

November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – First Sunday of Advent

## Introduction to the Day

Advent is about the “coming days.” God’s people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a “righteous Branch to spring up for David.” The Thessalonians awaited “the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.” Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for the time “to stand before the Son of Man.” With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.

### Lighting of the Advent Candle – Hope has a Home Here

Leader: We light a candle in HOPEful anticipation

**All: To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. My God, I put my trust in you.**

Leader: Where we feel inadequate

**All: God, let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

Leader: God, let the HOPE that is the Christ Child dwell in us.

**All: God, let your HOPE have a home in us.**

### Gathering Song

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

#264 vs. 1-3

### Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### Lesson – Jeremiah 33:14-16

<sup>14</sup>The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. <sup>15</sup>In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. <sup>16</sup>In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

### Children’s Message

### Gospel – John 18:33-37

[Jesus said:] <sup>25</sup>“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. <sup>26</sup>People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. <sup>27</sup>Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. <sup>28</sup>Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

<sup>29</sup>Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; <sup>30</sup>as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. <sup>31</sup>So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. <sup>32</sup>Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. <sup>33</sup>Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

<sup>34</sup>“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup>like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

## Message

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

It truly is somewhat difficult to believe that the season of Advent is upon us. Perhaps it is because we are still in November. Perhaps it is the lack of snow. Perhaps it is that over the last 21 months we have completely lost track of time. Who knows?

But, could there be a more appropriate text for the times we find ourselves in, both in the world AND the church calendar?

Our Gospel text speaks of the distress that the world is feeling. There will be distress among nations. Unexplainable roaring of seas and other natural disasters will have people confused. Fear and foreboding of what is coming to the world will have people fainting and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.

We can relate. Distress among nations. Fear and foreboding of what is taking place. Sound familiar?

And it is that unsettling time, those unsettling feels, that the Son of Man will come with power and great glory. And it is in the promise of that the Gospel of Luke calls us to stand up and raise our heads, for our redemption draws near.

And then he tells them a parable. Look at the fig tree. When it sprouts its leaves, you know that Summer is near. At the same time, when you see the trouble of the world you must know that God is near. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

Jesus gives the hearers of this word a message of hope in the face of turmoil and distress. And he goes on.

Jesus calls those who are listening to be attentive to what is taking place. Do not sit idly by but be on guard. Don't let your heart be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and don't be caught off guard. Be prepared. Be hopeful. For in the end we will stand before the son of man.

This is real easy for Jesus to say, being the Son of Man and all. Wholly God-like and wholly human would be real nice in times like these.

But Jesus does indeed call us to not live in fear, to be prepared, and in times that feel hopeless, be filled with the HOPE that is the love of Christ.

I, personally, am a hopeful person. 99% of the time I will look at a situation through rose colored glasses. And, being an adapter, the times that things don't work out, a new way is figured out.

But, the 1% of the time when I am less than hopeful is usually right before something big takes place. It will be moments before something big, and for a time, that hopeful feeling will be replaced with a what if.

That is simply the way that I am wired, and I know that not all of our wiring is like mine. I know we are not all wired to be 99% HOPEful. And so does God.

People of God, the beauty of this Advent season is that no matter where we are at in our faith journey, our life journey, and whatever other journey there might be, God comes in and God makes a home.

No matter what the world may look like, or how much fear has taken over, God comes in and makes a home.

In the seemingly HOPEless of situations, God makes a dwelling place. The HOPEless moments are broken open with the HOPEful anticipation of the Christ Child's arrival at Christmas.

The truth is, you may not be there. And that is okay.

You may not feel that you are a dwelling place fit for the Christchild. And that is okay.

You may feel that your life and your story is nothing that God would want to be a part of. And that is okay.

A mentor of mine in Seminary, Preaching Professor David Lose, gave me the best advice I've ever received shortly before Olivia was born, and it was this: "Take no advice." Thankfully there is a difference between advice, and hearing a word of hope.

This is our truth as people of faith: It is not up to us. As children of God washed in the waters of baptism, we are given an unerasable mark, a mark that marks a home for a Savior, the Messiah, whether we like it or not, are prepared for it or not, know it or not, and believe it or not.

This Advent let us be filled with the HOPE of Christ. Preparing in the promise of the coming Messiah at Christmas. Knowing that we are loved beyond measure.

Thanks be to God. Amen

**Song of the Day**

**"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"**

**#257vs. 1-2**

**Apostle's Creed**

**Prayers**

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

*A brief silence.*

God of presence and peace, strengthen your church around the globe to proclaim the message of your love coming to the world. Open our hearts to recognize your face in all people and in all of creation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of mighty redwoods and microscopic plants, fields and city parks, the wind and the waves, be a healing balm to our wounded planet. May we nurture what you have lovingly created. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of equity and compassion, bring righteousness and goodness to all peoples of the earth. Give a heart of discernment and integrity to leaders in our communities (*local, state, and national government officials may be named*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of comfort and care, be present with those who watch and wait. Come to all who await births, deaths, divorces, new unions, new jobs, retirements, healing, and life transitions of every kind (*especially Peyton, Kathy Smith, Matt Miller, Bob Hodges, Bob Kries, Jim and Sandy Nelson, Joe Christensen, Bill and Bonnie Kuehn, Steve Bradford, David Gunderson, Cassie Skinner, Keith Franson*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of promises kept and new dreams awakened, shelter your people from destructive storms. We pray for those whose lives have been upended by natural disasters, for the work of Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, and other relief organizations. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of companionship and community, we give you thanks for the saints who journeyed with us and now abide in you. Even in distress and uncertainty, make us confident that your promises endure forever. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

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

**Amen.**

## **Offering**

### **Offertory Prayer**

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

### **Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.**

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he 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 sins. So often as you do this, remember me.”

Once you’ve taken the elements say, “Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**”

### **Lord’s Prayer**

### **Communion Prayer**

**Sending Song**                      **“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”**                      **#244, vs. 1,4**

### **Blessing**

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

Go in peace. Christ is near.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Announcements**

### **We Challenge You!**

Look for the bulletin board outside of the sanctuary.

Take a flame - Make a payment!

60 payments of \$323.71

We're burning up the Boiler Loan from the Good Shepherd Endowment Fund.

The more money we put back into that fund, the more money that fund makes!

The more money that fund makes, the more that fund can do for our church and our community.

We already have commitments for the payments for 2022, could you claim one from 2023? If you would like to claim a month, contact the church office and let us know.

### **Poinsettias for Christmas**

If you would like to order a poinsettia to have in the sanctuary during the Christmas season, please fill out the form and return it to church with \$10 by Sunday, Nov. 28.

### **Advent Family Fun 2021**

Join us Dec. 1 at 5 p.m. for Advent Family Fun! There will be gingerbread houses, creating a family ornament, 3rd Annual Christmas carol bingo, and more! We will begin at 5 p.m. with dinner and wrap things up around 7.

Please let Anne know if you are coming for dinner! All are invited, bring your kids, grandkids and neighbors!

Don't miss the Advent Family Fun 2021!

### **Operation Christmas Child**

The Outreach Team thanks all those who filled a shoe box for Operation Christmas Child. The boxes were delivered to our local drop off site but if you still have a box, you can bring it to Peace Lutheran Church by Friday.

### **Blue Christmas Worship**

St. John's Lutheran Church invites you to Blue Christmas Worship - A service of Comfort and Hope on Saturday, Dec. 4 at 2 p.m.