

The Second Sunday of Advent



December 6, 2019
10:30AM

We Gather in the Lord's Name

Instructions for standing, sitting, and kneeling are rubrics from the Book of Common Prayer. Any person who is unable to stand or kneel is welcome to sit for any part of the service regardless of the printed instruction. Please feel comfortable using any posture you wish.

Advent Candle Lighting

Reader 1: The second candle on an Advent wreath, usually purple, represents preparation. Listen to a reading from Mark.

Reader 2: 3 He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord's coming! Clear the road for him!' 4 This messenger was John the Baptist. He was in the wilderness and preached that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. Mark 1:3-4

Reader 1: John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin, spread the word that Jesus was on his way. Part of our preparations for Christmas can include letting other people know what Christmas is all about - the birth of our Savior

Sharing: Just as we get our homes and churches ready for Christmas, we also get our hearts ready for baby Jesus. Brainstorm a list of things you do to get ready for house guests. Talk about what you would do differently if Jesus were coming to stay at your house.

After sharing, light the first and second blue candles.

People: Two candles, burning bright,
Chasing away the darkness from light.
Two candles, glowing light,
The blessing of God, giving new sight.

Reader 2: Let us pray. Dear God, we pray that our hearts will be ready for your coming through your Son, Jesus the Christ. Help us to see how you call us to prepare.

Processional Hymn: #76

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry

Please Stand and Sing

Words: Charles Coffin; Music: William Henry Monk

The musical score is written for three parts: Soprano (1), Alto (2), and Tenor/Bass (3). It is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a clear harmonic structure. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with line numbers 1, 2, and 3 indicating the different parts.

1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an -
2 Then cleansed be ev - ery breast from sin; make
3 For thou art our sal - va - tion, Lord, our

1 noun - ces that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
2 straight the way for God with - in, and let each heart pre -
3 re - fuge, and our great re - ward; with - out thy grace we

1 for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings.
2 pare a home where such a might - y guest may come.
3 waste a - way like flowers that with - er and de - cay.

Introduction

Celebrant: Welcome to our online worship at Grace Episcopal Church in Muskogee Oklahoma. We hope and pray that you are all well and that you are taking proper precautions such as wearing masks and maintaining distances.

The church began a new year last week with the first Sunday in Advent. Today we begin hearing from Mark's gospel starting with the official announcement in the very first line. Mark starts off just like any announcement of a royal birth, a royal wedding or other important affair of the Roman State. His first line might as well be a headline in the local paper.

The beginning of the good news - nearly all state announcements begin this way. But here's the twist of Jesus Messiah the Son of God: He goes on to quote Isaiah to give credibility to his claim. The big question for you is How is Jesus good news in your life?

Opening Acclamation

Celebrant: Blessed be God who forgives all our sins..

People: **God's mercy endures for ever Amen.**

Collect for Purity

Celebrant: Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord.. **Amen.**

Kyrie:#85

Please Stand and Sing

Cantor or Choir *All*

Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son. Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

Cantor or Choir *All*

Chri - ste e - le - i - son. Chri - ste e - le - i - son.

Cantor or Choir *All*

Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son. Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

Collect of the Day

Celebrant: God be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Celebrant: Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

We Hear God's Word

First Lesson: Isaiah 40:1-11

Please be seated.

Reader: A reading from the book of Isaiah.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak 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.

A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every 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. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass.

The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get 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!"

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

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

Reader: You have been gracious to your land, O LORD, *

People: **you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.**

Reader: You have forgiven the iniquity of your people *

People: **and blotted out all their sins.**

Reader: I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, *

People: **for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.**

Reader: Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *

People: **that his glory may dwell in our land.**

Reader: Mercy and truth have met together; *

People: **righteousness and peace have kissed each other.**

Reader: Truth shall spring up from the earth, *

People: **and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

Reader: The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, *

People: **and our land will yield its increase.**

Reader: Righteousness shall go before him, *

People: **and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.**

Second Lesson: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

Reader: A reading from second epistle of Peter.

Do 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. The 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. But 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.

Since 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, waiting 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? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Gradual Hymn: #59

Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding

Please Stand and Sing.

Music: William Henry Monk

1 Hark! a thrill-ing voice is sound-ing: "Christ is nigh," it seems to say;
2 Wak-ened by the sol - emn warn - ing, from earth's bond-age let us rise;
3 Lo! the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, comes with par - don down from heaven;

1 "Cast a - way the works of dark-ness, O ye child-ren of the day."
2 Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling, shines up - on the morn-ing skies.
3 let us haste, with tears of sor - row, one and all to be for - given;

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

Please stand.

Reader: The Holy Gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ according to Mark.

People: **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And 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. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He 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. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, Lord Christ**

Comfort and Glory

In theatre as in history, setting is everything. Sometimes an artist can get by copying a work and relocating the setting such as “West Side Story” copying Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet,” but most of the time, a work just cannot be pulled out of its setting and transplanted into a new setting. Important things get lost in that process. Imagine installing a copy of Michelangelo’s Creation of Adam mural from the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel and putting it on the ceiling of a mall. The Christian church, over the centuries and to the present day, constantly rips words, scenes, ideas, legal principles, and ethical concepts out of their original Greco-Roman-Jewish first century setting and gives them an entirely new setting. Rarely do we get a successful transplant like “West Side Story.” Most of the time, we are just copying Michelangelo’s “Creation” onto the ceiling of a Burger King.

In order to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest scripture, we must do some work. Without expending some serious effort, we run the very real risk of making the bible say what we want it to say instead of what the authors really intended to say. Who does not hear the English words of Isaiah chapter 40 and instantly start humming the lines to Handel’s “Messiah”? [choir break]. I have read this in three languages. I have read it in church for sixty years. I read it many times this week, and I found something about the setting that shocked me and blew me away. I would like to share that with you today.

The book of Isaiah was very likely written by three distinct authors at times separated by as much as a century. First Isaiah runs to chapter 39 and is the story before the exile to Babylon. Starting with chapter 40, second Isaiah takes place during the Jews’ seventy-year captivity. Third Isaiah is set after the exile and their return to Jerusalem. Chapter 40 is the most important text in the entire, very long book of Isaiah. It is used as the biblical setting for Handel’s “Messiah” as it has been treated by many Christians to predict the birth of Jesus. After all, the prophet Isaiah says, “Behold your God.”

I have never been comfortable rejecting the idea that the birth of Jesus was foretold six centuries earlier by writers telling their own, particular story of the destruction of Jerusalem, the deportation of the Jews and their eventual return and rebuilding. I think we are in a much better place if we try to understand the “Old Testament” or Hebrew bible stories in their own context and setting, and then work to understand the Christian scriptures in their own particular historic and cultural setting. If we fail to do that, we are just painting Michelangelo’s “Creation” onto the ceiling of a Burger King.

If we want to understand Michelangelo’s “Creation of Adam,” we need to go to Rome, see it in the Sistine Chapel. We need to understand what was going on with the artist, with the pope and the historical and religious circumstances of the day. If you do that work, you will arrive at a different place than if you were looking at a copy on the ceiling of a burger joint.

In chapter 39, the Jewish King Hezekiah entertains official political envoys from Babylon. He proudly shows them everything in his palace, his granaries, and his armory. He ruled Israel more than twenty years. He inherited a very successful and sprawling Jerusalem from his predecessors. He is very proud and that is his downfall. Isaiah warns the king that Babylon will come and take everything away from Jerusalem and the king’s descendants will serve the king of Babylon. Upon hearing this horrifying prediction, Hezekiah thinks it is just fine as he concludes saying, “There will be peace and security in my lifetime.” He is obviously only interested in his own well-being.

The exiled Jews believed their plight was because of their sin. Referring to the Jews as the Daughter of Zion, Isaiah says they have “received from the Lord’s hand double in exchange for [or because of] all her sins.” This may not be a helpful image of God as punisher, but this is what they believed at the time.

Here’s the shocker for me. Chapter 39 ends first Isaiah by giving the circumstances leading up to the Babylonian conquest and destruction of Jerusalem. Second Isaiah is about what happens to the Jewish community while they are in exile for seventy years. But chapter 40 is like a flash forward. It is written as if the exile has come to an end and God has begun to bring them back to Jerusalem. But nowhere in Isaiah can you find an account of the conquest and exile itself.

You can find the exile mentioned in Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Lamentations, but not Isaiah. The Babylonians wrote extensively about it in a book called “The Babylonian Chronicles.” Did the writers of Isaiah omit the event because it was too painful? Or, were the details of such an event too distracting from the proclamation Isaiah was compelled to make? I favor the latter interpretation.

The entire program of this book is twofold: First, to give to a traumatized people an assurance of comfort. Their circumstances may not be comfortable right now, but they will be comforted. For a thousand years, the center of Jewish life and culture was worship in the Jerusalem temple, and now it is utterly destroyed. Witnessing this destruction was disorienting to the Jews. The center of their life was

gone. They believed that God resided in the inner chamber of the temple, in the Holy of Holies, and now YHWH is gone. The people feel bereft and adrift.

Isaiah is told by God to first comfort God's people. Isaiah is to lift up the people who have lost hope, to give them hope and comfort. Isaiah is to announce that they have served their time and now it is time to come home. YHWH will return to Jerusalem with them and the people are to announce to all the neighboring cities of Judah, "The Glory of the Lord shall be revealed." and "Behold, your God."

This glory of God to the Jews meant respect, honor and majesty. The word has implications of a physical heaviness like an immense weight. The later, Christian scriptures will use a Greek word we also translate as glory, but it is more of a legal term meaning good reputation or honor. Isaiah begins the entire book with the vision of the year the King Uzziah died and he sees the Lord sitting on a throne. The angels and cherubim are chanting "Holy, Holy, Holy, the whole earth is filled with your glory." The glory of God is the immense weight of the earth itself. It is the physical presence of God.

The second goal of Isaiah is to proclaim to the people that the glory of God has returned. God is right here with us. This God is more powerful than armies. This God is more powerful than plagues and viruses. And at the same time, this God will comfort us.

He 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

Silence for reflection after the sermon.

The Nicene Creed *All in unison;*

Please stand .

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life who proceeds from the Father. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayers of the People

Please kneel, sit or stand.

Reader: As we have offered gratitude for God's grace upon this community, let us now offer our gifts to the Lord, trusting that by the power of the Holy Spirit, we will be led to ever more faithful fellowship and service.

Reader: For peace from things that separate us from one another and for our salvation.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, especially...

People: **St. John's, Woodward ; Diocese of West Virginia; Espíritu Santo Episcopal Church , Tulsa.**

Reader: For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For...

People: **Michael, our Presiding Bishop; Poulson, our Bishop; Bob and Tom, our clergy; Tim & Jennifer, our wardens; vestry, delegates, and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God. Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people. We pray for our leaders, especially...

People: **Donald, our President; Mike, our Vice-president; Markwayne, our Congressman; James & Jim, our Senators; Kevin, our Governor; and Marlon, our Mayor. Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For prisoners, the oppressed, all those in need or suffering, especially...

People: **Barbara & Family, Blackwell Family, Brad, Brewer Family, James & Shirley, Judy, Sherri, Bea, Eathen, Linda, John, Angie, Brian, Glen, Dante, Marilyn, Gary, Ann, Connie, Jan, Thomas, Cedric, Mary-Margaret, Jean, Barry, Cliff, Gabriella, Esther, Yee Se Ong, Ann, all those affected by the pandemic, all the front line workers involved with patient care, and those whose suffering is known only to God.**

Reader: We pray for those in the armed services. We pray for those who have died (*especially...*)

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: For ourselves, our families, and those we love. We pray for those in our parish, especially ...

People: **James, Marissa, Scott.**

Reader: Also those who are traveling, (*especially...*)

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Reader: Bless all those everywhere who give themselves to the service of others; that with wisdom, patience, and courage, they may minister to the suffering, the friendless, and the needy for love of him who laid down his life for us.

People: **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Reader: Remembering our most blessed Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ.

People: **To you, O Lord.**

Reader: Heavenly Father, you have promised to hear what we ask in the Name of your Son: accept and fulfill our petitions, we pray, not as we ask in our ignorance, nor as we deserve in our sinfulness, but as you know and love us in your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

People: **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

Please kneel, sit or stand.

Celebrant: Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Silence may be kept.

Celebrant and People:

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

Celebrant: Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

Peace

Please stand as you are able.

Celebrant: The peace of Christ be always with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Announcements, Birthdays & Anniversary Blessings

Please be seated.

Offertory

During this time we make an offering to the church to help maintain its mission in the world, and we fully offer ourselves to be Christ in the world around us at this time. The offering of bread and wine are brought to the altar.

Offertory Sentence:

Celebrant: But do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Hebrews 13:15, 16

Offertory Anthem:**Every Valley – J. N Beck***Rick Ewing***Doxology:*****Praise God from whom all blessings flow****Please stand as you are able.*

*3 Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below; praise him above, ye heaven-ly host: praise Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Ghost.

The Great Thanksgiving**Sursum Corda***Celebrant:* The Lord be with you.*People:* **And also with you***Celebrant:* Lift up your hearts.*People:* **We lift them to the Lord***Celebrant:* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.*People:* **It is right to give him thanks and praise.****Sanctus: #S-125*****Holy, holy, holy Lord****Please stand, sit, or kneel.*

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Lord's Prayer:

Celebrant: And now, as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray:

Celebrant and People: **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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Fraction: #S-157

Lamb of God

Please remain seated.

O Lamb of God, that ta - kest a - way the
sins of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.
O Lamb of God, that ta - kest a - way the
sins of the world, have mer - cy up - on us.
O Lamb of God, that ta - kest a - way the
sins of the world, grant us thy peace.

Breaking of the Bread

A period of silence is kept.

Celebrant: The Gifts of God for the People of God. Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Communion Hymn:

Ken Yadon.

We Go Out To Do Our Work

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Celebrant: Let us pray.

Celebrant and People: **Eternal God, you have graciously accepted us as living members of our Savior Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Blessing

Celebrant: May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen.**

Closing Benediction:

Celebrant: Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! **Amen.** *(Ephesians 3:20–21)*

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and for ever more.
Amen

Sending

Celebrant: Let us go forth in the name of Christ..

People: **Thanks be to God**

Recessional Hymn: #65

Prepare the way, O Zion

Please stand and sing.

Words: Charles P. Price



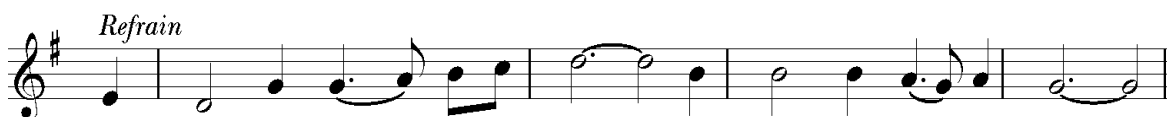
1 Pre - pare the way, O Zi - on, your Christ is draw - ing near!
2 He brings God's rule, O Zi - on; he comes from heaven a - bove.
3 Fling wide your gates, O Zi - on; your Sa - vior's rule em - brace.



Let ev - ery hill and val - ley a lev - el way ap - pear.
His rule is peace and free - dom, and jus - tice, truth, and love.
His tid - ings of sal - va - tion pro - claim in ev - ery place.



Greet One who comes in glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry.
Lift high your praise re - sound - ing, for grace and joy a - bound - ing.
All lands will bow be - fore him, their voic - es will a - dore him.



Oh, blest is Christ that came in God's most ho - ly name.

Sending

Celebrant: Let us go forth in the name of Christ.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Food for thought

1. How is Jesus good news in your life today?
2. Do you believe that Isaiah foretold the coming of Jesus 600 years earlier? why / why not?
3. If you believe Isaiah did foretell the coming of Jesus, what makes that ancient foretelling important to the overall story?
4. How will you proclaim good news to other people this week?

Poinsettias for the 2020 Christmas Altar



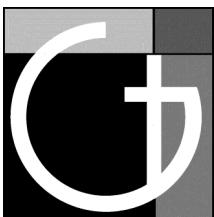
**Please make checks payable to: Grace Episcopal Church
with altar guild on the memo line and place it, along with this form,
into the offering plate or bring/mail it to the Parish Office.**

Name of Donor: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

**All donations must be received in the office no later than
Tuesday, December 15th, in order to be listed in the Christmas bulletin.**



Grace Episcopal

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Music Director: Kenneth Yadon

