

Sunday, December 3, 2017
First Sunday of Advent

INTRODUCTION

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.

PRELUDE

"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence"

David Cherwin

*LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

P *We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.*

C **As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen!**

*WELCOMING SONG

"He Came Down" vs. 2

ELW 253

He came down that we may have light;
he came down that we may have light;
he came down that we may have light;
hallelujah forevermore.

*GATHERING SONG

"Great Is Thy Faithfulness"

ELW 733

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father;
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not;
as thou hast been, thou forever wilt be.

Refrain

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided;
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love. *Refrain*

**Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside! *Refrain***

***GREETING**

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

G **And also with you.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

“A Litany for Advent”

Shirley W. McRae

Chancel Choir

Karen Jensen, recorder

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P *Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.*

G **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!**

ANTHEM

“Lift Up Your Heads”

acc. C. Wesley Anderson

Chancel Choir

FIRST READING

Isaiah 64:1-9

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.

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.

Reflection

This text is another text about the “day of the Lord” (although Isaiah doesn’t use that language). What is the prayer in this text? (verses 1-2) What do they expect God’s coming to be like? (verses 2-3) For whom is God’s coming good news? (verses 4-5a) Why did the people sin? (verses 5b-7) Whose fault is their sin, do they think? On the other hand, what is their relationship with the Lord? (verse 8) What is their prayer in this time? As we prepare for the coming of Jesus, this text calls on us (the people) to examine ourselves and reflect and repent, for “we are all your people.” (verse 9) In what ways does this text speak to you as you prepare for Christ’s coming?

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-1

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on 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 a- | way from you;
give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.

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

Reflection

How is God addressed in this psalm? (verse 1) What is the prayer of the psalmist on behalf of the people? (verse 2) The refrain in verse 3 is repeated throughout this psalm. What do the people expect/hope for when they pray? One of the phrases I like to use when I see someone in my family that I haven't seen for a while is this, "You're a sight for sore eyes!" When have you felt that way, as though seeing someone you love heals something in you? How is experiencing God's love like that? Why are they asking for God's favor? (verses 4-6) Why might God be angry with the people's prayers? Perhaps they were praying for divine favor when they did not give favor to others, but oppressed them. This reminds me of the parable of the unforgiving servant in Matthew 18:23-35. Are there ways we expect God's favor for ourselves but deny it to others? The final verses of this psalm remind the people that their strength comes from God. What do they pray for here? (verses 17-19) I would suggest that the refrain of this psalm (verses 3, 7, and 19) might be a good prayer for this Advent.

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

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.

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.

Reflection

What do you think of the congregation that Paul is writing to as you read this part of his letter? He begins with a greeting from whom? (verse 3) What do they have going for them? (verses 4-5) What are they lacking? (verses 6-7) How does Paul pray they will continue? (verses 8) In whom does he have confidence? (verse 9) Would you believe this if it were written to our congregation? (I would! I do!) What do you think gives me this confidence? (verse 9) My prayer is that we all have this confidence as we await the coming of Christ.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

"Sing Hallelujah"

**Sing hallelujah to the Lord.
Sing hallelujah to the Lord.
Sing hallelujah, sing hallelujah.
Sing hallelujah to the Lord.**

***GOSPEL**

Mark 13:24-37

In today's reading, Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[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.”

Reflection

This is another “day of the Lord” text—what will happen with the coming of the Son of Man? (verses 24-27) What are we to watch for? (verses 28-29) When does Mark expect this to happen? (verse 30) What will remain, even if everything else passes away? (verse 31) One of the games certain Christians have played over the centuries is trying to predict when these things will happen. What does Jesus say about that? (verse 32-33) What is our work as Christians as we await the coming of the Son of Man? (verses 34-36) What does it mean to you to “keep awake”? How might this reading inform your preparations this Advent?

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

Kris Langdon

SERMON

“Watch”

Rev. Roger Lenander

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

**Come, thou long expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art;**

dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver,
born a child and yet a King,
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all sufficient merit,
raise us to thy glorious throne.

***APOSTLES' CREED**

☑ 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!

***OFFERING OF THE 2018 COMMITMENTS**

***PRAYER SONG**

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" vs. 1

ELW 257

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Guided by the light of Christ, let us pray for the coming dawn of joy, healing, and comfort for all God's people.

A brief silence.

Give light to your people, Lord. As the darkness grows and we await the return of daylight, give new life to your church. Shape our communities to be faithful vessels of the gospel for the sake of the world. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Restore your creation, Lord. You give the earth opportunities for both sleep and awakening. Thank you for the gift of restful seasons so new life may grow according to your appointed time. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Bring peace to the nations, Lord. Keep us alert to injustice and oppression, give us courage to cry out for what is right, and guide world leaders toward fairness and peace for all. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Stir up compassion in us for all who wait for you. Be near to those whose lives are shaken, those who are experiencing loss, those who long for healing and wholeness, those who live with HIV and AIDS, and those who are in any kind of need due to illness, *especially Twila, Mary Anna, Alivia, Kay, Lin, and Linda* and for those we name before you aloud or silently in our hearts (*pause for 10 seconds*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for child care workers, teachers, Sunday school leaders, and all who nurture and educate children. We give you thanks for their diligence and devotion. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for all the men and women of our armed forces, at home and abroad. We especially lift up to you, Jason Shields. Defend them day by day with your heavenly grace; strengthen them in their trials and temptations; give them courage to face the perils which beset them; and grant them a sense of your abiding presence wherever they may be. Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

From ages past, your faithfulness has never failed. Shine your face upon us and bring us into the company of all your saints in light (*especially the missionary Frances Xavier*). Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We raise our prayers to you, O God, in the name of the one who is, who was, and who is to come, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen!

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P *The peace of Christ be with you always.*

C **And also with you!**

OFFERTORY

“My Lord, What a Morning”

ELW 438

Refrain

**My Lord, what a morning;
my Lord, what a morning;
oh, my Lord, what a morning,
when the stars begin to fall.**

**You will hear the trumpet sound,
to wake the nations underground,
looking to my God's right hand,
when the stars begin to fall. *Refrain***

**You will hear the sinner cry,
to wake the nations underground,
looking to my God's right hand,
when the stars begin to fall. *Refrain***

**You will hear the Christian shout,
to wake the nations underground,
looking to my God's right hand,
when the stars begin to fall. *Refrain***

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

“Come, Share the Lord” vs 1 refrain only

**We gather here
in Jesus' name,
his love is burning
in our hearts like living flame;
for through the loving Son
the Father makes us one;
Come, take the bread,
come, drink the wine,
come, share the Lord.**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

P *Savior of the nations, come.*

C **Make your home here in us. Feed us with your love, that our faith shine ever new and our lives reveal your light. Amen!**

***DIALOGUE**

- 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.**

***PREFACE**

- 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**

**Holy, Holy,
Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full,
are full of your glory.
Hosanna! Hosanna!
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes,
who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna! Hosanna!
Hosanna in the highest.**

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

- P** *Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
the Word made flesh.
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.
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:*

C Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

P *With this bread and cup
we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.*

C Come, Lord Jesus.

P *Holy God, we long for your Spirit.
Come among us.
Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.*

C Come, Holy Spirit.

P *All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.*

C Amen!

***LORD'S PRAYER**

P *Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.*

C **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 *Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you. Share in the feast of salvation.*

***BLESSING**

P *The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.*

G **Amen!**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

P *God for whom we wait,*

G **you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen!**

***BENEDICTION**

P *May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path.
Almighty God, Father, \dagger Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.*

G **Amen!**

***SENDING SONG**

“Days of Elijah”

These are the days of Elijah
Declaring the Word of the Lord
And these are the days
Of Your servant Moses
Righteousness being restored
And though these are days
Of great trials
Of famine and darkness and sword
Still we are the voice
In the desert crying
Prepare ye the way of the Lord

Refrain

Behold He comes
Riding on the clouds
Shining like the sun
At the trumpet call
So lift your voice
It's the year of Jubilee
And out of Zion's hill
Salvation comes

And these are the days of Ezekiel
The dry bones becoming as flesh
And these are the days
Of Your servant David
Rebuilding a temple of praise
And these are the days of the harvest
The fields are as white in the world
And we are the labourers
In Your vineyard
Declaring the Word of the Lord *Refrain*

Bridge

There is no god like Jehovah
There is no god like Jehovah
There is no god like Jehovah
There is no god like Jehovah (hey) *Refrain*