



*In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.*

DOVE OF PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday, December 6, 2020

The Second Sunday of Advent

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

Pastor Stephen Springer

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342

Though Nicholas is one of the church's most beloved saints, little is known about his life. In the fourth century he was a bishop in what is now Turkey. Legends that surround Nicholas tell of his love for God and neighbor, especially the poor. One famous story tells of Nicholas secretly giving bags of gold to the three daughters of a father who was going to sell them into prostitution because he could not provide dowries for them. Nicholas has become a symbol of anonymous gift giving.

PROLOGUE

Kevin Seal, pipe organ

Prelude on "Veni Emmanuel"

Edward Bairstow (1874-1946)

We continue our Advent journey through different settings of "O Come O Come Emmanuel" this week with a setting by Edward Bairstow, an English composer and organist who is best known for his 29 choral anthems, written in the Anglican tradition. His setting of "O Come" is taken from a set of three short organ preludes first published in 1947, the year after the composer's death.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
whose forgiveness is sure
and whose steadfast love endures forever.
Amen.

Together let us honestly and humbly confess
that we have not lived as God desires.
Silence is kept for reflection.

Loving and forgiving God,
we confess that we are held captive by sin.
In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray.
We have not welcomed the stranger;
we have not loved our neighbor;
we have not been Christ to one another.
Restore us, O God.
Wake us up and turn us from our sin.
Renew us each day in the light of Christ.
Amen.

People of God, hear this glad news:
by God's endless grace
your sins are forgiven, and you are free—
free from all that holds you back
and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.
May you be strengthened in God's love,
† comforted by Christ's peace,
and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

All sing in unison:

**O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

**O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
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.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 40:1-11

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

A reading from Isaiah.

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!"

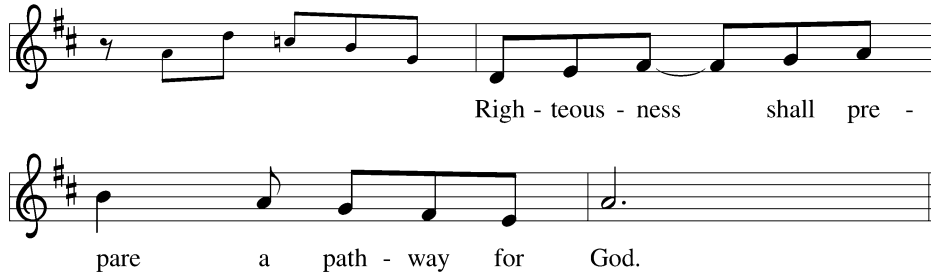
¹⁰See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

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.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALMODY (ELW): Psalm: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

The refrain is first introduced by the leader, then repeated by the assembly.



Psalm 85:13

Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year B* © 2008 Augsburg Fortress.
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- 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. REFRAIN**
- ¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have | met together;
righteousness and peace have | kissed each other.
- ¹¹**Faithfulness 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.
- ¹³**Righteousness shall go be- | fore the LORD
and shall prepare for | God a pathway. REFRAIN**

SECOND READING: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

A reading from Second Peter.

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; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW #175

The assembly sings the Alleluia before and after the gospel verse.

Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al-le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Cantor: *Prepare the way | of the Lord.**
All flesh shall see the salva- | tion of God. (Luke 3:4,6)

GOSPEL: Mark 1:1-8

The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

The Holy Gospel according to 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

Pastor Steve Springer



1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
 2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
 call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.
 Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635–1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–1878, alt.
 Music: FREU DICH SEHR, *Trente quatre pseauxes de David*, Geneva, 1551

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

After each petition: "Lord in your mercy," the assembly responds **"Hear our prayer."**

Let us pray for the church, for the world and for in any need.

We pray for the church.

O Gd,

we pray that our lives, our worship and our witness prepare a way for your sure and saving coming. May our hearts arise and be stirred to rejoice that we do have good tidings, good news, to tell - to say with strength and lifted voice, "Here is you God."

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the world.

O Gd,

come, we pray. Come to this world. In your righteousness, come down from the heavens to stir our hearts into raising up faithfulness on this earth. Let your steadfast love, rich in correction and comfort, forgive humanity's waywardness and show the way of peace to troubled minds and troubled nations. Be gracious, O Gd, to the land and people of your creation.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those in any need.

O Gd,

leaning on your word, which does not wither but stands forever, we pray that those in any need know that you are Emmanuel, Gd-with-us.

Come, be with, and be a near help to those who are burdened by worries, bowed down by sorrows.

Come, be with, and be a near help to those who are unnoticed, isolated, unattended in disease and loneliness.

Come, be with, and be a near help to those wandering in their life, wounded by words and weapons, memories and addictions.

Come, we pray, O Gd, to those in any need. We think of those we know and name, and we think of those we only hear about, but surely known to you.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Finally O Gd,

Holy One of our longing, we pray that by the same revelation which those who have gone before us already are blessed to see,

so also now may we behold the glory that is risen upon us, the glory of the Lord, the glory of your Word, the Word made flesh, and full of grace and truth.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.**

MEDITATION

Members of Dove of Peace Chancel Choir

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion (from Messiah)
G.F. Handel (1685-1789)

Taken from the most famous of oratorios, this joyful movement sets text from our second lesson proclaiming the good news of the Lord's coming.

COMMISSION

Pastor Stephen Springer

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.
Amen.

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.

Text: James Lewis Milligan, 1876-1961, alt.

Music: ASCENSION, Henry Hugh Bancroft, 1904-1988

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EPILOGUE

Kevin Seal, pipe organ

Chorale Partita on "Freu dich sehr, o meine Seele" (Comfort, comfort now my people)
Variations 1, 4, 9, and 12
Georg Böhm (1661-1733)

Georg Böhm was a north German composer who composed in the Stylus Phantasticus (fantastic style) that Dieterich Buxtehude helped to develop. He was highly influential on J. S. Bach, and even though no direct evidence exists, many scholars believe that the young Bach likely studied with Böhm for a time. One of his principal contributions to organ literature was to the development of the chorale-partita, a compositional genre that features variations on a chorale tune. The chorale-partita that is featured in today's liturgy is based on the chorale "Freu dich sehr", which was a Lutheran adaptation of a Genevan psalm tune, which we now sing to the text "Comfort, comfort now my people".

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Assisting Minister: John Hoelter
Lector: Christine Alexander
Cantor: Eric Holtan