judy Renwick (friend of Judi Duffy), in therapy for Glioblastoma; Gil Johnson (friend of Judi Duffy), in therapy for pancreatic cancer; Steve Michael (cousin of Rob Schiffer), in rehab after a serious accident.

For the sick: Val Sullivan; Margarete Decker (mother of Caroline Collins); Sallie Robinson (wife of Erik Robinson); Don Dowd; Isabelle Taylor (granddaughter of Bill & Connie Taylor), being treated for rheumatoid arthritis and Primary Immunodeficiency; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Dan Graney (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White).

In treatment for cancer: Phil Williams; Gordon Fleischer; Stephanie Barber; Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Bruce Blubaum (cousin of Sharon Simmons); Craig Timm (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Laura Ketchum-Jahn, (friend of Cheryl & Steve); Aubrey Thonvold (Reconciling Works Exec. Dir.).

Health and protection: For all affected by the coronavirus – especially those experiencing mental-health difficulties due to isolation, those struggling to recover from the disease, those on the front lines fighting, researching and treating the disease (doctors, nurses, medical personnel, EMTs), the millions of unemployed people, etc.; for the unaccompanied children entering the U.S., including those "unaccounted for."

For prisoners: All those on Death Row.

Other concerns: For Karen Olson; Kevin Robinson (son of Erik Robinson), in need of encouragement; Isaac (son of Terri Schmitt), for physical and emotional healing.

Church concerns: St. Stephen's Church Council; the Florida-Bahamas Synod Council; all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Grace Lutheran Church; Bishop Pedro Suarez; for rest and rejuvenation for Presiding Bishop Eaton as she takes a leave of absence for several months; Interim Presiding Bishop Michael Burk, providing leadership in Bp. Eaton's absence; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

World concerns: For all people suffering and/or recovering from hurricanes; migrants and asylum seekers; civil rights for people around the world; a ceasefire in Ethiopia and in Ukraine; peace in Afghanistan and the Middle East.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PLEDGE DRIVE: We are collecting pledge cards for 2024. Please prayerfully consider your planned contributions for the ministry of St. Stephen. The estimate of giving is vital information for our Church Council to begin preparing our budget. Our planned gifts are also vital to our own spiritual development and maturity. Thank you in advance for your generous stewardship and trust in God's mercy. (*Cards are in the narthex and can be dropped in the collection plate. You also have the option of pledging directly to Lori via email or calling.*)

FLOWER CHART FOR 2024: Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you would like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service by signing up for the 2024 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$40, and you can place it in the offering plate.

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER: Want to read a sermon you missed? Visit *https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters*. Want to read the latest newsletters? Go to *https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters*. Want to browse a collection of St. Stephen songs? They're at *https://ststephenlutherantally.com/newsletters*.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

We'll be decorating the chancel area with poinsettias for Christmas. Would you like to dedicate one (or more)? The cost is \$10, and the dedication list will be in the Dec. 18 and Dec. 25 bulletins. Just fill out the form below and place it with your payment in the offering plate, or email Lori with the information.

The deadline is Sunday, Dec. 17.

POINSETTIA ORDER FORM				
NAME	QUANTITY			
DEDICATION				