

*2nd Sunday of Advent*  
*Adaptive Worship Service*  
*December 6, 2020*



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Welcome! 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.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. This bulletin is designed to be used at home by anyone who is baptized serving as the Worship Leader. If you use this bulletin for worship, either by itself or alongside our service on YouTube, please fill out the Attendance Record Form on our website: [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com)

## ADAPTIVE SERVICE OF THE WORD

### GREETING

Worship Leader: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Congregation: And also with you.**

### PRAYER OF THE DAY

Worship Leader: 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.

**Congregation: Amen.**

### FIRST READING

#### Isaiah 40:1-11

Introduction to the Lesson: *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.*

Reader: "Comfort my people," says our God. "Comfort them!

2 Encourage the people of Jerusalem.

Tell them they have suffered long enough

and their sins are now forgiven.[a]

I have punished them in full for all their sins."

3 A voice cries out,

"Prepare in the wilderness a road for the Lord!

Clear the way in the desert for our God!

4 Fill every valley;  
level every mountain.  
The hills will become a plain,  
and the rough country will be made smooth.  
5 Then the glory of the Lord will be revealed,  
and all people will see it.  
The Lord himself has promised this.”  
6 A voice cries out, “Proclaim a message!”  
“What message shall I proclaim?” I ask.  
“Proclaim that all human beings are like grass;  
they last no longer than wild flowers.  
7 Grass withers and flowers fade  
when the Lord sends the wind blowing over them.  
People are no more enduring than grass.  
8 Yes, grass withers and flowers fade,  
but the word of our God endures forever.”  
9 Jerusalem, go up on a high mountain  
and proclaim the good news!  
Call out with a loud voice, Zion;  
announce the good news![b]  
Speak out and do not be afraid.  
Tell the towns of Judah  
that their God is coming!  
10 The Sovereign Lord is coming to rule with power,  
bringing with him the people he has rescued.[c]  
11 He will take care of his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs together  
and carry them in his arms;  
he will gently lead their mothers.

*After the reading...*

Reader: The word of the Lord.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

## **GOSPEL LESSON**

## **Mark 1:1-8**

Introduction to the Gospel: *Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.*

Worship Leader: The Holy Gospel according to Mark the 1st chapter.

## **Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Worship Leader: This is the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.[a] 2 It began as the prophet Isaiah had written:

“God said, ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you  
to open the way for you.’

3 Someone is shouting in the desert,  
‘Get the road ready for the Lord;  
make a straight path for him to travel!’”

4 So John appeared in the desert, baptizing and preaching. “Turn away from your sins and be baptized,” he told the people, “and God will forgive your sins.” 5 Many people from the province of Judea and the city of Jerusalem went out to hear John. They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan River.

6 John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. 7 He announced to the people, “The man who will come after me is much greater than I am. I am not good enough even to bend down and untie his sandals. 8 I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

*After the reading...*

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

**Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons**

### **Pointing to Christ**

Mark’s gospel opens with fanfare: a herald announcing the good news that the Lord is on the way! It’s time to prepare for the Savior! The role model for this process of preparation is an unusual character. He lives in the wild, wears animal skins, and eats insects. Because of his extreme lifestyle, John the Baptist is often portrayed as a madman living on the fringes of society.

Yet, the text makes clear that John was a respected faith leader. People from all over the region were coming to him to be baptized. In John’s context, living in the desert and eating a foraged diet were signs of spiritual commitment, not lunacy. We might imagine John as a precursor to the Christian desert mothers and fathers who came after him, wise teachers who lived in voluntary isolation. People made a point to come hear what these teachers had to say.

John used his influence to point to Jesus. Although he had a popular ministry of his own, John understood that his call to prepare the way for Jesus involved humility and service. He told others he wasn’t even worthy to untie Jesus’ sandals, a sentiment that was meant to elevate Jesus, not to demean John. He wanted to communicate how transformative

Jesus' ministry would be. "I have baptized with water," John proclaimed, "but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8).

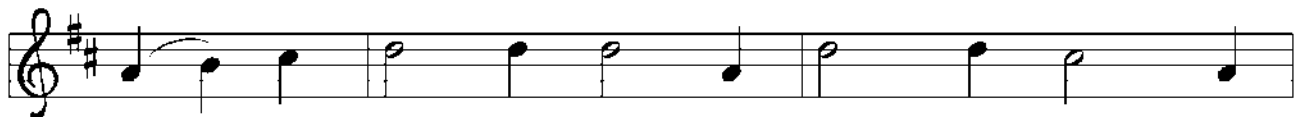
As we declare in our baptismal rite, that same Holy Spirit calls us into baptism and seals us with the mark of Christ forever. We, like John, are called to humble service for the sake of God's mission in the world, to use our unique gifts and vocations to point to Jesus. We become messengers proclaiming the good news: God has come to dwell with us.

**SERMON by Pastor Jeff & ANNIVERSARY GREETING from Bishop Suarez**

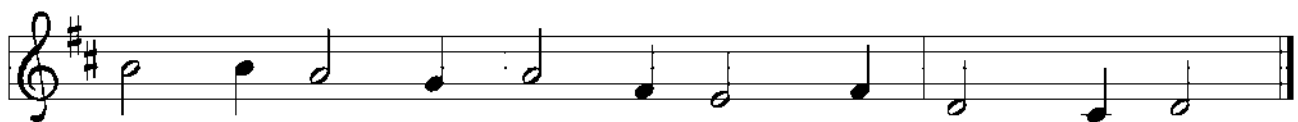
**HYMN OF THE DAY**      *On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry vs. 1 & 2*



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es  
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the  
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge  
4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us  
5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,  
way for God with - in, and let us all our  
and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we  
rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -  
has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!  
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.  
waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.  
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.  
we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

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

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Worship Leader: Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

Prayer Leader: We Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Bless our Adaptive Service. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: We give thanks to you for the members and the ministry of this congregation: for those who had the vision to begin this congregation, those who sustain its present ministry, and those who will carry its mission forward into the future. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Prayer Leader: We pray for the people in our families and congregation who live with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, addiction, and other invisible illnesses (especially Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Wade Buehler, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Gary Neal, Karen Bates, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, George Clark, Jill Grote, Larry Timmons, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Kelly Sullivan, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Iris Valentin, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Steve Davis, Rose Marie Piff, Gary Mostrum, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Valerie Smutko, Jason Meadows, Missy, Penny, & Henry, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Rob Rodriguez & family, Marcus de Souza Lima, Maria de Nazare & Michele Rios, Ana Agramonte, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Seve Chacon, Pat Fredell, Skylar Favos, the family and friends of of Ethan Burgess, and all those suffering from natural disasters [including all those impacted by COVID-19, Hurricanes Laura, Sally and Delta, and Western wildfires], violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 280,000+ people in the US & the 1.5 million+ people worldwide who have died from COVID-19). Ease their suffering and support them when they struggle. Lord, in your mercy,

**Congregation: hear our prayer.**

Worship Leader: Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **OFFERING**

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at [GraceCLW.com](http://GraceCLW.com) (look for the “Donate” button), or (for now) by mailing a check to Grace Lutheran Church, 1812 N. Highland Ave. Clearwater FL 33755. Thank you for your continued financial support during these uncertain times. You can fill out your attendance form on our website as well.*

## **OFFERING PRAYER**

Prayer Leader: Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts: our selves, our time, and our possessions. Use us, and what we have gathered, in feeding the world with your love, through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Congregation: Amen.**

## **LORD’S PRAYER**

Worship Leader: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray in the language closest to our hearts.

**Congregation: 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.**

## **THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Worship Leader: Let us pray. O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Congregation: Amen.**

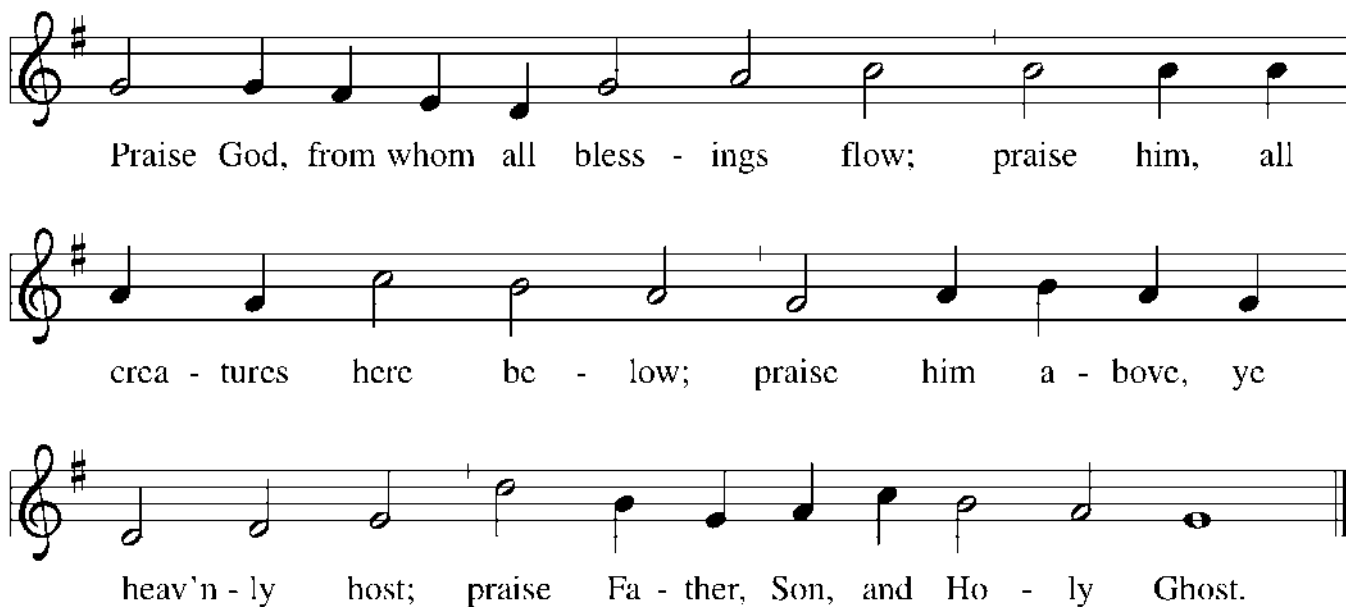
## **BLESSING**

Worship Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace .

**Congregation: Amen.**

## SENDING SONG

### *The Doxology*



Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all  
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye  
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711

Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

## DISMISSAL

**Pastor:** Together we have heard God's Word and joined in prayer, we have given and have been forgiven. Now our service of worship has ended, and our service to the world begins! Go in peace. Christ is with you.

**Congregation: Thanks be to God!**

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