

Ascension Lutheran Church

First Sunday of Advent..... November 29, 2020

Welcome, All, In the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord!

Stir up your power, and come! Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open and cries out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

PRELUDE

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,
whose forgiveness is sure
and whose steadfast love endures forever.

Amen.

Together let us honestly and humbly confess
that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence for reflection.

Loving and forgiving God,

we confess that we are held captive by sin.

In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another.

Restore us, O God.

Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ.

Amen.

People of God, hear this glad news:

by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—

free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God.

May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace,
and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.



1 For the beau - ty of the earth, for the beau - ty of the skies,
 2 For the won - der of each hour of the day and of the night,
 3 For the joy of ear and eye, for the heart and mind's de - light,
 4 For the joy of hu - man love, broth - er, sis - ter, par - ent, child,
 5 For each per - fect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;



for the love which from our birth o - ver and a - round us lies:
 hill and vale and tree and flow'r, sun and moon and stars of light:
 for the mys - tic har - mo - ny link - ing sense to sound and sight:
 friends on earth and friends a - bove; for all gen - tle thoughts and mild:
 for thy - self, best gift di - vine, to our world so free - ly giv'n:

Refrain

Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sac - ri - fice of praise.

Text: Follitt S. Pierpoint, 1835–1917, alt.
 Music: DIX, Conrad Kocher, 1786–1872

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**HYMN #257****"O Come, O Come Emmanuel" Verse 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.

ADVENT BLESSING

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

You call all nations to walk in your light and to seek your ways of justice and peace, for the night is past, and the dawn of your coming is near.

Bless us as we light the first candle of this wreath.

Rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes and welcome him into our hearts and homes, for he is our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God forever.

Amen.

Silence for reflection while the first candle is lit.

HYMN #257

“O Come, O Come Emmanuel” Verse 2

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and
stay; teach us your will and guide
our way.

Refrain

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

FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
so that the mountains would quake at your presence—

²as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,

so that the nations might tremble at your presence!

³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.

⁴From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him.

⁵You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed.

⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.

We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

⁷There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you;

for you have hidden your face from us,
and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.

⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;

we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.

⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

The holy gospel according to Mark, the thirteenth chapter.

Glory to you O Lord.

[Jesus said:] ²⁴“In those days, after that suffering,
the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light,
²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven,
and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.

²⁶Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory.

²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸“From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. ²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. ³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. ³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²“But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. ³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. ³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, ³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. ³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.”

The gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you O Christ.

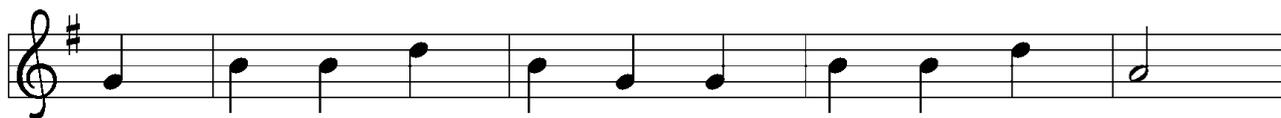
SERMON The Rev. Christina Auch



1 Im - mor - tal, in - vis - i - ble, God on - ly wise,
 2 Un - rest - ing, un - hast - ing, and si - lent as light,
 3 To all, life thou giv - est, to both great and small;
 4 Thou reign - est in glo - ry; thou dwell - est in light;



in light in - ac - ces - si - ble hid from our eyes,
 nor want - ing, nor wast - ing, thou rul - est in might;
 in all life thou liv - est, the true life of all;
 thine an - gels a - dore thee, all veil - ing their sight;



most bless - ed, most glo - rious, the An - cient of Days,
 thy jus - tice like moun - tains high soar - ing a - bove
 we blos - som and flour - ish like leaves on the tree,
 all laud we would ren - der; oh, help us to see



al - might - y, vic - to - rious, thy great name we praise!
 thy clouds which are foun - tains of good - ness and love.
 and with - er and per - ish, but naught chang - eth thee.
 'tis on - ly the splen - dor of light hid - eth thee!

Text: Walter Chalmers Smith, 1824–1908, alt.
 Music: ST. DENIO, Welsh traditional

NICENE CREED

God has gathered his people into one Church through Christ. Together with sisters and brothers throughout the world, we confess our faith...

**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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary, and became truly human.
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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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 INTERCESSION

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

Silence for reflection.

We pray for the ministry we share in Christ's name. Open our hearts to your call for justice, peace, and healing. Attune us to the needs of the world as you draw near. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for this planet in need of restoration: for devastated habitats, polluted waters, thawing ice, blazing fires, swelling floods, and long-lasting droughts. Renew the face of the earth and our relationship to it. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

We pray for all people who care for others in our community and around the world. Fill them with compassion and the power to respond with justice for those who are

oppressed, with welcome for those who are excluded, and with relief for those who suffer. We pray especially for those we name aloud now or silently in our hearts...

Grant Adcock (Bob and Vicki Jones' grandson), **Kathy** Backof (Donna Lilly's friend), **Dan** Birch (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Carolyn** Blitz (Bill Bridges' friend), **Cody** Bryant (Bob Bryant's grandson), **Chris** Carman (Judy Bridges' friend), **Martha** Cash (Bill Bridge's friend), **Edna** Cooper (Bill Bridges Aunt), **Joan** Craig (Clarann Schiavo's friend), **The Davenport Family** (Dave and Priscilla Williams friends), **Charles and Mary** Degree (Karen Long's friends), **Saher** Degree (Gail Sherman's friend), **Gloria** Dellinger (Greg Blalock's aunt), **Charles** Duval (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Tim** Farmer (Pastor Christina and Jamie's friend), **Avan** Fields (Carol Berger's friend), **Ann** Fitzsimmons (Steve and Jenny White's friend), **Mike** Greene (Gail Sherman's friend), **Markye and Carl** Greenwald (DeBell's friends), **Rena** Huffman (Jim Wilson's sister-in-law), **Michael** Huntsinger (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Joe** Hutchinson (William Coyne's friend), **Patti** Jenkins (Priscilla Williams' friend), **Steve** Jolly (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Mark** Kent (Majorie Olsen's son), **Rachel** Kidwell (Dave William's niece), **The Ledbetter Family** (Matthew Lilly's friends), **Bryan** Legrand (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Jim** Lilly (Dick and Donna Lilly's son), **Sonya and Gerald** Lovelace (Bill Bridges friend), **Brenda** Lowery (Gail Sherman's friend), **Pam** Lucas (Ludy Wilkie's friend), **Eva** McCombs (Sandra Waldrop's mother), **Bernice** McDaniels (Dean Davis' daughter), **Janice** McGoven (Eleanor Hendricks' sister), **Sheri Dawn** Mack (Relative of Karen Hubbard), **Maribeth** Norris Mies (Carol Berger's cousin), **Wanda** Mullinax (Edith Kelly's niece), **Teresa** Olsen (Marjorie Olsen's daughter-in-law), **Bob** Patzer (Carol Berger's brother-in-law), **Linda** Patzer (Carol Berger's sister), **Margaret** Peruzzi (Carol Berger's mother), **Liz and Ron** Dal Poggetto (Judy Bridges' friends), **Tommy and Paula** Price (Edith Kelly's nephew), **Bonnie** Reidy (Dave and Jennie Lambert's friend), **Beth** Rhyne (Ladley and Jane Burn's friend), **Harold** Rhyne (Ladley and Jane Burn's friend), **Lola** Ritchie (Rose Cook's mother), **Shannon** Sellers (Libby Stone's cousin), **Jean** Tesseneer (Bill Bridges friend), **Pam** Unger (Willi and Ray Lacy's friend), **The Vonbehren Family** (Barbara Davis' cousins), **Edith** Walker (Allen and Lisa Philbeck's friend's mother), **Molly and Darryl** Waterstraat (Karen Hubbard's friends), **Alfie** Welch (Renee Buchanan's brother), **Lan** Welch (Renee Buchanan's mother), **Christopher** Willever (David Williams' grandson), **Mary Ann** Woolley (Sandra Waldrop's aunt), **Denise and Savannah** Yount (Sandra

Waldrop's friends)

Members: Dean Davis, Lin Washburn, Dot Paul, Bob Bryant, William Coyne, Jim Wilson, Bobbie Johnson, Gerald Washburn, Ray Valentine, Lucinda Wallen, Lisa Upton, Ludy Wilkie and Jenny White.

In Undergraduate College: Emma Auch, Brooke Buchanan, Samantha Hoffman, Jacob Stone, Catherine Mae Lilly

Those Awaiting Arrival of Children: Kristen and Becca Gillespie (daughter and daughter-in-law of Joanna Gillespie.)

Ministry Partners: Hospice Cleveland County staff, leaders and those they serve.

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for people who are in crisis as the seasons change: for those without homes facing severe weather, for those who are unemployed or underemployed, and for those in poverty or facing food insecurity. Relieve their burdens, sustain their bodies, and ease their minds. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for the people in our families and congregation who live with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, addiction, and other invisible illnesses (*especially*). Ease their suffering and support them when they struggle. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

Amen.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace on video or say: "Peace be with you" from wherever you are or type it in the chat or comments.

OFFERING

*Make a one time or recurring gift using **the website** or **the GivePlus app** on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.*

*Or **text 844-906-2283** and enter the amount you wish to donate. Then click the registration link and enter your payment information. You will receive a verification text as well as an email receipt. For future giving, simply send a text to the same number with the amount you wish to give, and your donation will process automatically.*

Or mail your regular tithe or offering to PO Box 266, Shelby, NC 28151.

OFFERTORY

"Doxology"

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
praise him, all creatures here below;
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;
praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray...

Holy God, the Beginning and the Ending, our Hope as we wait,
we praise you for joining us to your people of old.

We bless you for your prophets who call us to righteousness
and promise a new earth with peace for all.

For the Word of your covenant, we thank you, O God. **We thank you, O God.**

We praise you for the coming of Jesus our Lord,
who lifts up the lowly, heals the suffering world,
and proclaims your way of mercy and truth.

For your Word who is Christ, we magnify you, O God. **We magnify you, O God.**

Send your Spirit on all who receive your Word.

Nurture our faith with your grace,
accompany us with your might,
and empower our zeal for your justice and joy.

For your Word through the church, we praise you, O God. **We praise you, O God.**

All praise to you, holy God,
today, tomorrow, and forever. Amen. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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, forever and ever.

Amen.

SENDING OF HOME COMMUNION

When our congregation gathered for Holy Communion with all the saints from every time and place, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and the love shown us in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. The holy meal of the Lord's supper was shared. Now we share this Word of life, and this bread and cup of blessing, that we may share in these same gifts and be strengthened by the Christian community, even though we gather separately for a time.

Gathered at the Lord's table, our congregation remembered with thanksgiving that "in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

This is the supper of our Lord Jesus Christ. This bread and cup, shared in our community of faith, are here given for you.

Share the bread, saying, "The body of Christ, given for you." And share the wine or grape juice, saying, "The blood of Christ, shed for you."

Let us pray.

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

BLESSING

The Lord bless us and keep us. The Lord's face shine on us with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon us with favor and ☩ give us peace.

Amen.

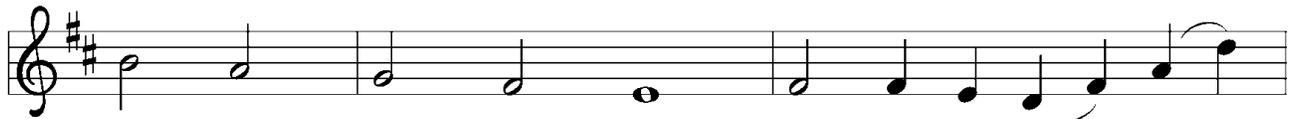
HYMN #848

"Give to Our God Immortal Praise!"

Verses 1-2



1 Give to our God im - mor - tal praise! Mer - cy and
2 He sent his Son with pow'r to save from guilt and
3 Give to the Lord of lords re - nown; the King of



truth are all his ways. Won - ders of grace to
dark - ness and the grave. Won - ders of grace to
kings with glo - ry crown. His mer - cies ev - er



God be - long; re - peat his mer - cies in your song.
God be - long; re - peat his mer - cies in your song.
shall en - dure when lords and kings are known no more!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

Music: DUKE STREET, attr. John Hatton, d. 1793

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Coronavirus Response: Our sanctuary remains closed, but the fellowship hall is available for small groups (less than 10) with social distancing and masks required. Contact Debby in the church office for more information.

Prayer Concerns: Please call or email the office or text Pastor Christina at 704-472-7783 to update prayer requests. You may leave a voicemail but please provide the spelling of any names, and your relationship to the person being prayed for.

Please continue your tithes and offerings. Make a one time or recurring gift using **the website** or **the GivePlus app** on iPhone or Android. You can give using ACH (bank account), Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

Or **text 844-906-2283** and enter the amount you wish to donate. Then click the registration link and enter your payment information. You will receive a verification text as well as an email receipt. For future giving, simply send a text to the same number with the amount you wish to give, and your donation will process automatically.

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Ascension Lutheran Church

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