



Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 6, 2020

Gathering in God's Presence

Prelude — “Comfort, Comfort Now My People”

Setting by Jayne Southwick Cool
Lauren Shoemaker, flute

Gathering Hymn — no. 249

“On Jordan's Banks the Baptist's Cry”



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
way for God with - in, and let us all our
and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. composite

Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621

Welcome

Prayer of Confession for Advent

O God, you search us out and know us,
and all that we are is open to you.

We confess that we have sinned:

**In your mercy, Lord,
forgive us and heal us.**

When we scoff at those who await your return,
and live as though you were never here:

**In your mercy, Lord,
forgive us and heal us.**

When we long for your coming to change the world,
and yet are unwilling to change even our own hearts:

**In your mercy, Lord,
forgive us and heal us.**

When we do not make straight paths for justice,
nor offer a welcome when you come as a stranger:

In your mercy, Lord,

forgive us and heal us.

When we dismiss prophets and angels
and refuse to nourish your seed within us:

**In your mercy, Lord,
forgive us and heal us.**

When we reduce our preparation for your
coming

to reckless expense and trivialities:

**In your mercy, Lord,
forgive us and heal us.**

We turn to you,

O God of infinite mercy;

We renounce evil;

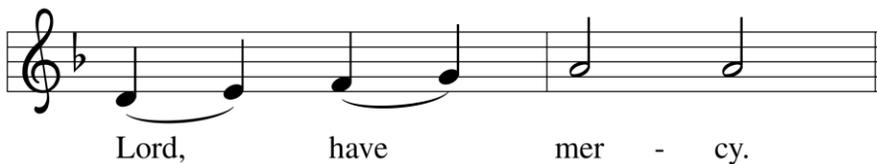
We claim your love;

We choose to be made whole.

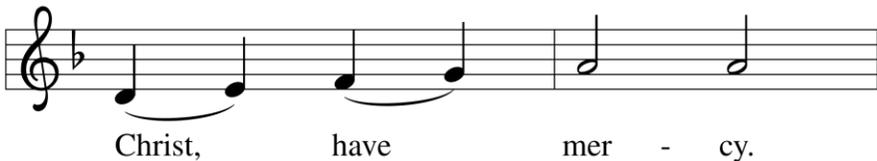
Kyrie — FLC Liturgy for Advent

“Turn to Us Again”

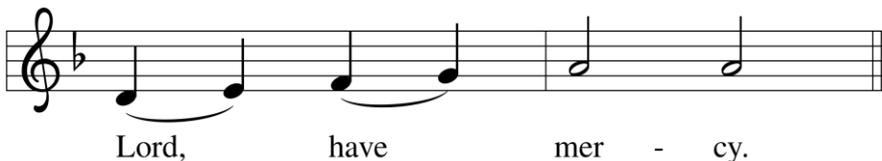
Turn to us again, O God our Savior. Send to us your gift of Love. Lord, have mercy.



Show us your compassion, O God our Lord, grant us your salvation. Christ, have mercy.

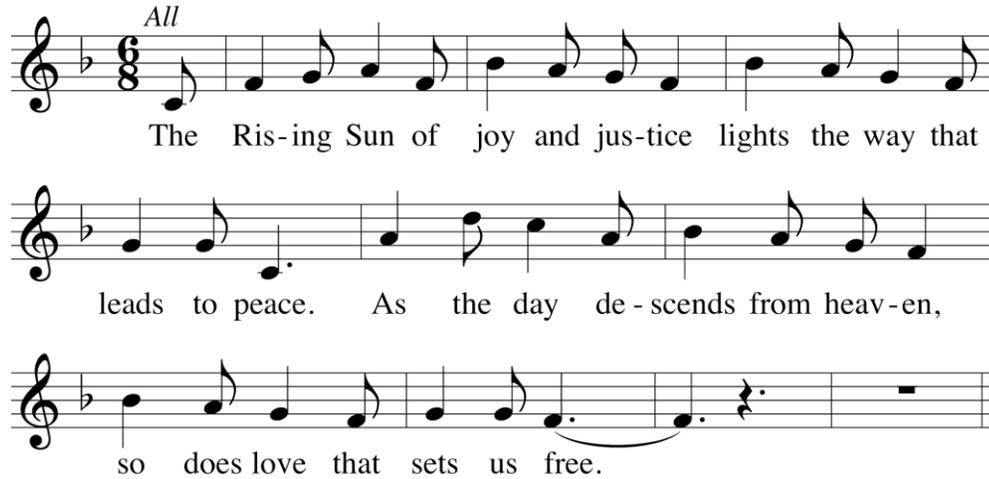


Come and bring salvation; we wait, O God; may your glory dwell in us. Lord, have mercy.



Refrain

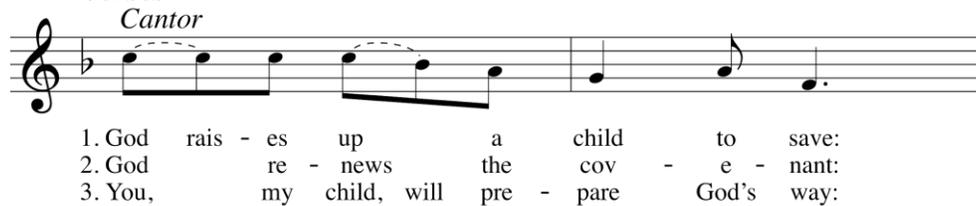
All



The Ris-ing Sun of joy and jus-tice lights the way that
leads to peace. As the day de-scends from heav-en,
so does love that sets us free.

Verses

Cantor



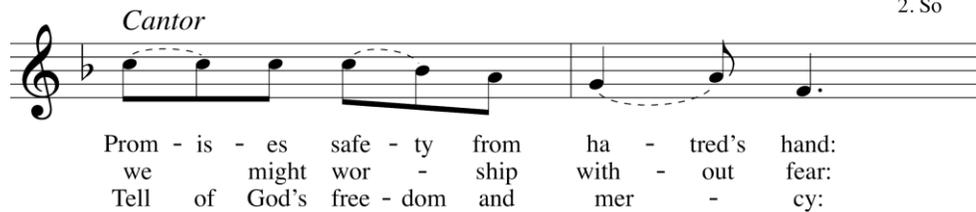
1. God rais - es up a child to save:
2. God re - news the cov - e - nant:
3. You, my child, will pre - pare God's way:

All



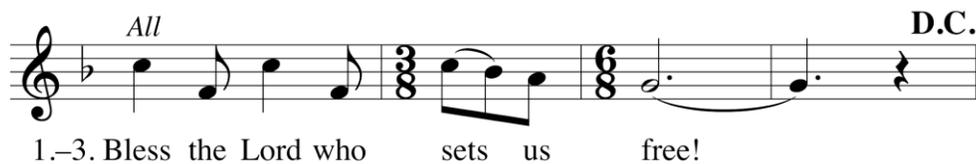
1.-3. Bless the Lord, bless the Lord! *2. So*

Cantor



Prom - is - es safe - ty from ha - tred's hand:
we might wor - ship with - out fear:
Tell of God's free - dom and mer - cy:

All **D.C.**



1.-3. Bless the Lord who sets us free!

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.
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.**

Hearing & Responding to God's Word

A Reading from Hebrew Scriptures — Isaiah 40:1-11

¹Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
²Speak 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.

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

⁴Every 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.

⁵Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

⁶A voice says, "Cry out!"
And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
⁷The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
⁸The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.
⁹Get 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!"
¹⁰See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
¹¹He 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.

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

Tone



Refrain



¹You have been gracious to your | land, O Lord;
you have restored the good for- | tune of Jacob.
²**You have forgiven the iniquity | of your people
and blotted out | all their sins.**
⁸I 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.
⁹**Truly, your salvation is very near to | those who fear
you,
that your glory may dwell | in our land. R**

¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have | met together;
righteousness and peace have | kissed each
other.
**¹¹Faithfulness shall spring up | from the earth,
and righteousness shall look | down from
heaven.**
¹²The Lord will indeed | grant prosperity,
and our land will | yield its increase.
**¹³Righteousness shall go be- | fore the Lord
and shall prepare for | God a pathway. R**

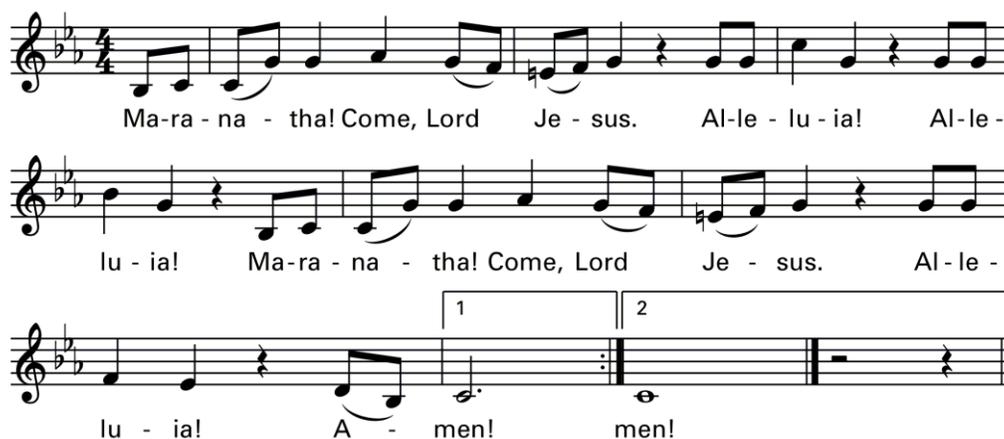
A Reading from the Epistles — 2 Peter 3:8-15a

8Do 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. 9The 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. 10But 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.

11Since 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, 12waiting 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? 13But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

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

Gospel Acclamation — *FLC Liturgy for Advent*



Ma-ra - na - tha! Come, Lord Je - sus. Al-le - lu - ia! Al-le - lu - ia!
lu - ia! Ma-ra - na - tha! Come, Lord Je - sus. Al - le - lu - ia!
lu - ia! A - men! men!

Gospel — Mark 1:1-8

The Gospel of the Lord according to the 1st chapter of Mark.

Glory to you, O Lord.

1The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

2As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

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

3the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

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

4John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5And 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. 6Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7He 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. 8I 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 Grand Miracle: The Great Enters the Little”

Interim Pastor Bill Nelsen

Hymn — no. 255

“There’s a Voice in the Wilderness”



1 There's a voice in the wil - der - ness cry - ing, a
2 O Je - ru - sa - lem, her - ald good tid - ings, as -
3 But the word of our Sav - ior is faith - ful, the



call from the ways un - trod: Pre - pare in the des - ert a
cend to the heights and sing! Pro - claim to a des - o - late
arm of our God is strong, who stands in the midst of the



high - way, a high - way for our God!
peo - ple the com - ing of their king.
na - tions and soon will right the wrong.



The val - leys shall be ex - alt - ed, the
Like flow'rs of the field we per - ish, like
Lord, feed your flock like a shep - herd, the



loft - y hills brought low; make straight all the crook - ed
grass our works de - cay; the pow'r and the pomp of
lambs so gent - ly hold; in pas - tures of peace now



plac - es where God, our God, may go!
na - tions shall pass like a dream a - way.
lead them, and bring them to your fold.

Affirmation of Faith — *an Advent Creed*

We believe in God the Creator, maker of heaven and earth.

The one who is full of patience,

who is not afraid of silence,

who does not need to fill each moment with activity and noise.

The one who is beyond bluster and flurry,

and who does not jostle for attention.

We believe in God the Son, Savior of creation,

who slipped into Bethlehem one night, mostly unnoticed,

who lived thirty years without headlines or hurry,

who frequently took time alone with his patient Abba,

who waited for the right time to become the suffering servant,

who stood quietly before the noise of his accusers,

whose silence overpowered their words,

who died, then rose again on a quiet Sunday morning.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,

who strengthens, empowers, renews and refreshes,

sometimes arriving with obvious power,

sometimes with the quiet breath of a whisper.

We believe in one God

who patiently waits for us,

and who longs for us to do the same.

Prayers of Intercession

O Lord, hear our prayer, O Lord, hear our prayer. Mar - a -
na - tha! Mar-a - na - tha! O come, Lord Je - sus, come.

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

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. 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. We pray now for Marion Peterson and all others on our hearts, aloud or in silence. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work. 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 Lord's Prayer

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.

Offering

Please remember to give financially to support our ministry.

You can write a check and mail it to the church office or give online at <https://tithe.ly/give?c=283920>.

Departing to Serve God's World

Announcements

Sending Hymn — no.239

“Hark, the Glad Sound!”



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, your wel - come



prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -
bond - age held. The gates of brass be -
soul to cure, and with the trea - sures
shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal



pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.
fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751
Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820

Closing Litany

If you choose,
you can be instruments of hope in the world.

**We so choose,
so we go to spread the hope and promise of a coming child.**

If you choose,
you can counter the voices of anxiety and despair in the world.

**We so choose,
so we sing songs of hope because the world can be changed**

If you choose,
you can fight against the fear that freezes the heart of many.

**We so choose,
so we will tell of the love that conquers fear,
the love of a child in a manger.**

The choice is ours to make,
how we live into the possibilities of Christmas,
**the beauty is that we do not live out the choice
by our own strength.**

Go with God,
who feeds our hopes and quiets our fears
Always and everywhere. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace, prepare the way for the Grand Miracle. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude — “Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

Setting by Mark Hayes

Acknowledgements

From sundaysandseasons.com. © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted and broadcast by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SASo20319.

“Prayer of Confession for Advent” by Nathan Nettleton, laughingbird.net, <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/11/advent-confession.html>
“Advent Creed” by Dave Hopwood, © Dave Hopwood/engageworship.org. Posted on Area 52/Engage Worship. [https://engageworship.org/Closing Litany “If You Choose”](https://engageworship.org/Closing%20Litany%20If%20You%20Choose) by Rev. Gord, <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2013/08/adventchristmas-litany-if-you-choose.html>

Words and music of hymns and worship songs under copyright are reprinted and broadcast using OneLicense #A-724285.

“Turn to Us Again” by Ryan Hosler, © 2013 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Permission granted to reprint for local, non-sale use.

“The Rising Sun” by Tony Alonso, © 2004 GIA Publications, Inc. All rights reserved.

“Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus” by Janet Sullivan Whitaker, © 2002 OCP Publications. All rights reserved.

“Advent Prayer Response” by Daniel Schwandt, © 2013 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Permission granted to reprint for local, non-sale use.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

Pastor/Presider: Pastor Bill Nelsen

Cantor: Emily Bruflat

Lector/Assistant: Barb Wilkinson

Liturgy: Bonse Aba Singers

Musician: Lauren Shoemaker

Announcements:

Theme for Advent Sermons: Pastor Bill will be continuing the theme of getting ready for “The Grand Miracle” in the sermons for the Sunday worship Services during this Advent season. It is so important that we focus on the messages of love, caring, and readiness to have God enter our lives in the days ahead.

Annual Congregation Meeting: As many of you know, First Lutheran’s Constitution requires a Congregation meeting to be held on the first Sunday in December. The Constitution also requires a notice of the meeting to be given at the services of worship on the preceding two consecutive Sundays and by mail or electronic means to all voting members at least 10 days in advance of the date of the meeting. This Congregational meeting will be held on **Sunday, December 6, 2020, at 11:00am via Zoom**. The purpose of the December meeting is the election of new Congregation Council members and the adoption of a budget for the following year. In addition to these two required items, the Council is proposing three amendments to the Constitution. Such amendments must be approved by a majority vote of those voting members present and voting at a Congregation meeting and then be ratified without change at the next annual meeting by a two-thirds vote of those voting members present and voting. Details on these three items and how the Zoom meeting will be conducted will be included in the mailed notice. If you have any questions, please contact any member of the Church Council.

National Lutheran Choir Christmas Festival comes to audiences **FREE** in a virtual, multi-media format on December 11. *The Incarnation: For the Healing of the World* brings music from around the globe announcing the birth of Christ with messages of peace and joy that nothing – not even a pandemic – can take away. **Friday, December 11, 2020 – 8pm (CST) @ NLCA.com**. *This online presentation is FREE for all.*

Pastor's Emergency Fund: The people of First Lutheran have been generous in making funds available for helping people with special needs in our community, especially resulting from the difficulties caused by Covid-19. Recently we have been able to help three families with special needs. If you know of an individual or a family who has need of some emergency relief funds or other help at this time, let me know. You can send an email to pastorflcstp@gmail.com or send me a note, or call me at 507-327-2149. Pastor Bill

Return of Estimate of Giving Cards: Thanks to everyone who recently returned your "Estimate of Giving Cards" as a result of the second reminder mailing to those who had not done so to date. Your response is so important to our church at this time, as we prepare plans and budgets for next year in order to answer God's call to serve our congregation, our community, and the vital work of our larger church throughout the world.

Christmas Opportunities: While our Christmas worship will look different this year, Emily is working hard to bring joyous Christmas music into our festive celebrations. She is hoping to put together a virtual Christmas Choir! If you have an interest in participating in such a special occasion, email her at musicflcstp@gmail.com by November 29th.

Twelve Days of Family: FLC invites you to let us into your home this holiday season by sharing with us a holiday tradition (e.g. singing a song, cooking a meal, decorating, making a snow person, etc.) of yours! Sign up, record your tradition, and submit it to Calleigh. All videos will be organized and released on our Facebook page throughout the Twelve Days leading up to Christmas! For more information email Calleigh, cc.flcstp@gmail.com.

Prayer Concerns: We are called to remember one another in prayer. We lift up prayers of healing for Marion Peterson and all others we lift up in our personal prayers this week. We also pray for the families of Robert Peterson, Lee Landgrebe (mother of Sue Peterson), Marjorie Riebesell (mother of Bill {Linda} Riebesell) and Merle Bruflat (grandfather of Emily Bruflat) as they mourn the loss of loved ones.