

Worship Plan for Sunday, December 20, 2020
3rd Sunday of Advent **40th** Sunday of Quarantide

Advent Call to Worship (Inspired by Isaiah 61)

This Advent, we hope and pray:
for Joy as we journey together,
for Sight for the blind and healing for the sick,
for Freedom for the prisoners and good news for the poor,
for Release for the oppressed with justice for all
and love for each other.
And the coming of God's upside-down Kingdom,
where Peace shall be known among the nations,
where the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up from all the earth.

GATHERING SONG *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (JEFFERSON)* (ELW 254)



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.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

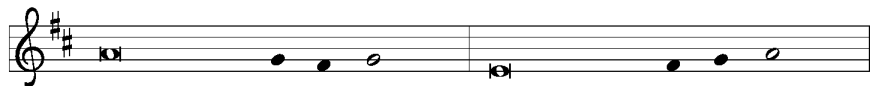
FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-11

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³to provide for those who mourn in Zion — to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
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.

⁵Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines;
⁶but you shall be called priests of the LORD, you shall be named ministers of our God;
you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory.
⁷Because their shame was double, and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot,
therefore they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs.

⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being 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 with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

PSALM: Psalm 126



¹When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion,
then were we like | those who dream.
²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with | shouts of joy.**
Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great | things for them.”
³The LORD has done great | things for us,
and we are | glad indeed.
⁴**Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD,**
like the watercourses | of the Negeb. R
⁵Those who | sowed with tears
will reap with | songs of joy.
⁶**Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed,**
will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves. R

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 188)

The image shows a musical score for a two-part setting of 'Wait for the Lord'. It consists of two systems of music. The first system has a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (bass clef). The lyrics are 'Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.' The second system also has a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!'. The music is in the key of D major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The piano part features a steady bass line with chords that support the vocal melody.

Text: Taizé Community
Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994
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SECOND READING: 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 the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

GOSPEL: John 1:1-8, 19-28

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for 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.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among

you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing. The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY *Lost in the Night* (ELW 243)



1 Lost in the night do the peo - ple yet lan - guish,
2 Must we be vain - ly a - wait - ing the mor - row?
3 Sor - row - ing wan - d'ers, in dark - ness yet dwell - ing,
4 Light o'er the land of the need - y is beam - ing;



long - ing for morn - ing the dark - ness to van - quish,
Shall those who have light no light let us bor - row,
dawned has the day of a ra - diance ex - cel - ling,
riv - ers of life through its des - erts are stream - ing,



plain - tive - ly sigh - ing with hearts full of an - guish.
giv - ing no heed to our bur - den of sor - row?
death's deep - est shad - ows for - ev - er dis - pel - ling.
bring - ing all peo - ples a Sav - ior re - deem - ing.



Will not day come soon?	Will not day come soon?
Will you help us soon?	Will you help us soon?
Christ is com - ing soon!	Christ is com - ing soon!
Come and save us soon!	Come and save us soon!

Text: Nordic hymn; tr. Olav Lee, 1859–1943, alt.
Music: LOST IN THE NIGHT, Finnish folk tune
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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION (PRAYED FROM HOME BY ZOOM PARTICIPANTS)

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

A brief silence.

Advent God, as we draw closer to the day of your Son's birth, help us look for your coming among us. May we look for the places you are present, both in the signs we expect and in the light, but also in the beauty of quiet and in darkness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm (*survivors of recent natural disasters may be named*). Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love (*especially Lucy, martyr of the church*). Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. 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.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

(We give give thanks to God for caring for us and for your gifts to support the church.)

God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant.

Amen..

THE SHARING OF PEACE

HOLY COMMUNION

At this time you would prepare your own 'Lord's Table' with the food and drink you have prepared to be the Body and Blood of Christ for us

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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.

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 112)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

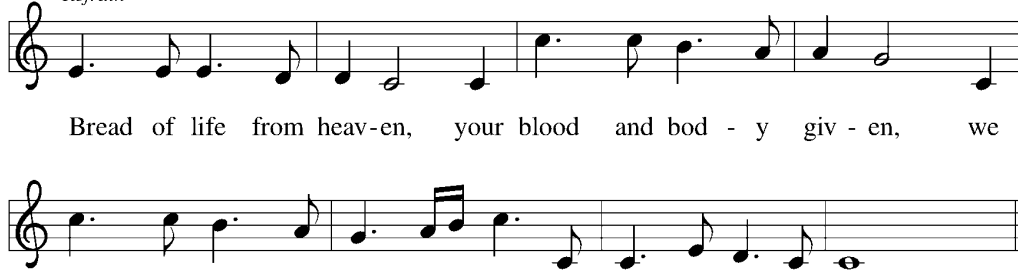
INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Friends of Jesus, know that Christ is with you at your table. Receive nourishment for your journey. For this food is for us the Body and Blood of Christ, given and shed for you.

(At this time you are invited to receive communion, having heard the words of Christ's promise in this meal. If you are with someone else you can commune one another with the words "Body of Christ, given for you" and "Blood of Christ, shed for you". If you are alone, you have heard them from the pastor.)

SONG AFTER COMMUNION *Bread of Life from Heaven*, (ELW 474, chorus only, repeated)

Refrain



Bread of life from heav-en, your blood and bod - y giv - en, we
eat this bread and drink this cup un - til you come a - gain.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the chorus, and the second staff contains the melody for the second line. The lyrics are written below the notes.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us with food beyond compare, the body and blood of Christ. Nourished and forgiven, may we follow our calling to wipe away the tears of all who hunger and thirst, guided by the example of the same Jesus Christ and led by the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG *It Came upon the Midnight Clear* (ELW 282)



1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,
3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,



from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow:
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,



“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king.”
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,
look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,



The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!
and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810–1876
Music: CAROL, Richard S. Willis, 1819–1900

BENEDICTION: BLESSED ARE YOU WHO BEAR THE LIGHT (based on John 1)

Blessed are you who bear the light in unbearable times,
who testify to its endurance amid the unendurable,
who bear witness to its persistence when everything seems in shadow and grief.

Blessed are you
in whom the light lives, in whom the brightness blazes—
your heart a chapel, an altar where in the deepest night can be seen the fire that shines forth in you
in unaccountable faith, in stubborn hope, in love that illumines every broken thing it finds.

—Jan Richardson

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Call to Worship adapted from one posted on Third Space. <http://third-space.org.uk/>

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