

# Advent #2

12-5-2021

J.V. Trautwein, Pastor

## Celebrate (Introduction)

“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.’”

We come together in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

## Opening Hymn: [“On Jordon’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”](#)

### Psalmody: Luke 1:68-79

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.  
<sup>69</sup> He has raised up a mighty savior<sup>69</sup> for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
<sup>70</sup> as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
<sup>71</sup> that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.  
<sup>72</sup> Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,  
and has remembered his holy covenant,  
<sup>73</sup> the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,  
to grant us <sup>74</sup> that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear, <sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness  
before him all our days.  
<sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
<sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
by the forgiveness of their sins.  
<sup>78</sup> By the tender mercy of our God,  
the dawn from on high will break upon<sup>78</sup> us,  
<sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

## Hymn of Praise: [“Let the Whole Creation Cry”](#)

### Prayer of the Day

“Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give t 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 Jesus. Amen.”

## 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: [Malachi 3:1-4](#)

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** [Philippians 1:3-11](#)

**The Gospel:** [Luke 3:1-6](#)

**Hymn of the Day:** ["O Come, O come, Emmanuel"](#)

(The third week's Angel Tree results will be sent later today)

**The Message:** ([Video Link](#))

Hold onto your hats and take a deep breath for we have not only entered the months of December but we already have reached the second Sunday in Advent. Many have already begun celebrating Christmas since for them Thanksgiving has been overtaken by the need to celebrate the joy of Christmas early. No longer do the traditional Thanksgiving items decorate the dinner table and the entrance doors for they have become passe' with poinsettias and Christmas wreaths and decorations replacing them. The weeks from Thanksgiving on have become consumed by what is now the Christmas season. The reality is becoming that the celebration of Christmas begins with Thanksgiving or before and ends midnight of December 25<sup>th</sup> at which time the celebration of winter solstice continues leading up to New Years Day which ends the holiday's festivities.

Many of us can remember when the Christmas season of celebration began on Christmas Eve and went through New Years to January 6<sup>th</sup>, Epiphany. There may have been the time of preparation after Thanksgiving like gift buying but other Christmas preparations didn't begin until the week preceding Christmas. But over the years commercialism and secularism gradually took over the holidays kidnapping Christmas until the celebration of the Nativity has dwindle to be almost an after-thought.

Although the season of Advent, which begins the church calendar year, remains within the life of the church, it too has changed in its emphasis and meaning. In many cases its penitential preparation has been deemphasized and replaced with the secularize preparation for Christmas. We have become the product of a society who wants all the pleasures and gifts of life now. As Christmas becomes more and more commercialized and secularized, there is no longer the need for Advent as it has been traditionally known. That is to say that John the Baptist's words "proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins" is out of the realm of reality in so much of our thinking even within the church.

I guess whether for good or bad life changes with each new generation. It seems to have rapidly changed since the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the basic changes is evident in our observance of Advent. With the de-emphasis of the need to prepare for the Nativity through first coming face to face with both the good and bad in who we are, there is little need or understanding of the Good News. There is little need or understanding of God' loving power of forgiveness.

All too quickly we are becoming a society which no longer is in need of forgiveness since we are convinced that we can do no wrong. We have become blind to the truth of who we are and project our wrongs on everybody else. Unless what we do promotes ourselves there is little or no accountability of our actions in how we live and how we view and treat others. All too prevalent is the thinking that I can do anything which I want to do, whether it hurts others or not, without bearing the consequences of my actions. This of course leads to complete chaos. Tragically we see this happening everyday throughout our society and throughout every segment of life from street murders, to mass murders, to corporate fraud and greed, to government corruption, to heretical ecclesiastical conduct, to sedition, to intentional social and mass media lies. It has become a way life.

Into such a deteriorating society comes the message of Advent and the lighting of the second Advent candle, the candle of repentance and forgiveness. In the gospel of Luke we read,

<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.’”

These words of Luke and Isaiah lay the foundation to the coming of Jesus and in reality the ability to celebrate the Nativity. John the Baptist says first repent. Isaiah says we are to put everything in order before we can experience the forgiveness and salvation of God as found in the incarnation. This is the reason for Advent. It gives us the pathway to realizing the Angel’s message, “Do not be afraid. For see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” This is the truth which we must come face to face with before there can be the true joy of Christmas as the incarnation, the birth of Jesus.

Likewise, before we as a society and individuals can begin to turn around we must first come face to face with the truth of who we are. In reality unless there is recognition of that which is destroying us as individuals and as a society there is no possibility of the need to change. But recognition in itself is not enough for change. This recognition must be felt so deeply as to acknowledge the need to change. In this is the process of repentance which leads to changing our mindsets and lives to rid ourselves of any damaging thoughts and actions. In order to free ourselves of any past damaging influences we must take the next step and that is to seek forgiveness. It is then that we will begin to be able to take on the responsibility of our lives and accountability will become a reality.

This is the message of Advent for it is a season which not only prepares us to receive the good news of the Nativity but changes our lives in order to answer the desperate needs today's life circumstances. It is through the process of repentance that we become free from all that keeps us from seeing the truths in life without being influenced by preconceived ill-gotten mindsets. The truth of the Nativity is that of God's love and forgiveness is made known to us through the birth of Jesus, the incarnation. Without the acknowledgement of both good and bad in our lives and the need to change the bad, there is no need for forgiveness, there is no need to celebrate the Nativity. The Nativity will continue to find less and less of a place in the celebration of Christmas and the holiday season will become falsely called Christmas or the Christ mass.

This kind of process does not come easy especially living in a time when we are doing everything possible to escape the truth of what is destroying us as a society and which has limited the importance of the Nativity in the holiday season. It is the church's responsibility to proclaim the Advent message in order to begin the process of finding our way out of the abyss we have created. In lighting this the second Advent candle comes the commitment to be that shining example of the life which has found the true joy and meaning of Christmas through the pathway set during Advent.

The words of the Hymnist says it all,

1. Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding:

'Christ is nigh,' it seems to say;

'Cast away the dreams of darkness,

O ye children of the day!'

2. Wakened by the solemn warning,

let us all from sleep arise;

Christ, our sun, all ill dispelling,

shines upon the morning skies.

3. Lo! the Lamb, so long expected,  
comes with pardon down from heaven

let us haste, with tears of sorrow,

one and all to be forgiven.

4. When our Saviour comes in glory,

though the world be wrapped in fear,

with his mercy he will shield us,

and with words of love draw near.

5. Honour, glory, might and blessing

to the Father and the Son,

with the everlasting Spirit

while eternal ages run.

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**Anthem:** ["Panis Angelicus" Agne G. and Children's Choir](#)

**Offering\*:** ([On-Line giving Link](#))

We give thee but thine own, what e'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust,  
O Lord, from thee.

### **The Prayer**

Ever forgiving Father of Creation, instill within us the insight into life to understand that both good and evil exist. Especially open our minds to realize that we are capable within our lives to do both. When we understand this give us the will to honestly own up to what we have done which may have gone against the love which you have shown us through the Nativity. For this we seek the forgiveness which only you can give. May we always learn from our mistakes and further develop the goodness within our lives.

We pray for all who need your comforting and healing presence especially Bob and Pat Allen, Heidi Brackbill, Parker Brennan, the Cronin family, the Elshafei family, the Fultz family, Kraig Greff, the Johnson Family, Robert Karner, Charles Larsen, Donna Mayhew, Wendy Neumann, Elise Oliver, Peter Olsen, David Otto, Dottie Reitz, Robert Reitz, Linda Rigby, Colin Shea, Jerry Shea, Jack Smith, the Spiegler family,, Della, Yongyin Sun, Esther and Buck Trautwein, Linda Williamson, Wyatt Lee Wolf, Pastor Jack,  
We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

### **The Lord's Prayer**

#### **The Benediction**

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
The Lord make His face shine upon you;  
The Lord lift up His presence upon you and give you peace. Amen

And now my brothers and sisters  
Live on knowing God's love,  
The joy of living this life of love,  
And the peace which only comes through the power of His presence within you.  
So live on in Love, Joy, Peace, and Power.

**Closing Hymn:** ["Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding"](#)

### **Announcements**

All services are being held indoors in the sanctuary. Masks and social distancing is required.

Decorating Day. Saturday December 11<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 AM

Piano Recital Sunday December 12<sup>th</sup> 2:00 PM

Community Caroling Night at the Outdoor Chapel. Sunday December 19<sup>th</sup>. 6:00 PM

Add an angel to the Angel Trees by giving a donation to The World Hunger Appeal. Either give on-line [https://tithe.ly/give\\_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291](https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291) Or send directly to either address below.

\*Offering and World Hunger Contributions to be sent to

Robert Brackbill

10274 Raleigh Tavern Lane

Ellicott City, MD 21042

Epiphany Lutheran Church

9122 Sybert Drive

Columbia Hills

Ellicott City, MD 21043

<https://www.epiphanylutherancolumbia.org>

Please note that you now have the opportunity of online giving with the link found after the offering designation or here: [https://tithe.ly/give\\_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291](https://tithe.ly/give_new/www/#/tithely/give-one-time/2627291)