

SALEM EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 6, 2020

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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.

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

Let us pray. Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH (based on Isaiah 40: 1-2, 9-11)

Isaiah the Prophet reassured the people, “God is sending words of comfort to you, speaking tenderly to you. God promises that your hard labor is over, your sentence has been served and your penalty has been paid. You are forgiven not once, but double, all that is needed.”

“Go up to a high mountain and call out the good news! Left your voices up with strength and call out the good news! Do not be afraid! Your God is coming. Our God is mighty, but our God is also gentle. God loves the flock and will feed it, just the way a shepherd would, holding us close like lambs and guiding us, old and young. We wait for God’s peace and live in God’s hope as we light these candles.”

Loving God, come and shine your light in the world!

FIRST READING: Isaiah 40: 1-11

The First Reading is from the 40th chapter of Isaiah.

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.

PSALM: Psalm 85: 1-2, 8-13 (Read responsively)

¹You 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.**

⁸I will listen to what the Lord God is saying; for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.

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

¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

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

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

¹³**Righteousness shall go before the Lord and shall prepare for God a pathway.**

SECOND READING: 2 Peter 3: 8-15a

The Second Reading is from the 3rd chapter of 2 Peter.

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 Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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, O Christ.**

THE SERMON

HYMN

O Come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here. Until the Son of God appear.

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

O Come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on Sinai’s height
In ancient times you gave the law, In cloud and majesty and awe.

O Come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadow put to flight

THE APOSTLES' CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.**

**He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven,

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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

Response to “Hear us, O God” **Your mercy is great.**

HOLY COMMUNION

We celebrate the presence of God in bread and wine. All are welcome to receive this gift.

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.**

SENDING

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