

Advent 3 Dec. 13, 2020

- Holden Prayer Around the Cross “In Silence We Wait” (Susan Briehl & Tom Witt)
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Soft Instrumental “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Title Card - “*Christ comes to our heart in our home*”

Begin in Darkness “We begin in darkness”

Begin song Holden SP#24 Light and Darkness

[Carry in light to light the Christ Candle]

L1 The God of peace be with all of you.
And, also with you.

L1 Let us pray (pause):

Stir up our hearts, O God, to prepare a pathway for your Christ.
By his coming speak peace to your people and turn our hearts toward you,
That your steadfast love and faithfulness may dwell in all the earth.
Amen.

L2 As the days grow shorter and the nights longer,
we gather in the darkness to await the dawn of God’s mercy.
Our prayer is woven of silence, scripture, and song.
The music is simple and easily learned.
And the time of silence will be long enough for you to breathe deeply,
Wide enough to wrap around us, and deep enough to become our prayer.

L1 As we await Christ’s coming, let us give thanks for God’s presence in the
darkness. Each bid will conclude with the words, “We praise you, O God.”
Your response is “For the darkness and the light are both alike to you”.
(pause) We praise you, O God.
For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

L2 For the darkness of waiting, of not knowing what is to come,
of staying ready and quiet and attentive, we praise you, O God.
For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

L1 For the darkness of staying silent, for the terror of having nothing to say, and
for the greater terror of needing to say nothing we praise you, O God.
For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

L2 For the darkness of loving in which it is safe to surrender, to let go of our self-protection, and to stop holding back our desire, we praise you, O God.
For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

L1 For the darkness of choosing, when you give us the moment, to speak, and act, and change, and we cannot know what we have set in motion, but we still have to take the risk, we praise you, O God.
For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

L2 For the darkness of hoping in a world that longs for you, for the wrestling and the laboring of all creation, for wholeness and justice and freedom, we praise you, O God.
For the darkness and the light are both alike to you.

L1 [adapted prayer from p. 68]
Let us pray. (pause)
Holy God, Eternal Light, we wait in the glow of this Christ candle – a light, signs of our hope and your promise. We cry out for your dawn to illumine our lives, to pierce the darkness of our sin and sorrow, and to shine on this community, our neighborhoods, our nation, and your whole creation. Hear our prayers, O God, and strengthen our faith, through the One for whom we wait, Jesus Christ, Amen

CHANT *Stir Up Your Power* (SP39)

L1 Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. In your mercy, receive our prayers and by your power hasten the day when peace and justice kiss and steadfast love and faithfulness meet for the sake of the world you love.
Amen.

Sunday December 13, 2020

Advent Wreath (Sundays and Seasons p. 25)

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen.

(Light three candles)

Confession & Forgiveness (Sundays and Seasons p. 24)

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 the times that we have not lived as God desires.

(Silence is kept 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.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

- ¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—

to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.
¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord Thanks be to God.

Psalm 126

¹When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion,
then were we like | those who dream.
²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with | shouts of joy.**
Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great | things for them.”
³The LORD has done great | things for us,
and we are | glad indeed.
⁴**Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD,**
like the watercourses | of the Negeb.
⁵Those who | sowed with tears
will reap with | songs of joy.
⁶**Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed,**
will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"
as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ

Message (posted separately) by Reverend Ken Tegtmeier, Assistant to Central Southern Illinois ELCA Synod Bishop

Hymn of the Day

Christ Be Our Light

ELW 715

The Apostles' Creed ELW p. 105

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,

born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and 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.

Prayers of Intercession

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

A brief silence.

A: God you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to creation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

A: God of sinners and saints, you offer joy in midst of our grief. We are grateful for the people whose lives testified to your radiant love. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

Offering

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

ELW 490

Offering Prayer

Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. **Amen.**

Words of Institution ELW p. 110 (Advent – Epiphany)

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup, we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth.

We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.

We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel,

Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High,

one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer ELW p. 112

Invitation to Communion

Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here. Come, eat and drink.

Prayer after Communion

Gracious and abundant God, you have done great things for us, and we rejoice.

In this bread and cup, you give us life forever.

In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs,

for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting,
the long-expected Savior fill you with love,
the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, † now and forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sending Hymn

People Look East

ELW 259