

Triune Lutheran Church



First Sunday of Advent



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

CONFESSION & 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 always lived as God desires.

Silence is kept for reflection.

**Loving and forgiving God,
we confess that we are captive to 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 news of glad tidings:
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.**

GATHERING HYMN

“Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”

ELW 242



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, Sing out your joy, for
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in -
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen

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LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLE OF HOPE

Blessed are you, God of Jacob, for you promise to transform weapons of war into implements of planting and harvest and to teach us your way of peace; you promise that our night of sin is far gone and that your day of salvation is dawning.

As we light the first candle on this wreath, wake us from our sleep, wrap us in your light, empower us to live honorably, and guide us along your path of peace.

O house of Jacob, come,

let us walk in the light of the Lord. Amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Vs. 1 & 2

ELW 257

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

- 2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way. *Refrain*

FIRST READING

Isaiah 64:1-9

- ¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
²as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
- ³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
- ⁴From ages past no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who works for those who wait for him.
- ⁵You meet those who gladly do right,
those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
because you hid yourself we transgressed.
- ⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
- ⁷There is no one who calls on your name,
or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
- ⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
- ⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,

and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 80:1-7,17-19

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

²**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and
Manasseh,**

stir up your strength and come to help us.

³Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁴**O LORD God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your people
pray?**

⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

⁶**You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

¹⁷**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

¹⁸And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹**Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;**

let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

Mark 13:24-37

[Jesus said:] ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light,
²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. ²⁷Then he will send out the angels,



and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

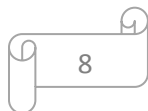
This is the holy Gospel of our Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Change My Heart, O God”

ELW 801





Change my heart, O God; make it ev - er true.



Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.



You are the pot - ter; I am the clay.



Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.

Text: Eddie Espinosa, b. 1953
Music: CHANGE MY HEART, Eddie Espinosa
Text and music © 1982 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing, admin. Music Services

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of power and might, we long for the heavens to be opened upon this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

Holy God, we give thanks for the universal ministry we share in Christ's name. Open our hearts to your call for justice, peace, and healing. Attune us to the needs of the world as you draw near. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, continue to care for this planet in need of restoration: for devastated habitats, polluted waters, thawing ice, blazing fires, swelling floods, and long-lasting droughts. Renew the face of the earth and our relationship to it. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Loving God, we lift up all people who care for others in our communities and around the world. Fill them with compassion and the power to respond with justice for those who are oppressed, with welcome for those who are excluded, and with relief for those who suffer. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Hopeful God, watch over your precious children who are in crisis as the seasons change: for those without homes facing severe weather, for those who are unemployed or underemployed, and for those in poverty or facing food insecurity. Relieve their burdens, sustain their bodies, and ease their minds. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate God, strengthen our loved ones in our families and congregation who live with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, addiction, and other invisible illnesses, including Bev Deitrick, Hazel Schwab, Martha Wasson, Mardell Weiss, Dave & Clara Wilcox, Matthew Loede, Donna Matter, George Tomaselli, Gerry Praizner, and all those we name in our hearts now...Ease their suffering and support them when they struggle. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work. 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. **Amen.**

MUSIC INTERLUDE (use for your personal prayers)

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Holy God,
the Beginning and the Ending, our Hope as we wait,
we praise you for joining us to your people of old.
We bless you for your prophets who call us to righteousness
and promise a new earth with peace for all.
For the Word of your covenant, we thank you, O God.

We praise you for the coming of Jesus our Lord,
who lifts up the lowly, heals the suffering world,
and proclaims your way of mercy and truth.
For your Word who is Christ, we magnify you, O God.

Holy Spirit, enliven all who receive your Word.
Nurture our faith with your grace,
accompany us with your might,
and empower our zeal for your justice and joy.
For your Word through the church, we praise you, O God.

All praise to you, holy God,
today, tomorrow, and forever.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.

BLESSING

May you find time for rest this season.

May you create space to prepare.

May the Lord our God fill you with hope.

May Jesus Christ be ever present in your heart.

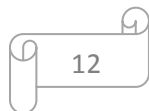
May the Holy Spirit illuminate your way.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN

“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”

ELW 244





1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ings bore,
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907
Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, Swedish folk tune

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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Lectionary Blog: Advent – A Confusing Beginning



Welcome to the year of the Gospel of Mark! I'll be honest, our first Gospel reading for this year out of Mark 13 has been confusing the faithful and scholars—me among them—since shortly after it was received. When Jesus talks about celestial bodies failing, figs ripening and bondservants readying themselves, what is he talking about? And what does it have to do with our preparations to celebrate his incarnation in a few weeks?

Some scholars say Jesus was discussing the eschatological end of the age and the coming of the Day of the Lord. Others suggest that he was giving a coded anti-imperial encouragement to his followers. In my reading, I tend to see Jesus as being pastoral, helping his folk through difficult times that he knew they would face.

As always, it's important to start with context. What started the conversation into which our lectionary reading drops us? At the beginning of Mark 13, the disciples were remarking at the large stones that made up the temple complex (1). Jesus told them that all the impressive stones would be toppled over (2). Then, after walking up the next hill, a smaller group of disciples asked specifically about when the stone buildings of the temple complex would be destroyed and how they would know it was about to happen (3-4). It's the response to these questions that animates the rest of Mark 13.

Jesus answered their questions as well as he could. He warned them to watch out for false messiahs and to be ready for betrayal in their midst. Borrowing language of “the abomination that causes desolation” from the book of Daniel, Jesus seemed to foretell of the Roman general, Titus, entering the Holy of Holies in the temple and offering a pig sacrifice there (which he did, according to Josephus' *Jewish Wars* 6.4.7, 6.6.1). But Jesus' main concern was for the people, not for the stones or the sacredness of the space. He warned them to flee and fretted about how difficult the brutal Roman suppression of dissent would be for pregnant women and those nursing infants (17). Jesus again warned of false messiahs before ending his comments about the first Jewish War with Rome.

And now, finally, we arrive at this week's reading. People of goodwill may disagree, but I think Jesus continues the theme he's been discussing—persecution by the heavy hand of Rome. He gives a sort of historical disambiguation—“but in those days, following that distress . . .” (24)—and then quotes two passages from Isaiah talking about the failure and fall of heavenly bodies (13:10 and 34:4). I'm convinced this is a reference to the Bar Kokhba (“Son of a Star”) revolt that fomented the Third Jewish-Roman War. The Jerusalem Talmud and *Seder Olam* both record that Simon Bar Kokhba was a false messiah, like the ones Jesus warned about (21-22), who maimed and murdered Jews as well as Romans. In fact, the rabbis called him “bar Kosiba” (Son of the Lie). This “star” fell dramatically and caused hundreds of thousands of deaths of both Jews and Romans.

Peter, James, John and Andrew ask, “What will be the sign that all these things are about to be accomplished” (5)? Jesus borrows language from Amos 8:1-2 to make a pun: when the fig ripens you know it is summer (28). The Hebrew word we translate as “summer” (ehW .(ztyaq/רִקְוֹ) ”dne“ sa etalsnart ew drow eht ot ralimis yrev sdnuos (ztiyaq/רִקְוֹn they saw these things happening—Romans and Jews fighting desperately hand-to-hand in cities and hundreds, if not thousands, of Jews being crucified by Romans just as Jesus had been, then they should know something was coming.

And what is that something? It’s Jesus, the Human One, who is very near and, in fact, at the door (29). Jesus is speaking of the fears and, frankly, horrors that his disciples and their children’s generation would see with their own eyes (30). Mere days before his arrest and murder at the hands of the Romans, Jesus takes the time to warn about the dangers to come. To be sure, Jesus is explicit that he doesn’t know exactly when or how those events will take place (32). But he knows that when they happen, he will be close at hand and right at the door. Jesus knows that terrible suffering will happen, but he tells the disciples that he will be close to them when it does.

The best news during uncertain and, frankly, scary times is that Jesus doesn’t abandon us. God is not caught unaware of tumult and unrest. God’s people have faced war, famine, persecution and illness before. As we enter the Advent season, and celebrate Jesus’ incarnation among us, let us remember his promise: to be “near, at the very gates” during all times of trouble.



Cory Driver is a minister of word and service, and the director of the Transformational Leadership Academy in the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. He earned his doctorate in Jewish religious cultures from Emory University, Atlanta. Cory lives with his family in Indianapolis.