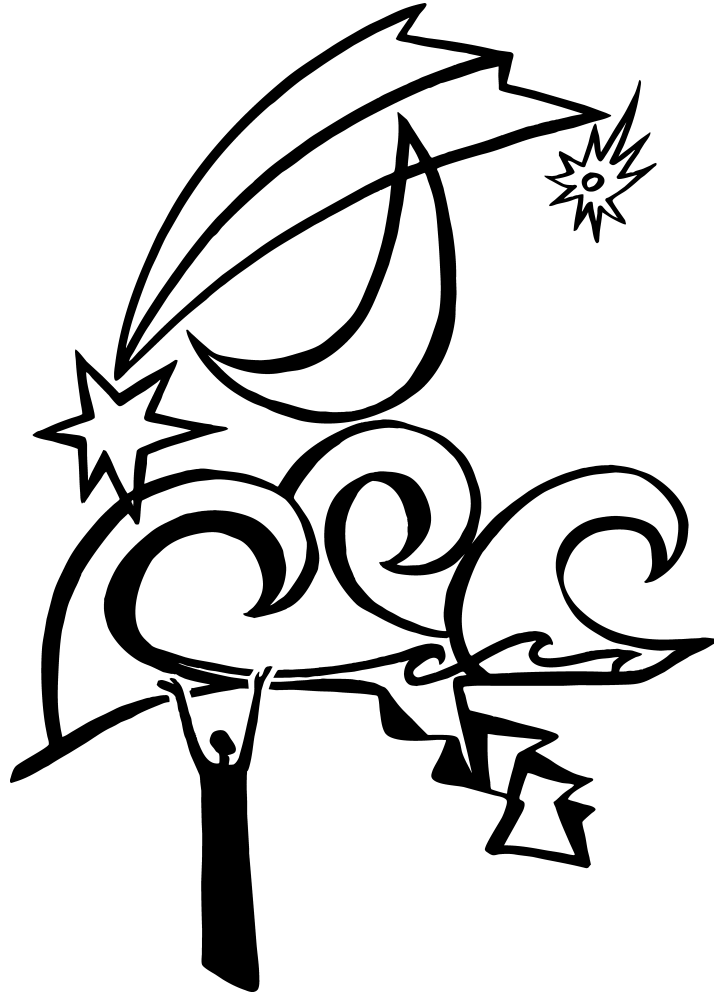


1st Sunday of Advent

November 28, 2021



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Welcome! Advent is about the “coming days.” God’s people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a “righteous Branch to spring up for David.” The Thessalonians awaited “the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.” Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for the time “to stand before the Son of Man.” With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.

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 or by following our online service. 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
Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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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

Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

FIRST READING

Jeremiah 33:14-16

Introduction to the Lesson: *In the Old Testament, “righteousness” often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today’s reading, Jerusalem’s future name—“The LORD is our righteousness”—proclaims that God is even now working salvation for Israel.*

¹⁴The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

The reading is concluded:

Reader: The word of the Lord. **Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Introduction to the Lesson: *Upon Timothy’s report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessings for the people of this growing church.*

⁹How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? ¹⁰Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

¹¹Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you.
¹²And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all,
just as we abound in love for you. ¹³And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness
that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus
with all his saints.

After the reading...

Reader: The word of the Lord. **Congregation: Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL

Luke 21:25-36

Introduction to the Lesson: *God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.*

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Luke in the 21st chapter.

Congregation: Glory to you, O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ²⁵“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. ²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

²⁹Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³²Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place.

³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

After the reading...

Pastor: The gospel of the Lord. **Congregation: Praise to you, O Christ.**

GOSPEL MESSAGE—From Sundays and Seasons

Expectant Waiting

A pastor once summarized the way God answers prayers with three categories: yes, no, and not yet. To his young audience, these categories made sense and served as a simple way to think about their prayer life. But having clear categories does not dismiss the fact that it is often easier to receive the answer “yes” or “no,” compared to the answer “not yet.” After all, the answer “not yet” often involves waiting. And waiting can be exhausting!

Whether it be waiting for a medical diagnosis, longing for healing in a relationship, expecting a child, or enduring another situation beyond our complete control, it can be challenging to be patient, accept the unknown, and trust God’s promises in the meantime.

This is a reality Jesus understood, and one that is at the heart of his parable of the fig tree in today’s reading. The early believers needed encouragement as they waited for the coming of the Lord. Patience, endurance, and trust did not come any easier to them than they do to many of us today. Yet that is precisely what followers of Christ are invited to do during the season of Advent: to remain prayerful and expectant as they await the birth of Jesus.

Perhaps that is why Jesus gives his followers something to do in their waiting. Jesus’ words urge us to be on the lookout for signs of God’s kingdom, even as we await the fulfillment of God’s promises in the future. The sign you see may be a neighbor helping another in need, a child growing and thriving, or a card received from a friend. God’s promise is that even as we wait for the fulfillment of God’s kingdom, it is drawing near—and is, in fact, already among us.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

vs. 1 & 2



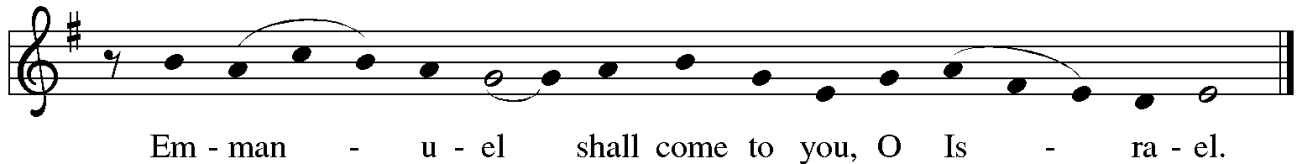
1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



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-joyce! Re-joyce!
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



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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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Worship Leader: In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

A brief silence.

Prayer Leader: God of presence and peace, strengthen your church around the globe to proclaim the message of your love coming to the world. Open our hearts to recognize your face in all people and in all of creation. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: God of mighty redwoods and microscopic plants, fields and city parks, the wind and the waves, be a healing balm to our wounded planet. May we nurture what you have lovingly created. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: God of equity and compassion, bring righteousness and goodness to all peoples of the earth. Give a heart of discernment and integrity to leaders in our communities. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

God of comfort and care, be present with those who watch and wait. Come to all who await births, deaths, divorces, new unions, new jobs, retirements, healing, and life transitions of every kind (*especially* Dale Willman, Jennifer Martinez, Bobby Crowel, Marc Calhoun, Linda Almond, Barbara Haseley, Duke Tieman, Betty Biddle, Cathi Adams, Michael Morales, Gloria Holtzclaw, Betty Daege, Dianne William, Rosemarie & George Smith, Rev. Lydia Villanueva and family, Don Eunis, Lorraine Reinhard, Bonnie Redler, Kathy Leotta, Brytt Mathis, Joseph Valentin, Rita Burneik, Bobby Schlegel, Hilda Taylor, Carl Stone, Neftali Garcia & family, Susan Gunn, Roy Pruitt, Deacon Connie Puls, Joan Keeton, Rose Marie Piff, Vicki Kennedy, Gail Elder, Jason Meadows, Bishop Pedro Suarez, Pastor Courtney Erzkus and family, Ralph Burson, Ellen Duncan, Luanne Sekel, Lorraine Chavez, Skylar Favos, Audrey Fisher, April and David, Jennifer Martinez, Sonya and Abigail Stone, Dennis Bruder, Carolyn Milsap, and all those suffering from violence, terror, and natural disasters (including all those impacted by COVID-19 & this hurricane season). . Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Prayer Leader: God of promises kept and new dreams awakened, shelter your people from destructive storms. We pray for those whose lives have been upended by natural disasters (especially), for the work of Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief, and other relief organizations. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Prayer Leader: God of companionship and community, we give you thanks for the saints who journeyed with us and now abide in you. Even in distress and uncertainty, make us confident that your promises endure forever. Lord, in your mercy,

Congregation: hear our prayer.

Worship Leader: God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

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 an Attendance Form on our website.** If you're new to Grace through our online services, please consider sharing some information about yourself through our Attendance Form.*

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.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Worship Leader: Let us pray. Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God,

Congregation: we give you thanks and praise.

Worship Leader: By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God,

Congregation: we give you thanks and praise.

Worship Leader: Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God,

Congregation: we give you thanks and praise.

Worship Leader: Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; 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 God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus for whom we wait, + now and forever.

Congregation: Amen.

SENDING SONG

Fling Wide the Door vs. 1 & 4



- 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
- 3 Oh, hap - py towns and bless - ed lands that live by their true
- 4 Come, Lord, our Sav - ior, Je - sus Christ; our hearts are o - pen



comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the
gen - tle self. His king - ly crown is ho - li - ness; his
king's com-mands. And bless - ed be the hearts he rules, the
wide in trust. Oh, show us now your love - ly grace, up -



Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion
scep - ter is his love - li - ness; he brings our sor - rows
hum - ble plac - es where he dwells. He is the right - ful
on our sor - rows shine your face, and let your Ho - ly



to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and
to an end. Now glad - ly praise our king and friend, and
Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, cre -
Spir - it guide our jour - ney in your grace so wide. We



praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word.
wor - ship him with song for sav - ing us from wrong.
a - tor of the world, our on - ly strength for good.
praise your ho - ly name, from age to age the same!

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 near.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Advent Recollections

by Jacob Morello

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