

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
THE ADVENT OF OUR GOD - ILLUMINATE PEACE

Reverend John R. Hanson
December 4, 2022, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Janet Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION - Our Advent preparation recalls John the Baptist's words calling us to repent and make a new beginning. As dark nights get darker, we seek the light of Christ. For Christians, Jesus is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We long for peace, for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb and there will be no more hurt or destruction. We are sent, in the spirit of The Baptist, to proclaim "in Christ Jesus the kingdom of God has come near."

LIGHTING THE SECOND ADVENT LIGHT

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

HYMN

"Light the Advent Candle"

TUNE Green # 407

Light the Advent candle, two: Think of humble shepherds, who
Filled with wonder at the sight of the child of Christmas night.
Candle, candle, burning bright, shining in cold winter nights;
Candle, candle, burning bright, fill our hearts with Christmas light.

CALL TO WORSHIP (8:00/10:30)

J Crew/Psalm 100 Kids

WELCOME AND VERSE

Lord God, you come to us so the poor might get a fair shake (not a shakedown), so we might clothe ourselves with faithfulness and righteousness, and so we might listen and hear the voices of the oppressed without judgment.

When we long for a leader beyond our imagination, you show us a picture of a barefoot wandering leader with a ragamuffin group of followers who say to us, "This is the one you're looking for."

In the midst of bigger and brighter, louder and flashier advertising blitzes, you offer a vision of cows giving milk to wolf cubs, children playing with snakes, and lions, and tigers, and bears playing hide and seek on our front lawns.

Holy God, bring us closer to your kingdom!

"You will keep them in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on you, because they trust in you." (Isaiah 26:3)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

God is good.

All the time.

GOSPEL: Matthew 3:1–6, 10–12

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways, and he speaks of the powerful one who is coming soon.

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming,
²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" ⁴Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to

him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ¹¹I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

HYMN

"Dona Nobis Pacem"

Blue # 774

Dona nobis pacem, pacem; dona nobis pacem.

Dona nobis pacem, dona nobis pacem.

Dona nobis pacem, dona nobis pacem.

CCLI Song # 3697010 CCLI License # 1713417

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Amen.

John the Baptist announced, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." We join with our own confession.

Lord of peace, we allow our eyes and ears to deceive us. We judge and decide only by what brings us the best deal. We turn our backs on the poor while consoling ourselves that we are not rich. We look down upon the meek for not having our strength. We rely on our religion instead of bearing faithful fruit worthy of you. God of righteousness, make your path straight into our hearts. Amen.

The Lord is coming! A son is given. It is for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ that our repentance will count and our sins are forgiven. This is the son who fulfills all righteousness and baptizes us with the Holy Spirit. Let us walk in the paths of right relationship with our God. In the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

WELCOME

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON "Rejoice, REJOICE! Emmanuel!"

PRAYER OF ADVENT

Lord Jesus, master of both the light and the darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations 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 seeking the light. To you we say, “Illuminate us, and come, Lord Jesus, come!” Amen.

READING: Isaiah 11:1–10

The Babylonians had conquered the Israelites. They burned their city, killed important people, and lined up to kill all the king's sons in front of him just before they blinded him. They did this because they wanted God's people to know that their nation was now as dead as an old dead tree stump. Isaiah agreed that's how it appeared, but he reminded people that some tree stumps send up fresh shoots that grow into healthy new trees and insisted that this would happen with God's people.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. ²*The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.* ³*His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.* He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; ⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his

loins. ⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. ⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

READING: Romans 15:4–7, 12–13

God's promise to include “Other people” called Gentiles within the circle of “God's blessed” has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. We live out our unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Jesus welcomed others into God's family. He's got the whole world in his hands!

⁴For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Welcome

one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ¹²Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope.” ¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

HYMN

“Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel”

Green # 34

Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

Oh, come, blest Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Oh, come, Desire of nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind.
Bid envy, strife, and quarrels cease, fill this whole world with heaven's peace.

CCLI Song # 31982 CCLI License # 1713417

SERMON - *“From reassurance to expectations, what gift would you like to bring this season? Hope for the hopeless, joy for the sorrow-filled, peace for the restless? What is required for us to live in peace?”*

HYMN

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling”

Green # 315

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heav’n, to earth come down!
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation, enter ev’ry trembling heart.

Breathe, oh, breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast;
Let us all in thee inherit; let us find thy promised rest.
Take away the love of sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee:
Changed from glory into glory, till in heav’n we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD’S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

As you pour your Spirit upon these gifts of bread, cup, and table may we find ourselves strengthened and sent to be your people in our world. As these become a part of us, may we leave here ready to serve as your people: building playgrounds on empty lots, reading stories to children, feeding the hungry, showing others your kingdom, here. And when all time has ended and Christ establishes your kingdom of joy and hope, we will join our sisters and brothers around the feast in glory, forever blessing your holy name. Amen.

BENEDICTION

“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” (John 14:27)

May we shine Christ to all the world.

May God, the source of peace, fill you with joy and hope through your faith in him.
Then you will overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Fill us with your light, O God.

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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.

This second week in Advent draws us into the possibilities of real peace for us and our world – God’s Shalom Kingdom. Ironically, there is so much in this time of year that works against a sense of peace – and much of it is the product of misguided faith. What would it mean if we really began to embrace the peace, the mutuality, the community and the enemy with this shalom found in the Gospel? These are the very powerful and practical challenges this week. May we be led into God’s Shalom and transform us into agents of Shalom in every moment, every situation and every interaction.

In so many ways we attempt to create shalom for ourselves. Unfortunately, though, our attempts are often the exact opposite of what God shows us is the real route to shalom. We think we can find security by preemptive attacks on our enemies, and then we find ourselves more at risk. We think we can find peace by excluding those who challenge and disagree with us, only to find our safe community growing smaller and smaller, until we only have ourselves to agree with (and even that fails sometimes!). We think we can find joy and abundance by amassing money and stuff, only to discover scarcity growing around us, and our planet dying, and the reality of losing it all robs us of any joy we might have known. We think we can find love by turning inward and making our own needs, potential and purpose more important than relationships, or the service of others – even those closest to us – only to find that our self-absorption leaves us alone and empty. We think we can find God by ignoring the realities of our world and escaping to an other-worldly faith, while waiting for a heavenly bliss after death, only to discover that our souls remain dissatisfied, and God feels distant and unattainable.

If we are to know shalom, we need to change how we do things. We must allow ourselves to be driven to the risky acts of listening, dialogue, hospitality, service, and compassion. Then, as we give ourselves to create shalom not just for ourselves but for others, we discover that shalom finds us, and God’s reign is truly within us.

By John van de Laar at www.sacredise.com