

“It is the beautiful task of Advent to awaken in all of us memories of goodness and thus to open doors of hope.”

“At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart?
Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving the others with God's own love and concern.” “

Prelude: Prelude on tune “Divinum Mysterium” Miles Martin
Processional Once He came Hymn #53

Bless the Lord who forgives all our sin, **His mercy endures forever.**

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

God of peace, during this Advent season, keep us from getting caught up in the busyness and chaos of the world around us. Help us to slow down, so that we may find rest in the Prince of Peace, your son, Jesus Christ. As we prepare for his coming, make us instruments of your peace in our homes, in our schools, in our work and in our world. **Amen.**

Song of Praise Come thou long expected Jesus Hymnal # 66

The Collect of the Day

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.**

The Lessons 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.

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

²Speak 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.

³A voice cries out: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every 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.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹Get 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!"

¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

¹¹He 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.

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

Psalm 85 Benedixisti, Domine

1 You have been gracious to your land, O LORD, *
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

2 You have forgiven the iniquity of your people *
and blotted out all their sins.

8 I will listen to what the LORD God is saying, *
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.

9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him, *
that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth have met together; *
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

11 Truth shall spring up from the earth, *
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

12 The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, *
and our land will yield its increase.

13 Righteousness shall go before him, *
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

⁸Do 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. ⁹The 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. ¹⁰But 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.

¹¹Since 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, ¹²waiting 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? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

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

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, according to Mark, **Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.’ ”

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And 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. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He 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. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

The Sermon

The Nicene Creed

[in unison]

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 and the Son.
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

Form VI

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

Silence

For all people in their daily life and work;

For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.

For this community, the nation, and the world; **For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.**

For the just and proper use of your creation;

For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.

For Michael, our Presiding Bishop, and Matthew, our Bishop; and

for all bishops and other ministers; **For all who serve God in his Church.**

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.

Silence The People may add their own petitions

Hear us, Lord; **For your mercy is great.**

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.

Silence The People may add their own thanksgivings

We will exalt you, O God our King; **And praise your Name for ever and ever.**

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.

Silence The People may add their own petitions

Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them; **Who put their trust in you.**

The Confession

We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father;

in your compassion forgive us our sins,

known and unknown, things done and left undone;

and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life,

to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Bishop, when present, or the Priest, stands and says:

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

The Peace

Offertory— *please stand as the bread and wine are brought forth, as the communion gifts are symbolically from the people for God, and again as the gifts of the people's treasure is presented for the growth of the kingdom. The doxology is sung as the recognition that all we have comes from God.*

Offertory My Lord, what a morning

Richrd Billingham

The Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;
Praise God above the heavenly host; Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer D

The Lord be with you.....**and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.....**we lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.....**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is truly right to glorify you, Father, and to give you thanks; for you alone are God, living and true, dwelling in light inaccessible from before time and for ever. Fountain of life and source of all goodness, you made all things and fill them with your blessing; you created them to rejoice in the splendor of your radiance. Countless throngs of angels stand before you to serve you night and day; and, beholding the glory of your presence, they offer you unceasing praise. Joining with them, and giving voice to every creature under heaven, we acclaim you, and glorify your Name, as we sing

[The Sanctus]

The people stand or kneel.

We acclaim you, holy Lord, glorious in power. Your mighty works reveal your wisdom and love. You formed us in your own image, giving the whole world into our care, so that, in obedience to you, our Creator, we might rule and serve all your creatures. When our disobedience took us far from you, you did not abandon us to the power of death. In your mercy you came to our help, so that in seeking you we might find you. Again and again you called us into covenant with you, and through the prophets you taught us to hope for salvation. Father, you loved the world so much that in the fullness of time you sent your only Son to be our Savior. Incarnate by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, he lived as one of us, yet without sin. To the poor he proclaimed the good news of salvation; to prisoners, freedom; to the sorrowful, joy. To fulfill your purpose he gave himself up to death; and, rising from the grave, destroyed death, and made the whole creation new. And, that we might live no longer for ourselves, but for him who died and rose for us, he sent the Holy Spirit, his own first gift for those who believe, to complete his work in the world, and to bring to fulfillment the sanctification of all.

When the hour had come for him to be glorified by you, his heavenly Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end; at supper with them he took bread, and when he had given thanks to you, he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, "Take, eat: This is my Body, which is given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

After supper he took the cup of wine; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and said, "Drink this, all of you: This is my Blood of the new Covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Whenever you drink it, do this for the remembrance of me."

Father, we now celebrate this memorial of our redemption. Recalling Christ's death and his descent among the dead, proclaiming his resurrection and ascension to your right hand, awaiting his coming in glory; and offering to you, from the gifts you have given us, this bread and this cup, we praise you and we bless you.

Celebrant and People **We praise you, we bless you, we give thanks to you, and we pray to you, Lord our God.**

Lord, we pray that in your goodness and mercy your Holy Spirit may descend upon us, and upon these gifts, sanctifying them and showing them to be holy gifts for your holy people, the bread of life and the cup of salvation, the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Grant that all who share this bread and cup may become one body and one spirit, a living sacrifice in Christ, to the praise of your Name.

Remember, Lord, your one holy catholic and apostolic Church, redeemed by the blood of your Christ. Reveal its unity, guard its faith, and preserve it in peace.

Remember all who have died in the peace of Christ, and those whose faith is known to you alone; bring them into the place of eternal joy and light. And grant that we may find our inheritance with the Blessed Virgin Mary, with patriarchs and matriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs, with Stephen and all the saints who have found favor with you in ages past. We praise you in union with them and give you glory through your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **AMEN.**

In unison: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name,
your kingdom 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 kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

The Fraction *sung in unison*

The invitation to communion: The gifts of God for the people of God.

All Baptized believers are invited to receive communion.

After communion. a prayer for those worshipping online:

In union, O Lord, with your faithful people at every altar in your church where Holy Eucharist is being celebrated, I offer you praise and thanksgiving. Since I cannot receive you today in the sacrament of your body and blood, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. Cleanse and strengthen me with your grace.
May I live in you and you in me. Amen.

The post communion prayer of the gathered: *[in unison]*

Our Lord says: Behold, I come quickly. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.

Father, we thank you for feeding us with the Body and Blood of your Son Jesus Christ. At his first advent, he came to seek and save that which was lost: grant that, on the last day, he may be found in us, and we in him; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(from the Scottish Episcopal Church)

Recessional: Shepherds of Souls

Hymn # 343

Postlude O come, o come, Emmanuel

J. Wayne Kerr