



3rd Sunday in Advent
December 17, 2023

Opening Hymn #272
When All the World was Cursed

1. When all the world was cursed
By Moses' condemnation,
Saint John the Baptist came
With words of consolation.
With forerunner's zeal
The Greater One he named,
And Him, as yet unknown,
As Savior he proclaimed.
2. Before he yet was born,
He leaped in joyful meeting,
Confessing Him as Lord
Whose mother he was greeting.
By Jordan's rolling stream,
A new Elijah bold,
He testified of Him
Of whom the prophets told:
3. Behold the Lamb of God
That bears the world's transgression,
Whose sacrifice removes
The Enemy's oppression.
Behold the Lamb of God,
Who beareth all our sin,

Who for our peace and joy
Will full atonement win.

4. Thrice blessed every one
Who heeds the proclamation
Which John the Baptist brought,
Accepting Christ's salvation.
He who believes this truth
And comes with love unfeigned
Has righteousness and peace
In fullest measure gained.

5. Oh, grant, Thou Lord of Love,
That we receive, rejoicing,
The word proclaimed by John,
Our true repentance voicing;
That gladly we may walk
Upon our Savior's way
Until we live with Him
In His eternal day.

Invocation

P: In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen

Confession and Absolution

P: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve Him as His dear children. But we have disobeyed Him and deserve only His wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to Him and plead for His mercy.

C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against You and do not deserve to be called Your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to Your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

P: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, He has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to His will.

C: Amen

Kyrie – sing

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord have mercy on us.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Advent 3

P: *We light three Advent candles remembering Jesus, the Light of the world. He came to defeat the prince of darkness.*

C: **We remember Jesus, who came in answer to his people's prayers. John proclaimed him the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.**

P: *We hear his call to see the light.*

C: **We light three Advent candles as a sign of our trust and confidence.**

P: *Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.*

C: **Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.**

Three Advent candles are lit.

The Shepherd's Candle typifies the act of sharing Christ. In the Lutheran Church, pink instead of violet is permitted as the color of the third Sunday in Advent (*Gaudete* = "Rejoice"). [Jer. 23:3-8]

(To the Tune of "Away in a Manger")

**The flame of these candles
Brings peace to our night,
Reminds us of Jesus
The world's only Light.
The darkness is ending,
Our fears fade away,
For God, his Son sending,
Will dawn Christmas Day.**

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray...

... through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

The First Lesson – Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations....⁸For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

Psalm of the Day – Psalm 126

Antiphon - WS p. 34

Antiphon – You turned my wailing into dancing; I will give You thanks forever.

When the LORD restored the fortunes of | Zion,*
we were like | those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with | laughter,*
and our tongue with | shouts of joy;

then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great | things for them.”*

The LORD has done great things for us; | we are glad.

Restore our fortunes, | O LORD,*
like streams in the | Negeb!

Those who | sow in tears*
shall reap with | shouts of joy!

He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for | sowing,*
shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his | sheaves with him.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Antiphon - You turned my wailing into dancing; I will give You thanks forever.

The Second Lesson – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil. ²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at

the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

The Gospel – John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. . . . ¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ²²So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.” ²⁴(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” ²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” ²⁸These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P: Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it.

The Alleluia – sing

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

These words are written that we may believe

That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Confession of Faith – Apostles’ Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

**and is seated at the right hand of God
the Father almighty.**

**From there He will come to judge
the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Hymn of the Day #60

Hark, a Thrilling Voice is Sounding

1. Hark, a thrilling voice is sounding!

"Christ is nigh!" we hear it say;

"Cast away the works of darkness,

O ye children of the day!"

2. Startled at the solemn warning,

Let the earth-bound soul arise;

Christ, her Sun, all sloth dispelling,

Shines upon the morning skies.

3. Lo, the Lamb, so long expected,

Comes with pardon down from heaven.

Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,

One and all, to be forgiven,

4. That, when next He comes with glory
And the world is wrapped in fear,
He may shield us with His mercy
And with words of love draw near.

5. Honor, glory, might, dominion,
To the Father and the Son,
With the everlasting Spirit,
While eternal ages run!

Sermon Text – Psalm 126

Sermon

In Your Dreams – The Lord Brings Back the Captivity of Zion

<https://ministrybymail.clclutheran.org/archive/2016/12-11-16.htm>

Offertory

5 Oh, come, O Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. [Refrain]

Offering of Thankful Hearts

Prayer of the Church

P: Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

P: Almighty God, You sent John the Baptist to proclaim the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. Grant that we who prepare to celebrate the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ may die to sin and rise to new life, that we may treasure up and ponder in our hearts the Christ announced by Your forerunner.

**¹ The King shall come when morning dawns
And light triumphant breaks,**

**When beauty gilds the eastern hills
And life to joy awakes.**

P: Heavenly Father, be the source of strength and comfort in every home. Bless the children of our families, that every darkness would be lightened by Your Son's gracious visitation. Preserve them from dangers to body and soul, guide them by Your Word in wise paths, and keep them firm in the faith until life's end.

**² Not as of old a little child,
To bear and fight and die,
But crowned with glory like the sun
That lights the morning sky.**

P: Creator of all, many in our midst have been afflicted with pain, sickness, trials and difficulties. Be merciful to those who are close to us, [*especially* _____,] that they may be granted health or strength to endure their afflictions. Help us all to see that when Christ returns in glory, our bodies will be incorruptible and immortal when He makes all things new.

**³ Oh, brighter than the rising morn
When Christ, victorious rose
And left the lonesome place of death
Despite the rage of foes.**

P: Righteous Lord, You rule over all things in heaven and on earth. Until that day when Your Son comes in glory to usher in His kingdom, give wisdom and insight to all leaders, that we may live peaceable lives.

**⁴ Oh, brighter than that glorious morn
Shall dawn upon our race
The day when Christ in splendor comes
And we shall see His face.**

P: Heavenly Father, Your Church eagerly awaits the return of her Bridegroom. Grant that we would not grow weary. Strengthen us through Your Word and Sacraments, that we would ever hold fast Your promise of salvation won for us by Christ.

**⁵ The King shall come when morning dawns
And light and beauty brings.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray:
Come quickly, King of kings!**

P: O Lord, heavenly Father, we gratefully remember the sufferings and death of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, for our salvation. Rejoicing in His victorious resurrection from the dead, we draw strength from His ascension before You, where He ever stands for us as our own High Priest. Gather us together from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers, deliver and preserve us, for to You alone we give all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

The 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.**

Sermon Hymn #371
Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness

1. Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head.

2. Bold shall I stand in that great Day,
For who aught to my charge shall lay?
Fully through these absolved I am
From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

3. The holy, meek, unspotted Lamb,
Who from the Father's bosom came,
Who died for me, e'en me t'atone,
Now for my Lord and God I own.

4. Lord, I believe Thy precious blood,
Which at the mercy-seat of God
Forever doth for sinners plead,
For me--e'en for my soul--was shed.

5. Lord, I believe were sinners more
Than sands upon the ocean shore,
Thou hast for all a ransom paid,
For all a full atonement made.

6. When from the dust of death I rise
To claim my mansion in the skies,
E'en then, this shall be all my plea:
Jesus hath lived and died for me.

7. Jesus, be endless praise to Thee,
Whose boundless mercy hath for me,
For me, and all Thy hands have made,

An everlasting ransom paid.

The Benediction

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

C: Amen

Closing Hymn #66

Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

1. Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne
And every voice a song.

2. He comes the prisoners to release,
In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.

3. He comes from thickest films of vice
To clear the mental ray
And on the eyeballs of the blind
To pour celestial day.

4. He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor.

5. Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With Thy beloved name.

Silent Prayer

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