

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

God's Gift of Faith

December 6, 2020



AS WE GATHER

What was it that made not only a couple or a few but, as Mark says, “all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem” come out to be baptized by the Baptist and to confess their sins? Well, what is it that made you get up and come to church today? Notice that today not all do come. Though occasionally during wartime or some great catastrophe more tend to come, the catechism explains, “I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him.” “But,” it continues, “the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel.” Some think believing is impossible for them. But believing is not on you; it is a gift from God, overflowing with forgiveness, life, and salvation. God was with John by the Jordan River. God is here with you by His Word and Sacraments. This year, the holy evangelist St. Mark greets us to lead us through a new Church Year. He does not, however, greet us as we might expect. For one thing, he seems to have forgotten all about Christmas! At least Matthew and Luke tell of Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in a manger and of angels and shepherds. But Mark? While Christmas is the earthly “beginning” of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, this preacher means that his entire Gospel, the whole biblical story, is but “the beginning of the Gospel.” It is as if he means to say that the Baptist’s call to repentance comes to us *In Medias Res*, that is, in the middle of everything else, in the middle of the biblical story and in the middle of our lives and activities, right now. He is saying, “Stop what you’re doing. Repent again and welcome the Greater One, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” The Christian faith and life is one of continual repentance and faith. Watch and listen as our Lord comes to us again, now, by His Spirit in His Word and Sacraments.

PRAYERS OF PREPARATION:

Holy God, on this second Sunday of Advent, we long for your peace, and trust in your promise; we hear your call to turn toward you, to change our lives and welcome you in. Loving God, be to us as a bulldozer of the spirit. Clear your road in us; clear a path through the detritus of possessions and obsessions. Thrust aside our divided aims and devious games. Topple the ramparts of pride and the doubts that deride. Make a highway on which Christ may come and take possession of the whole territory of our being. God, your servant cries out to us: Can you hear? A voice is heard in the darkness, the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Make way! Level the valleys! Straighten the paths! Prepare the way for his coming: The coming of the Lord! Meet us here and fill our minds with your wisdom and our hearts with your peace, that our worship together may open us to the challenge of your dream of wholeness for all. Can you hear? God, open the ears of our souls to hear your word of salvation. Open wide our hearts and our minds to see, feel, hear, and know the salvation of our God. In the Name of the One who is coming, we pray. Amen!

HOLY COMMUNION IS CELEBRATED:

Today we have the privilege of receiving Christ's true body and blood in, with and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion. Through this sacrament the Holy Spirit seals to us the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation for the strengthening of our faith. Scriptures also teach that as we commune together, we are publicly testifying to a complete unity of faith based on a confession of all of God's Word. If you confess the same belief, we invite you to our fellowship of the Lord's Supper.

WELCOME:

WELCOME TO GOD'S HOUSE.... We come to worship the God of forgiveness, who pardoned all our sins. We come to worship the God who sent a messenger saying Prepare for God's arrival! Make the road straight and smooth, a highway fit for our God. We will listen to what God has to say – a voice that speaks of peace, peace for the faithful, those whose hearts are turned to God. For our God is coming! Welcome one another, for Christ welcomes you: Let's worship together!

✂ PREPARATION ✂

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Prepare the way of the Lord. Recalling our Baptism into Christ, we confess our sins to God in the full assurance of the gift of forgiveness by the mighty sacrifice of His Son.

People: **O God, from the wilderness of lives disfigured and crushed by the devil, our own sin, and the sins of others, we cry out to You for the forgiveness of our sins, those that trouble us as well as those of which we are not aware. Restore our life and faith by Your own command for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

Pastor: Upon this, your confession, I, by virtue of my office, as a called and ordained servant of the Word, announce the grace of God to all of you. And in the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

LIGHTING THE ADVENT CANDLE

Pastor: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,

People: **the light no darkness can overcome.**

Pastor: Let Your light scatter the darkness

People: **and illumine Your Church.**

HYMN“Jesus The Light Of The World” TFBF 59 St. 1

1 Hark! the herald angels sing, Jesus, the Light of the world; "Glory to the new-born King," Jesus, the Light of the world.

Refrain:

We'll walk in the light, beautiful light, come where the dewdrops of mercy are bright. Shine all around us by day and by night, Jesus, the Light of the world.

✘ WORD ✘

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts by Your mighty Word and Spirit, O Lord, that we may be prepared to receive Your gifts of life and salvation through the forgiveness of our sins; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 40:1–11* (Comfort for God's people)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

SELECTION

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GRADUAL *Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26, alt.*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord. From the house of the Lord we bless you.

EPISTLE *2 Peter 3:8–14* (The day of the Lord will come.)

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

VERSE *Luke 3:4b, 6*

Leader: Alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord, make His paths straight; all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL *Mark 1:1–8* (John the Baptist prepares the way.)

Leader: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the first chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

(The Gospel is read.)

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

SELECTION

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SERMON

SELECTION

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(We Bring Our Tithes & Offering To The Lord)

CREED Nicene Creed

People: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life Ξ of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Leader: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Almighty God, we give thanks this day for calling us and the whole world to repentance and faith by Your holy prophets, by Your servant John the Baptist, and by Your own Son, whose Spirit calls, gathers, and enlightens everyone through His mighty Word and Sacraments. Grant that we and all who hear His voice remain faithful in the fellowship of Your Holy Church. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: Continue to give Your blessing, power, and grace to Your Church, especially all pastors and servants You have called and given to guard, feed, and teach Your flock. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: Give stability to our country, supplying all who make, administer, and judge our laws with wisdom and goodwill toward all people.
Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: Bless the schools of the Church and all centers of learning and research that those who teach would serve You honorably and that our common life be conformed to the ways of Your truth. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: By Your Word and Spirit comfort all who are in sorrow, need, sickness, or adversity, [*especially* . . .]. Support all who suffer persecution for the faith. Have mercy on those to whom death draws near, [*especially* . . .]. Give Your tender care to all. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: Remembering those who have loved and served You who now rest from their labors, we give You thanks. Keep us in fellowship with all Your saints, and bring us at last to the joys of Your heavenly kingdom. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Leader: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

People: Amen.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

2 Timothy 4:22

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

[Colossians 3:1]

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

[Psalm 136]

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore, with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

SANCTUS “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty” (TLH 246 St. 4)

4. Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! All Thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea. Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty! God in Three Persons, blessed Trinity!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

You sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for our Savior, by whose sacrifice of His blood and death on a cross all who are baptized in Him are enabled by His Spirit worthily to repent and receive forgiveness of sins and life everlasting.

Grant that we may faithfully eat of His body and drink of His blood and so proclaim His death until He comes again in glory.

People: **Amen.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20;

LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: **Amen.**

DISTRIBUTION

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
Numbers 6:24–26

People: **Amen.**

SELECTION

Minister Terry Dale