

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
THE ADVENT OF OUR GOD - ILLUMINATE “HOPE”
Reverend John R. Hanson
November 27, 2022, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Janet Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION

This is an exciting and moving time as we prepare ourselves for the journey to Christmas and open our hearts to new transformation experiences! The readings begin with our hope in Christ, the coming of God’s reign made known in Christ, and the challenge for us to live from this hope. We remember God’s comings in the past, recognizing God’s comings now and awaiting God’s comings into our futures. If we mindfully and wholeheartedly embraced this hope, it could change us forever. Let’s open ourselves and embrace the power of God’s gift of hope in Christ.

LIGHTING THE FIRST ADVENT LIGHT

As light dispels the darkness, as fire warms the cold, so the hope of your dream, O God, leads us out of despair. Amen.

HYMN

“Light the Advent Candle”

TUNE Green #407

Light the Advent candle, one; now the waiting has begun;
We have started on our way, time to think of Christmas day.
Candle, candle, burning bright, shining in cold winter nights;
Candle, candle, burning bright, fill our hearts with Christmas light.

WELCOME AND VERSE

As farmers wait for rainfall, as prisoners wait for freedom, we wait for the coming of God. As exiles yearn for home, as peacemakers yearn for justice, we long for the coming of God. As travelers search for shelter, as disciples look for answers, we prepare for the coming of God.

Not by might nor by power but by my spirit, says the LORD of hosts. (Zechariah 3:6)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION God is good. **All the time.**

GOSPEL: Matthew 24:36–44

Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, unexpected event that will bring salvation or judgment upon people caught up in the usual affairs of daily life. He urges people to be alert and expectant.

[Jesus said to the disciples,] ³⁶But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will

be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark,

³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴²Keep awake therefore, for you do not

know on what day your Lord is coming. ⁴³But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather in the name of the Triune God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Let us take this time to prepare to welcome the Son of God.

O Lord, our sin is obvious to you, yet we do not see our own works of darkness. Only you can show us the light of salvation, but we are not ready to prepare for your coming. Even with Christmas on the way, we still make provisions for our flesh and desires instead of seeing the sign to put on the Lord Jesus Christ. God of salvation, rescue us from our sins. Amen

The Lord is coming! And what a salvation God will bring to us. Because we belong to God, a son will be sent to save us: our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is for Christ's sake that our sins are forgiven. And through the gift of the Holy Spirit, we may again walk in the light of the Lord. In the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

HYMN

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

Green # 165

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee,
Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
Which wert and art and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy, though the darkness hide thee,
Though the eye made blind by sin thy glory may not see,
Only thou art holy, there is none beside thee,
Perfect in pow'r, in love and purity.

CCLI Song # 1156 CCLI License # 1713417

WELCOME

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON "Get Ready? For What?"

PRAYER OF ADVENT

Lord Jesus, master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for this Advent. We who have so much to do need quiet spaces to hear your voice each day. We who are anxious over many things await your coming to bring “peace on earth.” We who are blessed in so many ways long for the complete joy that is your kingdom. We whose hearts are heavy seek the joy of your presence. We, your people, walk deep in darkness yet seek the light. To you we say, “Illuminate us, and come, Lord Jesus, come!” Amen.

HYMN

“All Who Are Thirsty”

All who are thirsty, all who are weak,
Come to the fountain, dip your heart in the stream of life.
Let the pain and the sorrow be washed away
In the waves of his mercy, as deep cries out to deep:
(We sing) Come, Lord Jesus come, come, Lord Jesus, come. (repeat)
CCLI Song # 2489542 CCLI License # 1713417

READING: Isaiah 2:1–5

The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will make war obsolete, and the worshipping community responds, “Let us walk in that light of that Lord now!”

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. ²In days to come the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established as the highest of the mountains and shall be raised above the hills; all the nations shall stream to it. ³Many peoples shall come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion

shall go forth instruction, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. ⁴He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. ⁵O house of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the LORD!

READING: Romans 13:11–14

Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ's coming in the future.

¹¹Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; ¹²the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; ¹³let us live

honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. ¹⁴Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

HYMN

"I Wonder as I Wander"

Burgundy # 50

I wonder as I wander out under the sky,
How Jesus the Savior did come for to die
For poor orn'ry people like you and like I.
I wonder as I wander out under the sky.

If Jesus had wanted for any wee thing,
A star in the sky, or a bird on the wing,
Or all of God's angels in heav'n for to sing,
He surely could have it, 'cause he was the King.

SERMON - *"How to shine a light that can mean hope for the hopeless? What does it mean to "shine?" Hopeless people from all walks of life could see Jesus if we just let him shine.*

HYMN

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

Blue # 649

I want to walk as a child of the light, I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.

***In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.***

I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path, and show me the way to the Father.

I'm looking for the coming of Christ, I want to follow Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race, We shall know the joy of Jesus.

CCLI Song # 89848 CCLI License # 1713417

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

LORD of hope, can we really hope? From out of the darkness, we sense a dim light ahead, the light of your coming into the world. We long for the time when you are no longer hidden from us. Our desire is to trust in your warm voice guiding us along hidden paths we do not know. Dry our tears, heal our wounds, and help us to wait for the new day dawning with a brighter vision of healing for all earth. Amen

BENEDICTION & SENDING

One day the wilderness will blossom with flowers, and the desert wasteland will come alive with new growth, and God's glory and splendor will be on full display. With this news, strengthen those who have tired hands and encourage those who have weak knees. Say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, and do not fear, for your God is coming to save you."

May we be the light that will shine Christ to all the world.

So go with confidence into the days ahead. And may the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit be among you and within you.

Fill us with your power, O God, and fill our lives with your Spirit.

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Worship, as an action, continues to change.

Use this space to guide your thoughts as the Spirit may lead you.

Use this time to center your distractions in order to help activate your worship.

The first Sunday of Advent always leads us to reflect on the time of Christ's return, which is both problematic and exciting. The problem lies in how we deal with the issue of his Second Coming – especially with the ongoing tendency to try and predict times and dates, and with the possibility that it creates a “pie-in-the-sky” theology for our people.

The readings offer us another possibility, though – and this is where the excitement lies. In every reading, the promise of Christ's coming is related back to how we live now – which is as it should be. Isaiah and Paul both invite us into a life lived in God's light – a life of peace, justice and morality. The Psalmist encourages us to pray for peace, and to continue to gather for worship where God's presence and ‘judgment’ are encountered. Finally, Jesus, encourages us to live in ‘readiness’ – always aware that Christ's coming is immanent, and avoiding the temptation (unlike those in Noah's day) of growing absorbed in self-interest and personal pleasure (what Paul refers to as ‘wild parties’).

In too many ways the life of Christians and their churches simply reflects the values and beliefs of the societies around us. To look at us you wouldn't know that we wait for a different world, and hold out the hope of peace and justice.

If we really lived our faith in the coming of Christ, we would seek to express hope in all our interactions, we would invite others into a hope-filled way of living, and we would live the kind of life that demonstrates what we believe the world will one day be. This means we must embrace a life of daily acts of mercy – living modestly and simply; bringing peace through the practices of forgiveness, conversation and listening; seeking grace through serving those in need and challenging injustice wherever we find it in our communities.

In addition we need to develop the habit of readiness – looking for every example of the coming of Christ in our lives and world. Take notice and proclaim the presence of Christ whenever we can. If we can do this, we become the fulfilment of the prophecies in this week's readings.

In what way can you seek to be a quiet, but prophetic voice this Advent season?

By John van de Laar at www.sacredise.com