

The First Sunday in Advent

December 3, 2023

Note: In preparation for this service, you may choose to use an Advent wreath. The Advent wreath has four candles around its circumference. Three of them are blue or purple. One is rose-colored. A white candle is in the middle of the wreath. On the first Sunday in Advent, we light the blue candle directly across from the rose candle. You may choose to light it now or in the service where indicated.

Advent means coming. For the last few weeks, we have been anticipating Jesus' second coming at the end of all time. In the Season of Advent, we prepare to celebrate Christ's first coming while keeping our eyes on Jesus' second coming in triumph and glory. At Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, the crowds recognized the coming of the long-promised King. We know that this King was born in the Royal City of Bethlehem, died and rose again in the Regal City of Jerusalem, and rules heaven and earth for the sake of His faithful people. He will one day come again to judge both the living and the dead.

The Advent of Our King

Lutheran Service Book 331, Lutheran Worship 12, The Lutheran Hymnal 68



- 1 The ad - vent of our King Our prayers must now em - ploy,
2 The ev - er - last - ing Son In - car - nate deigns to be,
3 O Zi - on's daugh - ter, rise To meet your low - ly King,
4 As judge, on clouds of light, He soon will come a - gain



And we must hymns of wel-come sing In strains of ho - ly joy.
Him-self a ser - vant's form puts on To set His ser - vants free.
Nor let your faith - less heart de - spise The peace He comes to bring.
And His true mem - bers all u - nite With Him in heav'n to reign.

- 5 Before the dawning day
Let sin's dark deeds be gone,
The sinful self be put away,
The new self now put on.

- 6 All glory to the Son,
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever one
Through all eternity.

Public domain

L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

L Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C who made heaven and earth. (*Psalm 124:8*)

L Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults.

C Keep your servant also from willful sins; may they not rule over me. (*Psalm 19:12, 13*)

- L** If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord who could stand?
C But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared. (*Psalm 130:3–4*)

L Let us, confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and as His people let us take refuge in His infinite mercy seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, saying:

C God, be merciful to me, a sinner, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen. (*Luke 18:13*)

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH - THE FIRST CANDLE:

L As we light the first candle on our Advent wreath, we confess that Jesus, the wondrous child, is also the Light of the world, who came forth from the Father, conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary as the Prophet Isaiah long ago foretold:

C “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”

Introit Psalm 25:1-3; antiphon Zechariah 9:9b, alt.

L Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation.

C To you, O Lord,
I lift up my soul.

L O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame;
let not my enemies exult over me.

C Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;
they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

L Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest (omitted during the season of Advent)

Collect of the Day

L Let us pray: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Isaiah 64:1–9

- ¹Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at your presence—
²as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
and that the nations might tremble at your presence!
³When you did awesome things that we did not look for,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you,
who acts for those who wait for him.
⁵You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,
those who remember you in your ways.
Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?
⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
⁷There is no one who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.
- ⁸But now, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
⁹Be not so terribly angry, O LORD,
and remember not iniquity forever.
Behold, please look, we are all your people.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

Gradual Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alt.

- L** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.
G Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem.
L Behold, your king is coming to you;
G righteous and having salvation.
L Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
G From the house of the Lord we bless you.

Psalm 80:1-17

- L** ¹Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.
- C** ²**Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come to save us!**
- L** ³Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!
- C** ⁴**O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?**
- L** ⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure.
- C** ⁶**You make us an object of contention for our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh among themselves.**
- L** ⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
- C** **let your face shine, that we may be saved!**

1 Corinthians 1:3–9

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 was given you in Christ Jesus,
⁵that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

- L** This is the Word of the Lord.
- C** Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Psalm 24:7

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia Lift up your heads, O gates! Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Alleluia.

Mark 11:1–10

- L** The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 10th chapter.
- C** Glory to You, O Lord.

¹Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’” ⁴And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. ⁵And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. ⁷And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. ⁸And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. ⁹And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

- L** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C** Praise to You, O Christ.

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And 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 sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.

From thence 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

Savior of the Nations, Come

Lutheran Service Book 332, Lutheran Worship 13, The Lutheran Hymnal 95

“Savior of the Nations, Come” is one of the most ancient hymns in the Church. It is attributed to St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan. He lived from 340 A.D. to April 4, 397. He was a steadfast supporter of the divinity of Christ and opposed all who would make Jesus less than the Son of God.

Our English version comes from Martin Luther’s German translation of this hymn that the Church has been singing for more than 1,600 years. Lutheran Churches have been singing it since 1524 when it appeared in the first Lutheran hymnal together with Luther’s well-known hymns, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God” and “From Heaven Above to Earth I Come.”

Pastor Quardokus



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here Thy home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth. | 4 From the Father forth He came
And returneth to the same;
Captive leading death and hell--,
High the song of triumph swell! |
| 2 Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh—
Woman's offspring, pure and fresh. | 5 Thou, the Father's only Son,,
Hast o'er sin the victory won.
Boundless shall Thy kingdom be;
When shall we its glories see? |
| 3 Wond-drous birth! O won-drous Child,
Of the Vir-gin un-de-filed!
Tho' by all the world dis-owned,
Sill to be in heav'n enthroned. | 6 Brightly doth Thy manger shine,
Glorious is its light divine.
Let not sin o'ercloud this light;
Ever be our faith thus bright.. |

7 Glory to the Father sing,
 Glory to the Son, our king,
 Glory to the Spirit be
 Now and through eternity.

Public domain

Devotional thoughts:

Oops! The Church is out of sync with the world again. How can we hope to survive when we do so many things that are so different and go against good marketing practices?

Everything around you screams, CHRISTMAS! Black Friday, Christmas lights and decorations, Christmas movies, etc. But wait! It's not Christmas yet!

How can we reconcile what is going on around us in the world with what we do in the Church? I have a suggestion. Recognize that there are two separate and distinct holidays happening at this time of year. What makes it confusing is that they are both called Christmas!

Of course, they both began as one holiday, celebrating our Savior's birth. The Church still celebrates and observes this holiday. Over time, another secular holiday arose and in many ways outpaced and overwhelmed the original Christmas story. It still is called Christmas but it's a completely different holiday.

The secular holiday called Christmas still looks a little bit like the Christian holiday and often has parts of the Christmas holiday mixed in but it's not the same holiday. Once I recognized that there are two different holidays at this time of year with the same name, I found that I was better able to cope with the strange reality that we call Christmas in America.

In the Church, Christmas is still more than three weeks away. We anticipate celebrating our savior's birth on December 25. Christmas begins on that day and extends for twelve days until Epiphany on January 6. We use the time from now until then for preparation.

St. Mark records the beginning of Jesus' ministry this way: "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.'" (Mark 1:14-15). This is the first proclamation of Jesus! The long-awaited coming of the kingdom of God is at hand! Repent and believe!

With this admonition of Jesus in mind, Advent began sometime in the 400s as a time of repentance much like Lent. It was not a time of hectic partying and merriment that we find now in the days leading up to the celebration of Christmas.

Sin is a reality that we often refuse to recognize. But it is a reality that we ignore at our own peril. Sin leads to death and despair. The only solution to sin is repentance and faith in Jesus.

In recognition that preparation for Christmas includes repentance, the color associated with Advent in the Church was purple. It was the same color that we use for Lent. However, about 50 years ago, it was thought that maybe Advent was too much like Lent so the focus shifted a little. Repentance is still important but now we want to concentrate a little more on the idea of hope. To help us recognize this shift, the color of Advent in the Church is now blue.

Advent is a season of the Church Year when we can pull everything together in one nice package. It includes the Old Testament. The time of the Old Testament was an extended period of preparation for the long-awaited Kingdom of God! It was a very long Advent Season. It included calls for repentance and prophecies of the coming savior. It was a time of anticipation filled with hope. Advent is a time for us to reflect on all of those themes from the Old Testament.

Advent is a season for reliving the events leading to Jesus' birth and ministry. We remember John the Baptist and his preparation for the coming King. We hear again his pleas for repentance as he called for the king's highways to be made straight and level.

Advent is a time to reflect on the coming of King Jesus into David's capital city of Jerusalem! We hear again the adoring crowds shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!" on Palm Sunday at the beginning of Holy Week. Yet by Friday, Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem ended with Him on the cross forsaken by God and man. It

ended with Jesus fulfilling the words of John the Baptist, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.” This and every Advent we remember that Jesus has taken away our sin and opened for us the Kingdom of Heaven.

Advent is a time to pause and remember that we live in the time when we await Christ’s return at His second coming. Our days here on earth are short compared to eternity. Like the hairs on our heads, they are all numbered. We are waiting for Him to come and call us to be with Him for all eternity in heaven. This is our ultimate anticipation of Advent.

I believe that as God’s children, we are free to participate in and enjoy the world’s secular holiday called Christmas. Yet, as God’s children, I pray that we do not become deaf to Jesus’ call for repentance. I pray that we will use the days ahead to pause and prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews who began His life in Bethlehem, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. I pray that at His coming, we will join with the multitude in shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!” I pray that when Jesus comes again to call us home that we will join the angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven to live with our Savior and King forever and ever. Amen.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

Lutheran Service Book 357, Lutheran Worship 31, The Lutheran Hymnal 62

Stanza 1

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive

Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here

Refrain
Un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice!

Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Prayers

L Gracious Lord, sustain Your saints to the end as we enter another Church Year. Prosper the proclamation of Your Word that the testimony about Christ may be confirmed among us and throughout the world as we wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

L Lord Jesus, our great and glorious king, prepare our hearts during this Advent season to make straight the way of the Lord is all of our thoughts, words, and deeds.

C Amen.

L Lord, as we celebrate participate in secular Christmas celebrations, help us never to lose sight of the baby born in Bethlehem to be the Savior of all humanity.

C Amen.

L Heavenly Father, bless the homes of Your people, that parents may train their children with wisdom and love that children may know Your love and the salvation You have granted to them through faith in Your beloved Son, Jesus.

C Amen.

L O God of peace, during this time of war in the ancient land of Israel and in Ukraine, we pray that You would grant a swift end to the conflict, that right and justice would prevail, and that You would grant Your mighty hand of protection to the innocent and helpless.

C Amen.

L Righteous God, You give leaders to every nation and people. Grant us good and wise public servants to defend the innocent and punish evil. Guard those who protect us, especially our armed forces, police, and firefighters.

C Amen.

L Visit us in Your compassion, O Lord. Deliver the sick from their infirmity, the troubled from their afflictions, the grieving from their sorrow and the dying from their fear. May all who cry to You receive grace according to Your will.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas with true repentance and faith during this Advent season and always.

C Amen.

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

C 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.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

Hark the Glad Sound

Lutheran Service Book 349, Lutheran Worship 29, The Lutheran Hymnal 66



1 Hark the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Thy wel - come



prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare a
bond - age held. The gates of brass be - fore Him
soul to cure, And with the trea - sures of His
shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal arch - es



throne And ev - 'ry voice a song.
burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.
grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.
ring With Thy be - lov - ed name.

Public domain

The Gospel According to Mark

As we begin a new Church Year, we also begin reading the Gospel of St. Mark. The Gospel of Mark emphasizes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus announced the Kingdom of God, healed the sick, and died as a ransom for sinners. In addition to Jesus, Mark features three main groups of people: the disciples, the crowds, and the religious leaders, none of whom understood Jesus. When the time came for Jesus to go to the cross, the religious leaders arrested him, the disciples abandoned him, and the crowds jeered him. Only when He died alone on the cross did a Roman centurion recognize that He is the Son of God.

Tradition identifies John Mark (Acts 12:12) as the author of the Gospel. He may have based his Gospel on Peter's preaching, writing sometime in the 50s or 60s A.D. To enhance your spiritual journey this Church Year, please consider sitting down and reading The Gospel According to Mark from beginning to end.

Adapted from the ESV Introduction to Mark

Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Some liturgical portions are adapted from Lutheran Service Book © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. Lutheran Service Book License: 10002731 Christ Lutheran Church, Stevensville, Michigan

Hymns are in the public domain. The remainder of this work including adaptations and the Devotional thoughts © 2023 Philip G. Quardokus. All rights reserved.

Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Week of The First Sunday in Advent December 4 - 9, 2023

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you meditate on what God has done for you.

Monday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Psalm 24:7

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia Lift up your heads, O gates! Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Alleluia.

Introit Psalm 25:1-3; antiphon Zechariah 9:9b, alt.

- L** Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation.
C To you, O Lord,
I lift up my soul.
L O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame;
let not my enemies exult over me.
C Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;
they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.
C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
L Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation.

Kyrie

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Christ, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |

The introit begins with a portion of Zechariah 9:9. Here is the entire verse:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

This is a remarkable prophecy of Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Historically, Advent begins with the reading of the Palm Sunday account recorded in Matthew. This year we hear it from Mark.

What is significant for us is that this coming righteous King comes with salvation for us! We might normally expect a king to come and rule over us. Every four years, our country experiences difficult and wearisome elections to determine who will rule over us. We soon discover how much money the government will demand from us and how it will spend our taxes. We may be told that it is for our own good. The government may even pretend to be saving us but we know this is not true.

Only King Jesus came to bring salvation. He did this humbly without any demands made upon His subjects. Only King Jesus went to the cross to pay for our sins, not with gold or silver but with His holy, precious blood. Only King Jesus offers us paradise without any charge or cost but purely by grace! Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

L Let us pray. O King Jesus, thank You for coming to bring salvation for us and all believers. Grant that we may use this Advent time to prepare our hearts for You with repentance and faith..

Tuesday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Psalm 24:7

L Alleluia, Alleluia Lift up your heads, O gates! Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen

I can never pray the "Stir up" collects of Advent without thinking of Father Clark Day. He was the Anglican Priest in Ignace, Ontario when I first arrived there straight out of seminary to serve Faith Lutheran Church.

Clark was also a freshly minted clergyman. He was slightly older than I me. He had served as a teacher before attending seminary. We soon became very good friends. It was Clark who first alerted me to the fact that three of the four collects of Advent begin with the words "Stir up."

During this first week in Advent, we ask God to “Stir up” His power in our lives. We pray for His coming because only by Jesus coming in power can we be saved from sin, death, and the devil.

When Jesus first came into the world it was a different place. Caesar Augustus was emperor of Rome. Herod the Great was ruling in Judea. The entire world seemed to be in darkness. But God stirred up His power! He sent Gabriel to the Virgin Mary in Nazareth to announce the coming birth of our Savior! And as they say, “The rest is history.”

God continues to stir up His power today. It matters not who is emperor or king! God comes into our lives with grace and forgiveness. He grants to us eternal life through faith in His Son, Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

Prayer: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Psalm 24:7

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia Lift up your heads, O gates! Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Alleluia.

Kyrie

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Christ, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |

Psalm 80:1-17

- L** ¹Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock!
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.
- C** ²**Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh, stir up your might and come to save us!**
- L** ³Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved!
- C** ⁴**O LORD God of hosts, how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?**
- L** ⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears and given them tears to drink in full measure.
- C** ⁶**You make us an object of contention for our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh among themselves.**
- L** ⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
- C** **let your face shine, that we may be saved!**

Yesterday, we considered the first words of the collect, “Stir up Your power.” Today, we see that these words come from Psalm 80 verse 2, “stir up your might and come to save us!”

This time of year brings many demands on our time and energy. We are easily distracted by the world's take on Christmas as a time to bring out the best in people. This is all well and good! But we must never lose focus on the most important aspect of Advent and Christmas, salvation!

I had an aunt who always sent very nice Christmas cards until her death. We also always remembered her with our cards. Our cards always included the message of salvation. Hers always were secular. She always celebrated Christmas but sad to say she never believed in God!

May we return to the Good Shepherd who always welcomes back the straying sheep that we may dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Prayer: Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved! Let Your face shine upon us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Thursday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Psalm 24:7

L Alleluia, Alleluia Lift up your heads, O gates! Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Isaiah 64:1–9

¹Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at your presence—

²as when fire kindles brushwood
and the fire causes water to boil—

to make your name known to your adversaries,
and that the nations might tremble at your presence!

³When you did awesome things that we did not look for,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

⁴From of old no one has heard
or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you,
who acts for those who wait for him.

⁵You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,
those who remember you in your ways.
Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?

⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf,
and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

⁷There is no one who calls upon your name,
who rouses himself to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.

⁸But now, O LORD, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

⁹Be not so terribly angry, O LORD,
and remember not iniquity forever.
Behold, please look, we are all your people.

Our Old Testament lesson this week from Isaiah 64 is a reminder of the Advent theme of repentance. Judgment awaits all those who refuse to repent and continue to live in their sins.

Why do some refuse to repent? They assume that they have no need for repentance. After all, most of us can find someone who is a worse sinner than we are.

Our nation is divided. It appears that those in one party consider those in the other party to be evil. Since I am in the proper party, I have no need of repentance. Or at least it seems that some think this way.

Isaiah 64:6 gives us a proper perspective on all of this: “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (KJV). When we look to make a comparison, we ought to be looking at God and His righteousness. In this light, we all fall short. There is none that doeth good, no, not one!

We know that God will someday bring this world to an end in judgment. Now is the time to repent! God has taken away His judgment and anger. In Christ, you are a forgiven child of God. Let Advent be a time for us to return to the Lord our God!

Prayer: Mercifully hear, O Lord, the prayers of Your people, that, as they rejoice in the advent of Your only-begotten Son born in Bethlehem, so also when He comes a second time in His majesty, may they receive the gift of eternal life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Friday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Psalm 24:7

L Alleluia, Alleluia Lift up your heads, O gates! Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord,	C Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ,	C Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord,	C Have Mercy on us.

1 Corinthians 1:3–9

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 was given you in Christ Jesus, ⁵that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge— ⁶even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— ⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ⁸who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

I vaguely recall a television commercial with the line, “Now the hard part. Wait 5 minutes.” I couldn’t discover the exact quote or the commercial. Nevertheless, the concept is the same. Waiting can be the hard part.

Originally, when people were tested for Covid-19, they had to wait several days for the results. I know that this was hard. Or maybe you have to wait for the results of a biopsy or some other medical test. It is equally hard to wait for good things. For children, the longest night of the year is the night before Christmas.

It is not in our nature to wait. However, Advent is a time of waiting. We are waiting for a good thing. We are waiting for the time when Jesus will come again and take us to be with Him in heaven.

He knew that this would be a difficult time. That is why He sent the Holy Spirit to be with us and strengthen us in faith until He calls us to be with Him for all eternity.

During this time of waiting and expectation, fill your life with God's word. Learn again of His love for you in Christ. Increase your production of the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

"Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14 NIV).

Prayer: Lord Jesus, Your mother, Mary and Your earthly father, Joseph, waited for Your birth. All the Old Testament people waited for the fulfillment of prophecy, grant that we also may wait with patience for Your second coming. Amen.

Saturday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Gradual Revelation 7:14; Psalm 84:5

L These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation.

C They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

L Blessed are those whose strength is in you,

C in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

Verse of the Day: Psalm 24:7

L Alleluia, Alleluia Lift up your heads, O gates! Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Mark 11:1–10

¹Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples ²and said to them, "Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³If anyone says to you, 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.'"⁴And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. ⁵And some of those standing there said to them, "What are you doing, untying the colt?" ⁶And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. ⁷And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. ⁸And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. ⁹And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"

God granted me the opportunity to walk down the Mount of Olives to the Kidron Valley. This approximated the path that Jesus took on Palm Sunday. The route down the mountain is much steeper than I had imagined from seeing pictures and maps. There is nothing like experiencing it. If you haven't been there,

I hope that you will be able to go someday.

What I also realized is that there was no need for Jesus to be on a donkey to go down this path. In fact, maybe it would have been easier to walk!

Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey? It was to fulfill the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation is he,

humble and mounted on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

We still today rejoice at the coming King, the Advent of our God. He came humbly and having salvation. We know what the Palm Sunday crowds did not. King Jesus' humility meant that He was riding to His death on the cross to bring salvation to sinners.

May we also rejoice and sing, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"

Prayer: O Lord God, grant that we may use the Advent time to prepare our hearts to receive our King who comes in the name of the Lord. Amen.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from are from The ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Enhancing Your Worship © 2023 Philip G. Quardokus. All rights reserved.