

# *Second Sunday of Advent*



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ELW Service of the Word

St. Paul Lutheran Church – December 6th, 2020– 10:00 A.M.

## **Introduction to the day**

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

## **PRELUDE**

*Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending  
Savior of the Nations, Come  
Comfort, Comfort Ye My People*

Gerald Bales  
Paul Manz  
Flor Peeters, Paul Manz

## **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light  
that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.  
As we light the candles on this wreath,  
kindle within us the fire of your Spirit,  
that we may be light shining in the darkness.  
Enlighten us with your grace,  
that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord,  
who's coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

## **WELCOME**

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
whose steadfast love is everlasting,  
whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**  
Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Reconciling God,  
**we confess that we do not trust your abundance,  
and we deny your presence in our lives.  
We place our hope in ourselves  
and rely on our own efforts.  
We fail to believe that you provide enough for all.  
We abuse your good creation for our own benefit.  
We fear difference and do not welcome others  
as you have welcomed us.**

We sin in thought, word, and deed.  
 By your grace, forgive us;  
 through your love, renew us;  
 and in your Spirit, lead us;  
 so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God,  
 by the radical abundance of divine mercy  
 we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus,  
 through whom we have obtained grace upon grace.  
 Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope.  
 For hope does not disappoint,  
 because God's love has been poured into our hearts  
 through the Holy Spirit. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

*Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

ELW 254

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;  
 2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.  
 born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,  
 By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.  
 by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer-it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

## GREETING

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

**And also with you.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## FIRST READING

**Isaiah 40:1-11**

*In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.*

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the LORD's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:  
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, "Cry out!"  
And I said, "What shall I cry?"  
All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

<sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;  
say to the cities of Judah,  
"Here is your God!"

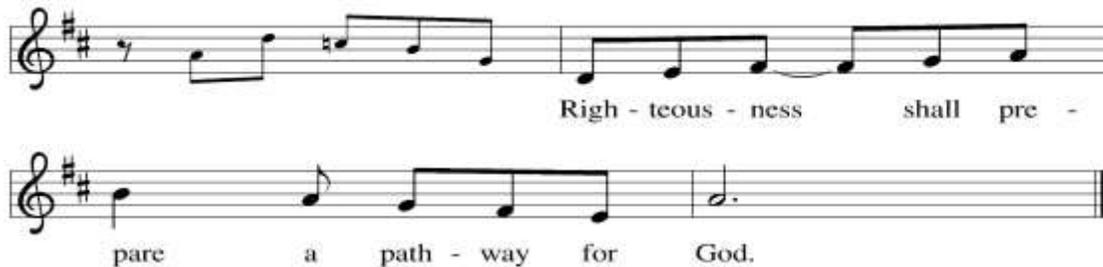
<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

## PSALM

### Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13



Psalm 85:13

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1

You have been gracious to your | land, O LORD;  
you have restored the good for- | tune of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>**You have forgiven the iniquity | of your people  
and blotted out | all their sins.**

<sup>8</sup>I will listen to what the LORD | God is saying;  
for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their | hearts to you.

<sup>9</sup>**Truly, your salvation is very near to | those who fear you,  
that your glory may dwell | in our land. R**

<sup>10</sup>Steadfast love and faithfulness have | met together;  
righteousness and peace have | kissed each other.

<sup>11</sup>**Faithfulness shall spring up | from the earth,  
and righteousness shall look | down from heaven.**

<sup>12</sup>The LORD will indeed | grant prosperity,  
and our land will | yield its increase.

<sup>13</sup>**Righteousness shall go be- | fore the LORD  
and shall prepare for | God a pathway. R**

## SECOND READING

## 2 Peter 3:8-15a

*This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.*

<sup>8</sup>Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

<sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15a</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (from setting 4)



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

## THE GOSPEL

## Mark 1:1-8

The holy gospel according to Mark.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.*

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way;

<sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.’ ”

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

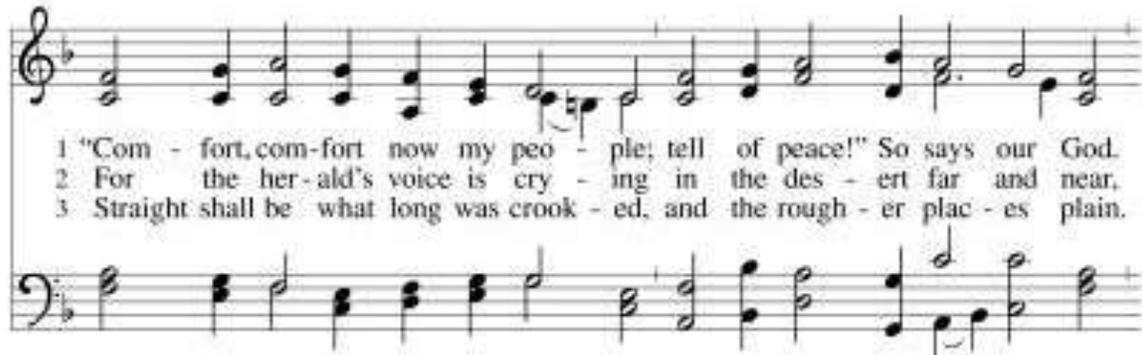
The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## SERMON

**The Reverend Luther Zeigler**

## Comfort, Comfort Now My People



1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.  
 2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,  
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load,  
 call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.  
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!  
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way,  
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er.  
 Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum - ble fa - vor.  
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

## NICENE CREED

We believe in one God,

the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,

of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation

he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\*  
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of power and might, comfort your people and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

*A brief silence.*

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. We pray especially for an end to racial and economic injustice in this country, and for meaningful reconciliation among all people. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace especially those on our prayer list and those whose names we offer now either aloud or within our heart. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work (*especially Nicholas of Myra*). Make their generous lives an example for all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## THE EXCHANGE OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

## OFFERTORY SONG

### Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God, from whom all bless-ings flow; praise him, all crea-tures here be-low;

The first system of musical notation consists of a treble and bass staff. The treble staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature. The melody is written in a simple, hymn-like style. The bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes.

praise him a-bove, ye heav'n-ly host; praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost.

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and accompaniment from the first system. It concludes with a double bar line. The treble staff ends with a final chord, and the bass staff ends with a sustained chord.

Text: Thomas Ken, 1637–1711  
Music: OLD HUNDREDTH, Louis Bourgeois, 1510–1561

Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. *Hymnal* 1940, alt.  
Music: CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM, plainsong mode IV  
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## THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Gracious and merciful God, slow to anger, rich in love, we bless your name and give you thanks. In our need, you make haste to help us. You plant us beside streams of your wisdom, teach us in pastures greenening with truth, and guide us on the path of your promise. By your Spirit awaken our faith, that, feasting on your Word, we may love you more fully and serve our neighbor more faithfully; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

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.

## BLESSING

Life is short.

We haven't much time to gladden the hearts of those with whom we walk this earth.

So be swift to love.

Make haste to be kind.

And may the blessing of Almighty God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

be with you and all those you love now and forever. **Amen.**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## He Came Down



1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;  
 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;  
 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;  
 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;  
 he came down that we may have light; hal-le-lu-jah for-ev-er-more.  
 he came down that we may have peace;  
 he came down that we may have joy;



Text: Cameroon traditional

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional; arr. John L. Bell, b. 1949

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**DISMISSAL** Go in peace. Share the good news. **Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE** *My Soul Magnifies the Lord* Johann Christoph Bach

### WORSHIP LEADERS TODAY:

Presiding and Preaching: The Rev. Luther Zeigler

Assisting Minister: Sharon Kishida

Reader: Sharon Kishida

Musician and Choir Director: Theodore Stoddard

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## Upcoming Commemorations

**Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342**

**Sunday, December 6, 2020**

Little is known about Nicholas, except that he was a bishop in present-day Turkey. According to legend, he was famous for his giving to the poor, and so has become a symbol of anonymous gift-giving.

## NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1123 Washington St., Gloucester, MA 01930  
978-283-6550, [office@stpaulcapeann.org](mailto:office@stpaulcapeann.org)

### WELCOME TO ST. PAUL

Thank you for joining virtually. Please follow us on Facebook and/or sign up for our FYI Newsletter by logging into our website at [stpaulcapeann.org](http://stpaulcapeann.org).

### QUARRY HOME COMPANION – STEWARDSHIP 2020-2021

Pledge cards should be returned to the church by December 8<sup>th</sup> in order to prepare the 2021 budget. Please mail your card or drop it off at the church using the mail slot in the door toward the back of the church or send an email to [amwheelerap@gmail.com](mailto:amwheelerap@gmail.com) with your pledge amount. Thank you!

### HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS DURING ADVENT

Our church has supported four local missions over many years: (1) the Open Door/Cape Ann Food Pantry, (2) Family Promise, (3) Grace Center, and (4) Action Inc./Brown Bag Program. This year during the four weeks of Advent, we will highlight and pray for each of these programs. Adding to our prayers, we ask your weekly support by giving local grocery gift cards (from, e.g., Stop & Shop, Market Basket, Shaw's) in smaller amounts such as \$10, \$20 or \$25, for each local mission throughout Advent. Please mail or drop-off your grocery gift cards in an envelope marked "Advent Gift Cards" to St. Paul Lutheran Church by Sunday, Dec. 20. (If dropping-off your gift at church, please use the mail slot in the door toward the back of the church.)

### PRAYER AT THE CHAIRS HAS BEEN SUSPENDED, HOWEVER . . .

There will no longer be a scheduled gathering on Sundays at 11 a.m. at the Prayer Chairs, but Pastor Luther remains available at this time, by appointment, for introductions and conversation. Please just call or text him at 617-999-6419 to arrange for a visit.

### PRAYER LISTS

**Please keep these people in your prayers for healing throughout the week:** Heidi H., Pastor O., Roger K., Dan W., Caitlin G., Janet C., Elaine V., Andrew G., Hope L., Amy P., Alane B., Daneen R., Sonny M., Mitch O., Tasha R., Carrie T., Willy G., Henry K., Jim W., Brian D., Ron M., Judith O.

**Armed services:** Josh Coakley, Stephanie Norberg, Brian Misuraca, Christian DiGregorio, John Korpi III, Danny Hill, Rachel Misuraca Lewin, Zach Hafey, Liam Carney, and Tony Favalora

**Please see the FYI emails for more information**