

December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Second Sunday of Advent

### **Introduction to the Day**

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

### **Lighting of the Advent Candle – Peace has a Home Here**

Leader: We light a candle in PEACEful protest amid the chaos of the world

**All: Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel,**

Leader: Bound by the sin of fear and hatred toward the other

**All: You have come to your people to set them free.**

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

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

**Gathering Song**                      **"People, Look East"**                      **#248, vs. 1,3,4**

### **Prayer of the Day**

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **Lesson – Malachi 3:1-4**

<sup>1</sup>See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>2</sup>But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; <sup>3</sup>he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. <sup>4</sup>Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

### **Children's Message**

### **Gospel – Luke 3:1-6**

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled,  
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;

<sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' "

## Message

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

With the Advent and Christmas season upon us, corporate America has rolled out all of their new commercials to get you to believe that they are the morally sound company that you should contribute to the success of.

One that caught my attention was I think for T-Mobile, though it is, as stated at the bottom of the screen, “made with an iPhone.”

The commercial starts with a family of snow people in the front yard of a house. Towards the end of the winter big brother starts destroying the snow family but is stopped by little sister before he can get to hers. She takes her snow person into the house and makes room in the freezer so that it can be preserved. This snow person travels with this child throughout the year, going on camping trips packed away in a cooler and surviving a power outage as the child sleeps on the kitchen counter.

As the first snow flies of the next winter the child excitedly carries her snow person back out into the yard to take it’s rightful place for the winter. No sooner has she set it down and a neighbor child comes through on a bicycle and blows this well cared for snow man to pieces. The camera pans to the caring daughter and the look of complete devastation. As she sadly picks up the scarf of her no longer living snow person, her brother – the same one that was stopped from destroying the snow person at the end of the last winter – bends down and starts building up her snowman again.

Luke 3 verse 1 starts with a list of powerful people. Rulers from all over the region are named. High priests. Governors. All of them, and if you looked at a map of the region, you’d notice that essentially the whole region is covered in the naming of these powerful men. Luke 3 verse 2 tells us who it is that the word of God comes to.

“And the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.”

We wonder aloud why it is that we get the names of the powerful men as a precursor to “and the Word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.”

A quick glance at Luke’s gospel would tell you that this isn’t the first time that the powerful are named, or at least referenced. Not long before this, in Luke 1, when we hear Mary’s song of praise the powerful are again named. Mary doesn’t name them by name, but she definitely calls them out. From the Magnificat:

“My soul magnifies the Lord. My Spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones. He has lifted up the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.”

We have come to understand that the powerful of that time were not generally kind to those who are under their rule. They are sometimes referred to as tyrants. And at others we here that those with power lord it over those below them. Luke’s Gospel is a warning to the powerful and Luke 3 is no different. It’s not on accident that Luke chapter 3 names all of the powerful men of the region, in light of Mary’s song that we hear one chapter prior, and follows it up with, “and the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.”

And the message, the word of God that John brings to the region around the Jordan, is a message of repentance. John boisterously calls out in the wilderness to prepare a way for the word. John goes about the region echoing the Song of Mary. Every low place is to be lifted up and high peak brought down. Crooked paths are to be made straight and rough ones made smooth. This is God’s work, God’s mission, in the world. Lift up the lowly and bring down the powerful.

And what does this have to do with Peace having a home here?

We here the opening of Luke 3 and think that these are the ones that are fit for the Word of God. The powerful. The mighty. The ones with status. The ones who seem to have it figured out.

But. The Word of God comes to John. In the wilderness. And it goes about proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

That is peace. That peace has a home in us. But it isn't an idle peace. It is a peace that is found through repentance. It is peace that is found through admitting that we may very well play a part in it. It is a peace that is found through repairing relationships. It is a peace that is found in us.

There is another peace as well. Inner peace.

As we hear of the wilderness we have come to relate that to the experiences in our lives where we have wandered, where we have felt lost, where we have imagined that the Good News couldn't possibly be for us. Perhaps that wilderness is a hospital room. Or an empty home. Or a courtroom. Whatever it may be, we have likely been there in some capacity. And, if you haven't, know that the person next to you probably has.

But the peace of God breaks into those wilderness moments. Those wilderness experiences. Those wilderness places, and makes a home in us. Because that is what God does. God doesn't need the powerful and those with status to make a home. In fact it is the opposite. It may take us picking up the pieces and putting things back together, but the peace of God has a home here.

Thanks be to God. Amen

**Song of the Day**

**“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”**

**#249 vs. 1,2,4,5**

**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.*

You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. Make our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay preachers confident in their preaching, that their words and our lives witness to your grace. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send your Spirit to all living creatures that are endangered. Provide them with shelter and care, and bring us into right relationship with the earth that you create and call good. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to reach out with compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely, or ill (*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*). Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

We remember your saints, both those publicly celebrated and those more humbly remembered. Confident that your work will be completed, we live in faith until the day of your coming. 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**                      **“Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”**                      **#242 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**

On Dec. 12 the children of Good Shepherd will be participating in the worship service, sharing the Christmas Story in "Checkin' It Twice". The service will be at 9 a.m. and will also be online.

**Hat and Mitten Tree**

Bring your hats, mittens and scarves for the Hat and Mitten tree. All items are donated to local schools as well as to the Beacon House, Bolton House and St. Francis Food Pantry. Please have all donations here by Tuesday, Dec. 14.

**The Choirs of Good Shepherd will be sharing their talents on Sunday, Dec. 19. Join us for a special day of music.**

**Christmas Eve Worship**

2, 4:30 and 9 p.m. Use the enclosed postcard to invite a friend or family member, or use it as a reminder for yourself.

**Bring an ornament for the Good Shepherd Christmas Tree!**