

Bethlehem Lutheran Church Wagga Wagga

2nd Sunday of Advent

6th December, 2020

The Triune God meets with us

John said: 'After me will come one more powerful than I,
the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie.

I baptise you with water,

but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.' (Mark 1:7,8 NIV)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

We meditate on the song 'AT 420 Get Ready'

Get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready,

Jesus is coming soon! Oh Yes!

Get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready,

Jesus is really true! Oh Yes!

1. Are the people ready to sing and dance and laugh?
This is God's Adventure, and it's coming fast.
Ready, set, go!

Get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready,

Jesus is coming soon! Oh Yes!

Get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready,

Jesus is really true! Oh Yes!

2. Are the people ready for Jesus to arrive?
This is God's Adventure, let the whole world cry.
Ready, set, go!

Get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready,

Jesus is coming soon! Oh Yes!

Get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready,

Jesus is really true! Oh Yes!

3. For we the people and this is the place.
This is God's Adventure, let's be in the race.
Ready, set, go!

*Get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready,
Jesus is coming soon! Oh Yes!
Get ready, get ready, get ready, get ready,
Jesus is really true! Oh Yes!*

*Words and music: Gerry Holmes
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We confess our sins to God the Father...

Friends in Christ:

God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. ^{Jn 3:17}

Therefore, let's confess our sins to God our Father, and ask him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

We confess that we are born in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have failed to do.

We have not loved you with our whole heart, and we have not loved our neighbour as ourselves.

We deserve your eternal punishment.

**For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us.
Amen.**

I ask each of you in the presence of God who searches the heart: Do you confess that you have sinned, and do you repent of your sins?

I do.

Do you believe that Jesus Christ has redeemed you from all your sins, and do you desire forgiveness in his name?

I do.

Do you intend with the help of the Holy Spirit to live as in God's presence, and to strive daily to lead a holy life, even as Christ has made you holy?

I do.

...and God forgives us

I have good news for you!

St Paul tells us: 'God shows his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.' Rom 5:8

As a called and ordained servant of the word, I announce the grace of God to all of you. On behalf of my Lord Jesus Christ, and by his command, I forgive the sins of all of you who repent and believe, in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

Peace be with you.

Amen.

We light the 2nd Advent candle and pray

Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world. The prophets foretold that you would bring peace to the world and save your people. Bring peace to our hearts, and show God's love to all people.

Amen.

Psalm 85:1, 2, 8-13

¹ You, Lord, showed favor to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

**Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation**

² You forgave the iniquity of your people
and covered all their sins.

**Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation**

⁸ I will listen to what God the Lord says;
he promises peace to his people, his faithful servants—
but let them not turn to folly.

⁹ Surely his salvation is near those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

**Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation**

¹⁰ Love and faithfulness meet together;

righteousness and peace kiss each other.

¹¹ Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,
and righteousness looks down from heaven.

¹² The Lord will indeed give what is good,
and our land will yield its harvest.

¹³ Righteousness goes before him
and prepares the way for his steps.

**Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation**

Jesus leads us as we pray

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Let us pray that we are ready for Christ's coming. *[silence]*

Merciful God, you sent your messengers to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation.

Turn us away from our sins, so that we greet our coming redeemer, Jesus Christ, with joy. For he lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

1st Reading – God speaks through his prophets

Isaiah 40:1-11 *Prepare the way of the Lord*

¹ Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.

² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

³ A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the Lord;
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.

⁴ Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;

the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

⁵ And the glory of the Lord will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

⁶ A voice says, “Cry out.”
And I said, “What shall I cry?”

“All people are like grass,
and all their faithfulness is like the flowers of the field.

⁷ The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the Lord blows on them.
Surely the people are grass.

⁸ The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God endures forever.”

⁹ You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.

You who bring good news to Jerusalem,
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,
“Here is your God!”

¹⁰ See, the Sovereign Lord comes with power,
and he rules with a mighty arm.

See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.

¹¹ He tends his flock like a shepherd:
He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

The time has come for us to wake up from our sleep.
Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

2nd Reading – God speaks through his apostles

2 Peter 3:8-15a *The day of the Lord*

⁸ But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. ⁹ The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

¹⁰ But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.

¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹² as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. ¹³ But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

¹⁴ So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. ¹⁵ Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him.

The time has come for us to wake up from our sleep.

Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

Gospel Reading – God speaks through Jesus

Mark 1:1-8 *John the Baptist prepares the way*

¹ The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, ² as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

“I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way” —

³ “a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.’”

⁴ And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵ The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. ⁶ John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷ And this was his message: “After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸ I baptize you with water, but

he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

The time has come for us to wake up from our sleep.

Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly.

Thank you, Lord Jesus, for sending John the Baptist to announce your coming to save people.

Help us to repent and believe in you.

Amen.

We confess our faith in the Triune God

**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 Spirit,
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 sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty,
from thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

Amen.

** 'catholic' here meaning 'universal'*

We meditate on the song 'AT 434 Sing Out With Joy, He is Coming'

Sing out with joy, he is coming, hallelujah!

Jesus our Lord will soon be here.

He is our life, our hope, our salvation!

Sing out with joy, for Christ is near!

1. Just when this world seems lost in darkness,
Satan may think he's had his way.

Jesus will come in his mighty power,
Driving the dark away!

Sing out with joy, he is coming, hallelujah!
Jesus our Lord will soon be here.
He is our life, our hope, our salvation!
Sing out with joy, for Christ is near!

2. When all our worldly plans are failing,
When all our schemes have turned to dust,
Our only hope will be Christ, our Saviour;
He is the living one!

Sing out with joy, he is coming, hallelujah!
Jesus our Lord will soon be here.
He is our life, our hope, our salvation!
Sing out with joy, for Christ is near!

3. None of our earthly kings can save us,
None of our earthly power or might.
Jesus alone is our one salvation,
He is eternal life!

Sing out with joy, he is coming, hallelujah!
Jesus our Lord will soon be here.
He is our life, our hope, our salvation!
Sing out with joy, for Christ is near!

Words and music: David R Dell
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God speaks to us

We meditate on the hymn 'On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry'

1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
announces that the Lord is nigh;
awake and hearken, for he brings
glad tidings of the King of kings!
2. Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin;

make straight the way for God within,
and let us all our hearts prepare
for Christ to come and enter there.

3. We hail Thee as our Saviour, Lord,
our refuge and our great reward;
without Thy grace we waste away
like flow'rs that wither and decay.
4. Lay on the sick Thy healing hand
and make the fallen strong to stand;
show us the glory of Thy face
Till beauty springs in every place.
5. All praise, eternal Son, to Thee
whose advent sets Thy people free,
whom with the Father we adore
and Holy Spirit evermore.

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We give of ourselves

Lord, lead us to show in our lives, by our repentance and faith, that we are your people.

As you have made us holy, help us to live holy lives, dedicated to you, preparing the way for your coming. Amen.

We pray for others

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has baptised us with the Holy Spirit, and given us the privilege of calling God 'Father'. Let us pray to our Father in heaven.

Heavenly Father: We praise and thank you for the cleansing waters of baptism and our adoption as your heirs and co-heirs with Christ. Strengthen our faith and bless all who are preparing for baptism at this time, and those undergoing instruction.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Bless and watch over your church as it prepares for the celebration of the birth of Christ. Help us all to prepare for the coming of Christ by living a life of repentance. May the light of Christ uncover our sin so that we might be released from its destructive power.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the missions of the church and those called to preach the gospel. May all those who hear the gospel believe the good news and turn to you in faith. Help us to prepare the way for the gospel by pursuing justice in our society. Be with our pastors and lay workers and fill them with your spirit of truth and love. Call and inspire more people to serve you in public ministry for the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Graciously protect us from fire and flood, from war and disease, from famine and strife and from every kind of disaster. Support all people in their proper vocation, and help all those who are unemployed. Bless our arts and culture, our science and technology. Be with all widows and widowers, and provide for all children who have lost their parents. Help those who are sick and in need, and comfort those who are lonely and in trouble, in particular we uphold to you in prayer (insert names)...

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer**

Lord God, as your servant John the Baptist called your people to prepare a way for the Lord, let us always be prepared to receive the blessings that you freely give us through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

We pray the prayer of Jesus

**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.**

Lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from evil. Matt 6:9-13

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

The Triune God sends us out with blessing

Go in peace. Rejoice in the Lord, and serve him with the power that he gives.
The Lord bless you
and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favour †,
and give you peace. Num 6:24-26
Amen.

We meditate on the hymn 'Come Thou long expected Jesus'

1. Come, Thou long expected Jesus,
born to set Thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us,
let us find our rest in Thee.
2. Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth Thou art:
dear desire of every nation,
joy of every longing heart.
3. Born Thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a King,
born to reign in us for ever,
now Thy gracious Kingdom bring.
4. By Thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by Thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to Thy glorious throne.
5. By Thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by Thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to Thy glorious throne.

*Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788), 1744
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Announcements