

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
BEARERS OF GOOD NEWS - Advent 1 HOPE
Pastor John R. Hanson
December 3, 2023, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

MUSICIAN

Janet Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION - We anticipate the vision of God's reign brought to perfection in Christ. Mark's Gospel does not give us a vision of some future second coming of Christ, it gives us a vision of the events that the early church had to navigate as the Roman Empire crushed their nation. Whether we speak of a vision of God's reign in the midst of the turmoil of the past, or a vision of God's reign coming in the midst of the turmoil of the future, the essential message remains: God is always coming to us. Turmoil does not stop us from experiencing God's ever-present kingdom now. We have a sure and certain hope that God is at work in our world. Advent offers us hope!

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

J Crew/Psalm 100 Kids

THEME AND VERSE

God of surprising generosity and unexpected grace, we have come to witness a miracle and to prepare our hearts for a new invasion, your Son, our light. We have come once again to open our souls and our lives to the divine birth. And in this sacred moment, we ask for you to captivate and challenge us.

"Therefore, 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, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly." (Mark 13:36)

CELEBRATION SINGERS

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

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

GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

Jesus speaks about the signs of his coming and encourages his followers to watch the signs and be alert. He tells about a man who goes on a long trip telling the gatekeeper to keep watch for his return. In the same way we are to keep a hope-filled watch, for we don't know when the Master will return.

[Jesus said:] ²⁴In 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. ²⁸From 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.

³²But 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."

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time.

God is good!

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather in the name of the

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

We all have this in common, that we easily become like one who is unclean.

O God, do we concentrate too much on future signs instead of being prepared for your arrival? Have we distanced ourselves from you with our sin and iniquity? Have we forgotten we are your people, and you are our God? Save us, Lord, from the many ways we forget or ignore your decrees. Free us, Lord, from the burdens we bring upon ourselves because of our fear to let you have them.

The Lord is our heavenly Father. We are being redeemed by the work of God's faithful hand through Jesus Christ. For Christ's sake our sins are forgiven. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we may be blessed with every spiritual gift and be continually strengthened in the fellowship of God's son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

In the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

ADVENT HYMN

"Be Still and Know"

Be still and know that I am God, be still and know that I am God,
Be still and know that I am God.

I am the Lord who gives you hope, I am the Lord who gives you hope,
I am the Lord who gives you hope.

Arranged by Pastor Richard Schwedes

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

HOPE

PRAYER OF ADVENT

Our caring God and Father, you who gave your beloved son to ransom all people, can see our human fears and you love us anyway. Guide us through this season with anticipation. Help us to pay attention to the poor and needy and to the lonely among us. Give us a spirit of reflection, patience with each other, and hearts brimming with thanks. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

WELCOME

CHILDREN'S SERMON "What Does Hope Look Like?"

HYMN

“Light of the World”

Light of the world, you stepped down into darkness, opened my eyes, let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore you, hope of a life spent with you.

***Here I am to worship, here I am to bow down, here I am to say that you're my God.
You're altogether lovely, altogether worthy, altogether wonderful to me.***

King of all days, oh, so highly exalted, glorious in heaven above;
Humbly you came to the earth you created, all for love's sake become poor.

I'll never know how much it cost to see my sin upon that cross.

READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

This prayer comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered for God to come and display his might as in the past. Also, a confession that, while God welcomes those who do good, God's people have not done good and have failed to confess. A plea for God's forgiveness finally follows.

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence² as 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.

READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 *As the Christians in Corinth await the return (advent) of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has given every spiritual gift and will sustain and strengthen believers as we await Christ's return.*

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.

HYMN

“O Lord How Shall I Meet You”

SBH # 11

O Lord, how shall I meet you? How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you, my hope, my heart's delight.
O kindle, Lord, most holy your lamp within my breast,
To do in spirit lowly all that may please you best.

Love caused your incarnation, love brought you down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation procured my liberty.
O love beyond all telling that led you to embrace
In love all love excelling our lost and fallen race.

Rejoice then you sad-hearted who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn your joys departed and tremble at your doom.
Despair not, he is near you there standing at the door,
Who best can help and cheer you and bids you weep no more.

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SERMON - *Light of the world, you step down into darkness... “Broken-ness. Shattered dreams. The Good News is that this IS a time of God’s presence in our world. For you who feel hopeless, you may need to look/listen/feel for this Good News amid the turmoil of this day.”*

HYMN

“Rejoice, Rejoice Believers”

Green # 25

Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.

The saints, who here in patience their cross and sufferings bore,
Shall live and reign forever when sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory the Lamb they shall behold;
In triumph cast before him their diadems of gold.

Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, O Sun, so longed for, O'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD’S PRAYER

PRAYER

**We thank you, Lord God, for breaking into our world, our lives, and our experience.
We thank you, O Christ, for this meal of remembering and the stories of love and grace
that it tells. We thank you, O Spirit, for your presence and your challenge for us to
become agents. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

BENEDICTION

Almighty God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you now and always.

Amen.

As we leave from here, remember this: All God's gifts are right in front of you! Not only that, but God himself is right alongside you to keep you steady and on track until Jesus returns. God who got you started in this spiritual adventure will do this, for he is faithful. Our God will never give up on you.

In Christ's name, we bring hope to the world!

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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.

It is extremely sad that the Christian view of Christ's coming has come to be seen as something that is filled with terror, destruction and a God who uses the violent and dominating methods of human dictators to accomplish God's ends. While popular publications and movies may glorify this way of seeing God's reign, it is certainly not what Christ had in mind, and it doesn't help us to experience or reflect God's grace in our communities either.

Advent calls us to think differently about the coming of Christ – as a gracious, restorative event that is always happening, and which gives us a cause for hope, not fear. Yes, there is the need for us to change – to repent – but all growth and healing requires this. The joyous challenge for our daily living in our neighborhoods, families and churches, is to use the gifts God has given us to help others to see Christ as coming to them to restore and heal, and to be willing to watch for the signs of God's coming in our own lives and in our communities, in order to co-operate with what God is doing.

This challenge is the opposite of waiting passively for a conquering God to come and sweep us off to a different world somewhere. It is an active participation in God's saving, peace-making, restoring work. It's about staying alert to the signs of God's presence everywhere, and jumping in, eagerly and graciously, to share in it. It is about believing that a new world is possible, and holding on to the hope that God is at work to bring this new world into being. And it is about being prepared to examine our own hearts and make changes where we find things that oppose God's reign. Perhaps if our Advent hope led us into this kind of just and gracious awareness and action, others would be more able to see the signs of Christ's coming in and through us.

Devotion resources from John van de Laar at Sacredise.com