

Service of Morning Prayer Advent 2 – December 4, 2022

Hymn 66, stanza 1 – Sleepers, wake!

“Sleepers, wake! A voice astounds us, the shout of rampart guards surround us;
Awake, Jerusalem, arise!

Midnight’s peace their cry has broken, their urgent summons clearly spoken:
The time has come, O maidens wise!

Rise up, and give us light; the Bridegroom is in sight, Alleluia!
Your lamps prepare and hasten there, that you the wedding feast may share.”

BCP - Page 40 - Greeting

Prepare ye the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

BCP – Pages 41 – Invitation to Confession

Dearly beloved, we have come together in the presence of Almighty God our heavenly Father, to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his Holy Word, and to ask, for ourselves and on behalf of others, those things that are necessary for our life and our salvation. And so that we may prepare ourselves in heart and mind to worship him, let us kneel or sit in silence, and with penitent and obedient hearts confess our sins, that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy.

BCP – Pages 41-42 – Confession and Absolution

*Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,
we have we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,
we have offended against thy holy laws,
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,
and we have done those things which we ought not to have done.*

*But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
spare thou those who confess their faults, restore thou those who are penitent,
according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord;
And grant, O most merciful father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly,
righteous, and sober life, to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.*

The almighty and merciful Lord, grant us absolution and remission of all our sins,
true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy
Spirit. *Amen.*

BCP – Page 42 - Gloria

O Lord, open thou our lips.
And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the
beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.*

BCP – Pages 44-45 – Venite

O come, let us sing unto the Lord;
 let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
 and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great god,
 and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are all the corners of the earth,
 and the strength of the hills is his also.
The sea is his and he made it,
 and his hands prepared the dry land.
O come, let us worship and fall down
 and kneel before the Lord our Maker.
For he is the Lord our God,
 and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.
O worship; the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
 let the whole earth stand in awe of him.
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth,
 and with righteousness to judge the world and the peoples with his truth.

Psalm 122

First Reading – Isaiah 2:1-5

Second Reading – Romans 13:11-14

Hymn 61, stanza 2 – Sleepers, wake!

Zion hears the watchmen singing: her heart with joyful hope is springing,
she wakes and hurries through the night.

Forth he comes, her Bridegroom glorious in strength of grace, in truth victorious;
her star is risen, her light grows bright.

Now come, most worthy Lord, God's Son, Incarnate Word. Alleluia!
We follow all and heed our call to come into the banquet hall.

Gospel – Matthew 24:36-44

Sermon

BCP – page 53 - The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth;

*And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,*

Was crucified, dead, and buried.

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven.

and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.

From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

*I believe in the Holy Ghost,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.*

BCP – page 54 – the Lord’s Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.

BCP – page 55 – Suffrages A

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;

And grant us thy salvation.

Endue thy ministers with righteousness;

And make thy chosen people joyful.

Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

For only in thee can we live in safety.

Lord, keep this nation under thy care;

And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let thy way be known upon earth;

Thy saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us clean hearts, O God;

And sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.

Collect for 2nd Sunday of Advent

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.*

BCP Collect for Sundays

O God, you make us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Give us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the week to come may be spent in your favor; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

BCP – pages 58-59 - The General Thanksgiving

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we thine unworthy servants
do give thee most humble and hearty thanks
for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men.*

*We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for thine inestimable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*

*And, we beseech thee,
give us that due sense of all thy mercies,
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful;
and that we show forth thy praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up our selves to thy service,
and by walking before thee
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost,
be all honor and glory, world without end. *Amen.**

Announcements

Hymn 717 - America – portions of stanzas 1 and 3

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;
Long my our land be bright with freedom's holy light;
Protect us by thy might, great God, our King.*

BCP – page 59 – Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. Amen.

BCP – page 59 – The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Hymn 61 – Sleepers wake! – stanza 3

Lamb of God, the heavens adore you; let saints and angels sing before you,
as harps and cymbals swell the sound.

Twelve great pearls, the city's portals: through them we stream to join the
immortals as we with joy your throne surround.

No eye has known the sight, no ear heard such delight: Alleluia!
Therefore we sing to greet our King: for ever let our praises ring.

Dismissal

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Sermon for 2nd Sunday of Advent, December 4, 2022

The theme of our lessons on this 2nd Sunday of Advent is “Shall.” Not “shell” as in “seashell.” But “shall” as in “this is definitely going to happen.”

In today’s passage of 10 verses from the Prophet **Isaiah**, the word “shall” is used 17 times. In today’s **Psalm**, which contains only 9 verses, the word “shall” is used 4 times. And in today’s Gospel of 12 verses, **Matthew** uses the word “will” four times. That whole collection of verses represents a very high level of confidence in God’s love.

The message, the Good News, is that God promised a Savior and God will deliver a Savior. And you and I are here not only to echo that hope, that promise, but to share in the Good News that God’s Savior has indeed arrived. The promise has been fulfilled. You and I live on this side of the Savior’s arrival.

In this Season of Advent, we are getting excited about the fulfillment of hope. And maybe we are impatient as well. “Hurray up, Mary, have your baby. The world has been waiting. The world needs a savior. We’re counting on you, Mary. And we’re counting on God who is responsible for your child. Hurray up, please, Lord.” Using the language of today’s Collect, we are eager to “greet with joy.”

Well, as eager as we are for Jesus to arrive, grow up, and heal the world, we know that the real test is not the 33 years of Jesus’ life, but the impact that his disciples have during their lifetimes. That would be you and I.

Oh yes, God in Jesus makes the big difference. He shall and he will. We can count on God’s engagement. It is our engagement – our discipleship – that is up in the air. Are we participating in the “shall” and the “will”? Are we, through our beliefs and actions, reinforcing Divine intent? Is our “joy” at Christmas shared with others, or are we counting on God to do, not just the heavy lifting, but the lighter lifting as well?

The Season of Advent is really the Season of Fresh Starts, the Season of yet another chance to serve the Lord, the Season of not only greeting the Lord with joy, but sharing in the Lord’s work.

Traditionally the four Sundays in Advent have four themes, expressed in a variety of ways, including a candle for each Sunday: **Hope, Faith, Joy and Peace**. All leading to the Christmas Candle with a theme of Light, as in the Light of the World.

Last Sunday the **Hope** candle was lit. It reminds us that we can share in the Lord's work by bringing hope to others, whatever their circumstance. And the best way to bring hope to others – really the only effective way – is to be hopeful ourselves.

All of us, I suspect, have been disappointed in some way, but we have rebounded. We didn't let our disappointment carry the day. We learned from that disappointment, maybe even apologized if our behavior contributed to that disappointment, and then we moved on.

Why? Because we were, we are, hopeful. We know things can be better and we know that we can be part of that improvement. And, more to the point of this Season, we know that our hope is lifted every time we revisit the Christmas Story.

This Sunday, we light the **Faith** Candle. Faith is Hope in the extreme. It's the conviction that God, at a level beyond our understanding, is in control. And in ways we don't always understand – probably rarely understand – there will be a positive outcome. It will take time, probably well beyond our time, but it will happen, all under the umbrella of a loving and engaged God.

Did you hear it? It will happen. It shall happen. "The wolf shall live with the lamb." This confident attitude is expressed by St. Paul in this morning's lesson from **Romans**. He speaks of "steadfastness." Don't give up on hope. Stand tall. The contemporary version is "Hang in there."

That's the message of John the Baptist in this morning's Gospel. "God will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." Don't just hope. Have Faith. It will happen. Look at the language: "He will baptize ... he will clear ... he will burn." In short, things are moving, and God is in control.

But, we're not there yet. Yes, things are moving, and, yes, God is in control. But there is plenty of work left for God to do and for us to do. Again, God could do it all, but chooses to include us in the process. The "do it all" dimension is

expressed in today's Psalm: "Blessed by the Lord God, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous deeds!" But immediately following in the Psalm is this qualifier: "and may all the earth be filled with his glory."

Guess who does the filling? You and I do. We carry the banner. We demonstrate the trust. We model the "filling of the earth with God's glory." We are players in this whole enterprise. We are, by God's appointment and our acceptance of that appointment, ambassadors of and for Christ.

And we are reminded of this designation every year in the Season of Advent. And this is not just wishful thinking. And, as powerful as hope is – the first Sunday, faith is even stronger – the second Sunday. And the stronger our faith is, **joy** – the third Sunday – is stronger yet.

Yes, the harder we work, the happier we are, the more joyful we are, the more satisfied we are. This relationship is true in all sorts of arenas, including what we do in this place in thanksgiving for the Gift of Christ.

And this Gift will be with us very soon. Last week, we sang "Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding." This week we sang "The bridegroom is in sight." Yes, he's getting closer, which is very exciting, not just for the children, but for their elders. Some of whom are here today.

God bless this Holy Season of Advent, this Season of Expectation, this Season of Excitement. But, we're not quite there yet. More loving work ahead for all parties: for the Lord for fulfilling a promise, for Mary and Joseph for accepting their role in this fulfillment, and for you and me in recognizing that we have role too, namely to "let our praises ring."

Amen.

Lessons for 2nd Sunday of Advent – December 4, 2022

Collect: Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way of 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 forever. *Amen.*

First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

Give the King your justice, O God.
and your righteousness to the King's Son;
That he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;

That the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the little hills brings righteousness.
He shall defend the needy among the people;
he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor.
He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.
He shall come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.
In this time shall the righteous flourish;
there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.
Blessed by the Lord God, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous deeds!
And blessed by his glorious Name for ever!
and may all the earth be filled with his glory. Amen. Amen.

Second Reading: Romans 15:4-13

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promise given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the people praise him"; and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope." May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary;; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*