

Second Sunday of Advent – December 4, 2022

At the heart of our Advent preparation stands John the Baptist, who calls us to repent and make a new beginning. As the darkness increases we turn toward the approaching light of Christ. For Christians he is the root of Jesse, the righteous judge who welcomes all, especially the poor and meek of the earth. We wait with hope for that day when the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and there will be no more hurt or destruction. From the Lord's table we are sent in the spirit of John the Baptist to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of God has come near.

Greeting

The Grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.
And also with you.

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be God's name forever.

Amen.

Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep.

Let us confront our sins,
and confess them to the one who is merciful and
just.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of new beginnings,

**we confess that we have not welcomed your holy
reign.**

We have strayed from your paths.

We prepare for war instead of peace.

We dishonor one another and your creation.

**Purify us with your refining fire
and set us again on your way of love,
that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance,
and welcome your coming among us.**

Amen.

People of God,
a new thing is growing in our midst,
a tender branch,
a living sign.

By water and the Spirit you are joined to this
wonder.

You have put on ✠ Christ,
and your sins have been washed away.

Rejoice in the way of the Lord.

Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Candle

L: God you call us to live into a life of immeasurable peace.

C: We tell ourselves that what we've done keeps us from experiencing the fullness of that life.

L: Regardless, You still call us into a life of immeasurable peace.

C: The light of your love shines bright, even when we know what we know about ourselves.

L: As we light our second Advent Candle,

**ALL: We look with PEACE towards what you call us to be, declaring from the beginning what is to come
- the fullness of life in you.**

Gathering Hymn "Prepare the Royal Highway"

#264, 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 nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings: Isaiah 11:1-10

¹A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse,
and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,

the spirit of knowledge and the fear of
the LORD.

³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see,

or decide by what his ears hear;
⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor,
and decide with equity for the meek of the
earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his
mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill
the wicked.

⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,
and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb,
the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

⁷The cow and the bear shall graze,

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Children's Message

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

¹In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

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

⁴Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor’; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹“I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

Sermon

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

The wilderness.

Interesting that our Sunday in advent where our theme is Immeasurable Peace, we find ourselves in the wilderness.

This word is a bit of a double edge sword.

On one side of the sword, the wilderness is a place where many go to find peace. One of the most peaceful places, and some of the most peaceful experiences I've had, are in the literal wilderness. A walk in the woods.

their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Camping on an island in the middle of the Chippewa Flowage. Even living in town, we are a block removed from a wooded hill, and the sounds of the wilderness are within an earshot of our deck.

It is peaceful. The wilderness is an escape. A place to go to clear your head, and feel closer to God your creator.

The wilderness is also talked about as a metaphorical place that we go to when we are wondering or questioning what this is all about. The season of Lent is a season of wilderness wandering as we look to the Cross of Good Friday and the Resurrection of Easter Sunday.

Jesus himself, just after this Gospel text and his own baptism, finds himself in the wilderness. For forty days he is there and on day 40 of wilderness wandering Jesus himself is tempted by Satan.

These stories in Matthew's Gospel are stories of a truly human Jesus. We see Jesus experiencing things that we, as people of faith, experiencing ourselves. Starting with the announcement of his coming baptism. There is excitement. Anyone who has ever had a child or a family member's child baptized, knows that excitement. From there the Spirit leads him into the wilderness where he is tempted. We can relate, I'm sure. From the temptation, Jesus starts to minister to people, but it is almost immediate that he realizes he is going to need to surround himself with a larger community, a cloud of witnesses, partners in the sharing of the Gospel, if this thing is going to work. There are many similarities to Jesus story and ours. He is fully human, and full divine.

Central to this story, the Jesus story, and our story, is the wilderness.

The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, quoting the prophet Isaiah, PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!

John was anything but peaceful, but he brought a message that brings peace. John knew what Jesus was about. His whole life from the moment he leapt in his mother's womb simply at the presence of Jesus in his own mother's womb, John was excited to share the Good News of God's Love for God's people. And the people knew it.

So, they came to him to be baptized. They came to him to do that thing that is at the root of where we find our immeasurable peace as people of faith. Baptism.

Part of our Baptismal service comes from that same Prophetic voice which John echoes:

“²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him,
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of counsel and might,
the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.
³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.”

John's shouts are a shout into our Wilderness. Whether it is the wilderness where we find peace, or the wilderness where we wander wondering if we will ever know peace again, John declares a peace for all people through a baptism of repentance. It is in repenting that we mark a change in our ways that bring us closer to God and those around us. It is in repentance that we build the community to which we have been called.

And, it is in that community where we are called to make the Peace of Christ known to all people. To embrace those who may find themselves in the wandering wilderness of searching for that community that truly embraces them. To embrace those who feel that their story has them destined for an eternity of wilderness wandering, and to let them know that the Love of Christ and the peace that it brings is far greater than anything we might tell ourselves otherwise.

Thanks be to God. AMEN

The Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church, the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

A brief silence.

God, you renew the church in every age. We give thanks for hymn writers and theologians. Inspire teachers, writers, and musicians to delight and instruct your people. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You give us a vision of creation in harmony, when hurting and destruction will be no more. Teach us to be stewards of the earth and companions to its creatures. Restore to balance and wholeness what human greed has harmed. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You defend the cause of all who are poor and oppressed. Raise up leaders who will govern with equity and serve the common good. Guide judges, lawmakers, and public officials to protect the rights of those who cannot advocate for themselves. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You deliver those in need from suffering and fear. Come to the aid of any who are exploited or abused, especially children, elders, and victims of human trafficking. Provide safety and help to our neighbors without shelter, refugees, and those fleeing violence. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You urge your people to welcome one another as you have welcomed us. Nurture ministries of hospitality and care in this and every congregation. We pray for people who are homebound, hospitalized, or separated from loved ones (*especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Cassie, Verna, Irene, Connie, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Daniel*).

God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

You embrace all who have died trusting in your promises, and we give thanks for their faithful witness. Sustain us in hope until we are united with them in the joy of your eternal presence. God, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Eternal God,

you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground. Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and justice. We ask this through Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

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

Communion

Prayer

Faithful God,

in this meal you have remembered your mercy, bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ.

As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery.

Guide us toward your promised future, coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Blessing

God the eternal Word,

who dwells with us in Jesus,

and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit,

✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Song

“People, Look East”

#248, vs. 1,3,4

Dismissal

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!

And all of Good Shepherd said,

AMEN!

End of November Snapshot

Month of November

Total Revenue **\$17,384**

Total Expenses **\$17,903**

November Difference

-\$519

Year-to-Date

Total Revenue **\$265,995**

Total Expenses **\$262,859**

Year-to-Date Difference

+\$3,136



Kids of Good Shepherd musical – Dec. 11, 9 a.m.



The Choirs of Good Shepherd will share their music on Sunday, Dec. 18 at 9 a.m. Come and be blessed