

Introduction

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.

Welcome *Please have a candle and Communion elements ready for worship.*

Candle Lighting: "Procession" HEP & "Joyous Light" (#561) v. 1

**Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world;
The light no darkness can overcome;
Stay with us now and help us not to fear,
For the day is in your care,
Let your light scatter the darkness,
And shine within your people here.**

**Joyous light of heavenly glory ,
loving glow of God's own face,
You who sing creation's story,
shine on ev'ry land and race.
Now as morning breaks around us,
we shall raise our songs to you,
God of daybreak, God of shadows,
come and light our hearts anew.**

Confession & Peace*

You bring our fear into the light of love;
We prefer to hide in the shadows.
Savior have mercy
Savior have mercy

You promise healing for the earth;
We turn our back on our common world.
Christ have mercy
Christ have mercy

You come near in the vulnerable word made flesh;
We worship distant idols of celebrity and power.
Savior have mercy
Savior have mercy

Christ's judgment is not vengeance, *an eye for an eye;*
Christ's peace is not false, *a veil for injustice;*
Christ comes to break the spear, to silence the guns

and still our warring souls.
May the peace of Christ Jesus rule our world and heal our hearts.
Amen. Let us **Bring Peace** .

Hymn of Praise: # 257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of humankind;
Bid thou our sad divisions cease,
And bring about thy reign of peace! *Refrain*

Prayer of the Day*

Wild God of the wastes, whose gospel begins with a cry and summons: take us to the pathless place where we can start again to taste creation's gifts anew and await the Spirit's touch; through Jesus Christ, the one who is to come. Amen.

Hebrew Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11 (Inclusive Version)

"Console my people, give them comfort,"
says your God.

"Speak tenderly to Jerusalem's heart,
and tell it
that its time of service is ended,
that its iniquity is atoned for,
that it has received from YHWH's hand
double punishment for all its sins."

A voice cries out,
"Clear a path through the wilderness for YHWH!
Make a straight road through the desert for our God!

Let every valley be filled in,
every mountain and hill be laid low;

let every cliff become a plain ,
and the ridges become a valley!

Then the glory of YHWH will be revealed,
and all humankind will see it.”

The mouth of YHWH has spoken!
A voice commands, “Cry out!”
and I answer, “What will I say?”
—“All flesh is grass
and its beauty is like the wildflowers:

the grass withers
and the flower wilts
when the breath of YHWH blows on them.

How the people are like grass!

Grass withers, and flowers wilt,
but the promise of our God will stand forever.”

Go up on a high mountain,
you who bring good news to Zion!
Shout with a loud voice,
you who bring good news to Jerusalem!
Shout without fear,
and say to the towns of Judah “Here is your God!”

YHWH, O Sovereign One,
you come with power,
and rule with a strong arm!
You bring your reward with you,
and your reparation comes before you.

Like a shepherd you feed your flock,
gathering the lambs and holding them close,
and leading mother ewes with gentleness.

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word... Thanks be to God

Childrens' Time

Hymn: “Magnificat” HEP

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you,
You have looked with love on your servant here,
and blessed me all my life through.

Great and mighty are you, O Holy One,
strong is your kindness evermore.
How you favor the weak and lowly one,
humbling the proud of heart

You have cast the mighty down from their thrones,
and uplifted the humble of heart,
You have filled the hungry with wondrous things,
and left the wealth y no part.

Great and mighty are you, O Faithful One,
strong is your justice, strong your love,
As you promised to Sarah and Abraham,
kindness forever more.

My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you,
You have looked with love on your servant here,
and blessed me all my life through.

Gospel Reading: Mark 1:1 -8 (*Inclusive Version*)

HERE BEGINS THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God:

as it was written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I send my messenger before you to prepare your way,
a herald’s voice in the desert, crying,
‘Make ready the way of our God.
Clear a straight path.’ ”

And so John the Baptizer appeared in the desert, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to John and were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. John was clothed in camel’s hair and wore a leather belt around his waist, and he ate nothing but grasshoppers and wild honey. In the course of his preaching, John said, “One more powerful than I is to come after me. I am not fit to stoop and untie his sandal straps. I have baptized you in water, but the One to come will baptize you in the Holy Spirit.”

Holy Wisdom, Holy Word... Thanks be to God

Message

Song of the Day: #704 When Pain of the World Surrounds Us

1 When pain of the world surrounds us with darkness and despair,
when searching just confounds us with false hopes ev’rywhere,
when lives are starved for meaning and destiny is bare,
we are called to follow Jesus and let God’s healing flow through us.

- 2 We see with fear and trembling our aching world in need,
 confessing to each other our wastefulness and greed.
 May we with steadfast caring the hungry children feed.
 We are called to follow Jesus and let God's justice flow through us.
- 3 The church is a holy vessel the living waters fill
 to nourish all the people, God's purpose to fulfill.
 May we with humble courage be open to God's will.
 We are called to follow Jesus and let God's Spirit flow through us.
- 4 We praise you for our journey and your abundant grace,
 your saving word that guided a struggling human race.
 O God, with all creation, your future we embrace.
 We are called to follow Jesus and let God's changes flow through us.

An Advent Creed

We believe in God the Creator of heaven and earth.
 The one who is full of patience,
 who is not afraid of silence,
 who does not need to fill each moment with activity and noise.
 The one who is beyond bluster and flurry,
 and who does not jostle for attention.

We believe in God the Christ Child, Saviour of creation,
 who slipped into Bethlehem one night, mostly unnoticed,
 who lived thirty years without headlines or hurry,
 who frequently took time alone with his patient Abba,
 who waited for the right time to become the suffering servant,
 who stood quietly before the noise of his accusers,
 whose silence overpowered their words,
 who died, then rose again on a quiet Sunday morning.

We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
 who strengthens, empowers, renews and refreshes,
 sometimes arriving with obvious power,
 sometimes with the quiet breath of a whisper.

We believe in one God
 who patiently waits for us,
 and who longs for us to do the same.

Offering

- *Text:* to number 833-893-0362 text GIVE
- *Website:* www.slcmv.org and click on GIVE
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amount makes a difference; so please consider submitting your offerings so that we (together) continue to honor God and support Salem's ministry & mission.

Prayers of Intercession

God of power and might, comfort your people and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God. **Mercy becomes You.**

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God. **Mercy becomes You.**

Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us, O God. **Mercy becomes You.**

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace. Hear us, O God. **Mercy becomes You.**

For what or whom else do the people pray?

(Zoom users: Please unmute or use chat feature to offer your petitions)

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work. Make their generous lives an example for all. Hear us, O God. **Mercy becomes You.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Holy Communion*

God be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to God.**
We give thanks to God. **Thank You God for Your grace.**

Mystery of winter skies,
we thank you in the darkening hour
for opening our eyes
to see your starlit beauty;
for parting the wide heavens
to send your gentle light;
for offering your word
to take our mortal flesh.

The Messiah was promised by those
who shared your dream of peace;
John the Baptist cleared the Messiah's way
with words of desert fire;
Mary and Joseph accepted his coming
with tenderness and faith;
We know that Jesus draws near again
to show us who we really are
with honesty and love.

Now we take up the song of hope
that we might awaken
to the Messiah's coming among us
and the world be touched
by the footfall of Jesus' glory.

Holy: ELW 191

**Holy, holy, holy are you,
God of power and might;
heaven and earth are filled with your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes in your name.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.**

Words of Institution

Christ's Prayer *(Inclusive)*

We pray together in the Spirit that Jesus taught:

**Our Creator in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kin -dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kin -dom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen.**

Invitation to Communion

Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here.
Eat and drink, this is Christ's **PEACE** for you.

Lamb of God : ELW 195

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Prayer after Communion*

Eternal God, we thank you that in Christ you give yourself into our hand:
May we who have tasted life proclaim the coming feast when many will come from
east and west, from north and south to greet the Savior of all; we ask this in Jesus'
name. **Amen.**

Announcements

Final Blessing: HEP

Let us bless our God: praise and thanks to you.
May God, Creator bless us and keep us,
May Christ be ever light for our lives,
May the Spirit of Love be our guide and path,
For all of our days.
A -- men.

Dismissal

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

Coffee Hour follows after Worship.

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