

Worship Plan for Sunday, December 5, 2021

Second Sunday of Advent

Introduction to the day

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the LORD of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

GATHERING

PRELUDE

BELL RINGING

WELCOME AND INTRO TO THE DAY -- BRYSON

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH AND PRAYER (2 Advent C 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,
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

Amen.

Light two candles.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly,
who fills the hungry with good things.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

God for whom we wait,

**in the presence of one another,
we confess our sin before you.**

We fail in believing that your good news is for us.

We falter in our call to tend your creation.

We find our sense of self in material wealth.

We fear those different from ourselves.

**We forget that we are your children
and turn away from your love.
Forgive us, Blessed One,
and assure us again of your saving grace.**

Amen.

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you!
Through the power of the Holy Spirit,
✝ your sins are forgiven.
You are children of the Most High,
inheritors of the eternal promise,
and recipients of divine mercy.
God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4

A reading from Malachi.

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined.

¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Luke 1:68-79

⁶⁸Blessed are you, Lord, the ¹ God of Israel,
you have come to your people and ¹ set them free.

⁶⁹**You have raised up for us a | mighty Savior,
born of the house of your | servant David. R**

⁷⁰Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us | from our enemies,
⁷¹from the hands of | all who hate us,

⁷²**to show mercy | to our forebears,
and to remember your | holy covenant.**

⁷³This was the oath you swore to our | father Abraham:

⁷⁴to set us free from the hands of our | enemies,

**free to worship you | without fear,
⁷⁵holy and righteous before you, all the days | of our life. R**

⁷⁶And you, child, shall be called the prophet of | the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to pre- | pare the way,

⁷⁷**to give God's people knowledge | of salvation
by the forgiveness | of their sins.**

⁷⁸In the tender compassion | of our God
the dawn from on high shall | break upon us,

⁷⁹**to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shad- | ow of death,
and to guide our feet into the | way of peace. R**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

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

⁵Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S TIME

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

A brief silence.

You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. Make our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay preachers confident in their preaching, that their words and our lives witness to your grace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send your Spirit to all living creatures that are endangered. Provide them with shelter and care, and bring us into right relationship with the earth that you create and call good. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to reach out with compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely, or ill (*especially*). Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We remember your saints, both those publicly celebrated and those more humbly remembered. Confident that your work will be completed, we live in faith until the day of your coming. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

PEACE

MEAL

OFFERING

OFFERING MEDITATION MUSIC

OFFERING PRAYER

God of our waiting and watching,
we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives
to the service of all your people.
Prepare the way before us
as we meet you in this simple meal,
through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, the Beginning and the End, our Salvation and our Hope, we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.

When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair, you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.

At this end of the ages your Son Jesus came to bring us your love
and to heal all the suffering world.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
his life, death, and resurrection,
we await his coming again
in righteousness and peace.

Send your Spirit on us
and on this bread and wine we share:
strengthen our faith,
increase our hope,
and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

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

**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

Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION -- IN UNISON

Most High God,
you have come among us at this table.
By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with
all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.
Amen.

SENDING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

The God of hope
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
so that we may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
through Christ Jesus for whom we wait.
Amen.

SENDING SONG

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE --

GOSPEL MESSAGE

December 5, 2021

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Life in the Wilderness

The American Red Cross offers a training called Wilderness and Remote First Aid, during which participants learn skills to be used in case of emergencies such as low blood sugar, hypothermia, and burns when professional help is unavailable or far away. For someone experiencing a health crisis in a wilderness setting, a companion with remote first aid skills can be lifesaving.

When Luke introduces John the Baptist in today's gospel, readers are told that the word of God came to John in the wilderness. The wilderness mentioned here brings to mind a place that is remote, sparsely populated, and rugged. Yet there is a sense of another wilderness being illuminated here as well—the wilderness of a messy world where some have wealth and status while others experience food insecurity, injustice, and homelessness.

It is into this wilderness that John the Baptist proclaims that one is coming through whom “all flesh shall see the salvation of God” (Luke 3:6). Luke's intentional listing of all the authorities in power (vv. 1-2) indicates that he wants readers to know just how different John the Baptist and, more importantly, the one he proclaims are from the rulers of the day.

People were drawn to the message John proclaimed, yet throughout his ministry John was clear that it wasn't about him or his personal agenda but rather the work of God through him. He pointed to the Promised One and to the salvation Jesus offers. Like Jesus, John proclaimed a message that extended to the vulnerable and spoke of caring for our neighbors.

Similarly, as followers of Christ, we are commissioned to go into the wilderness, to bring good news to the little and the least, and to proclaim the work of God in our lives, through both our actions and our words. As we do, we bear witness to the promise that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, the one who leads us from death to life.