

1st Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2020



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Welcome! Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

This is a special bulletin for Grace Lutheran Church. We have closed the Sanctuary to the general public amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. 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

SERVICE OF THE WORD

PRELUDE

Scenes of Advent

by Wendy Roth

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Worship Leader: Let us pray. 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,

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

CANDLELIGHTING CAROL *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* vs. 1



- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954
Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune
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APOSTOLIC 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: Let us pray together the Prayer of the Day.

Congregation: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 64:1-9

Introduction to the Lesson: *This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.*

Reader: 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.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

The psalm for the day is read responsively with the Advent refrain sung first and then at each “R”.

The musical notation is for the Advent refrain: "To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul." It is written on a single staff in 4/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 80. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The melody begins with a whole rest, followed by a quarter rest, then a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter note E4. A double bar line follows. The second measure contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter note E4. The third measure contains a quarter note D4, a quarter note C4, and a quarter note B3. The fourth measure contains a quarter note A3, a quarter note G3, and a quarter note F3. The fifth measure contains a quarter note E3, a quarter note D3, and a quarter note C3. The sixth measure contains a quarter note B2, a quarter note A2, and a quarter note G2. The seventh measure contains a quarter note F2, a quarter note E2, and a quarter note D2. The eighth measure contains a quarter note C2, a quarter note B1, and a quarter note A1. The piece ends with a double bar line.

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

**2In 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.

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

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

**⁶You 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.

**¹⁷Let 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.

**¹⁹Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. R**

SECOND READING 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Introduction to the Lesson: *As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.*

Reader: 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.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL LESSON

Mark 13:24-37

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 in the 13th chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

Worship Leader: [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.”

After the reading...

Worship Leader: The gospel of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

Learn from the Figs

Fig trees mature slowly. They don’t require much maintenance, but they do require plenty of time to grow. Some fig trees take years to start producing fruit. It may be tempting to give up on a fig too soon, but the patient gardener knows to wait and watch for the subtle signs that the fig tree is about to produce.

“From the fig tree learn its lesson,” Jesus says in today’s gospel (Mark 13:28). Just as the gardener watches for indications that a bud is about to unfold, so should believers watch for where God’s presence is emerging in the world.

Jesus’ words in this passage paint a picture of God’s arrival as unsettling and fearsome, with darkening skies and shaking celestial orbs. It is hard to imagine how anyone could miss such an arrival, yet Jesus warns his listeners that those who are not vigilant will be

caught unaware. We must watch with care and patience for the signs of the coming of the Son of Man, like the gardener who watches for the ripening fig. If you think such signs can be ignored, you will miss the surprising, gentle cry of the incarnate God come as a tiny, vulnerable baby.

Today, at the beginning of Advent, we enter a season of waiting and watching as we anticipate with hope the coming of Christ's light into the world. Yet, even as we wait, there are active signs of God's presence all around us now—in water and word, in bread and wine, in the assembly gathered for worship. These signs remind us of God's gracious love toward us. At the same time, the lesson of the fig tree reminds us to stay curious and attentive, open to what might surprise us. God is always up to something new.

SERMON

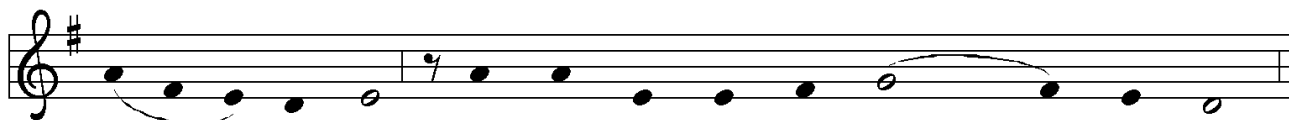
HYMN OF THE DAY

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

vs. 1 & 2



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

Text: *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
 Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.
 Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

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APOSTLES' CREED

**Congregation: 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

Worship Leader: God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: We pray for the 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. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: We pray 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. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: We pray for all people who care for others in our community 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. 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, Lisa & Ty Hauschild, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Ellen Duncan, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Seve Chacon, Pat Fredell, Skylar Favos, Marcos de Souza Lima, Maria de Nazare & Michele Rios, Steve Murray and his mom, the family and friends of Ethan Burgess, and all those suffering from natural disasters [including all those affected by COVID-19; and Western wildfires], from violence, & terror, and the family & friends of the 231,000+ people in the US & the 1,210,000+ 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.

Prayer Leader: We pray for people 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 . Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Prayer Leader: We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know (especially those within our Memorial Garden) and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Congregation: Amen.

OFFERING

*Offerings to the mission and ministry of Grace can be made online at GraceCLW.com (look for the “Donate” button), or 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 also fill out your attendance form on our website.***

OFFERTORY



Cre-ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re-new a right
spir-it with-in me. Cast me not a-way from your pres-ence, and take
not your Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re-store to me the joy of
your sal - va - tion, and up - hold me with your free Spir - it.

Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923

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OFFERING PRAYER

Prayer Leader: Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray.

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.

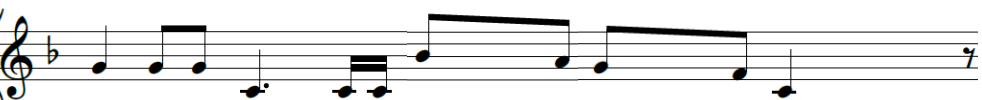
Congregation: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Worship Leader: 
The Lord be with you,

Congregation: 
AND AL-SO_ WITH YOU

Worship Leader: 
Lift up your_ hearts,

Congregation: 
WE_ LIFT THEM TO THE LORD

Worship Leader: 
Let us give thanks, to the Lord_____ our_____ God.

Congregation: 
IT IS RIGHT TO GIVE HIM THANKS AND_____ PRAISE!

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 Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, † now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

Fling Wide the Door vs. 1 & 2



1 Fling wide the door, un - bar the gate; the King of glo - ry
2 He is the rock of our be - lief, the heart of mer - cy's



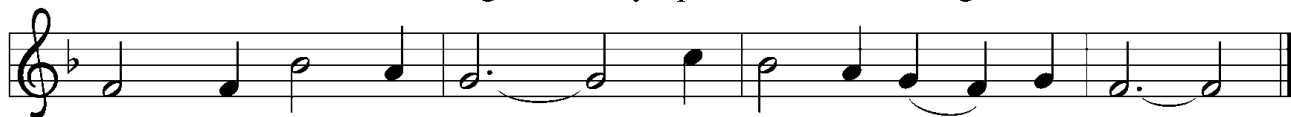
comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the
gen - tle self. His king - ly crown is ho - li - ness; his



Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion
scep - ter is his love - li - ness; he brings our sor - rows



to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and
to an end. Now glad - ly praise our king and friend, and



praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word.
wor - ship him with song for sav - ing us from wrong.

Text: Georg Weissel, 1590–1635; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943

Music: MACHT HOCH DIE TÜR, J. A. Freylinghausen, *Geistreiches Gesangbuch*, 1704

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DISMISSAL

Worship Leader: 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.

POSTLUDE

Advent Recollections

by Jacob Morello

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