

Sunday, December 6, 2020

Second Sunday of Advent, Year B

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.

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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 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 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.

Readings

[2 Peter 3:8-15a](#)

Waiting for and hastening the day of God

[Mark 1:1-8](#)

John appears from the wilderness

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.

A The Word of the Lord.

C **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.

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.”

Prayers of Intercession

When I say, “Hear us, O God,” you respond, “**Your mercy is great.**”

Silence is held as we gather our prayers.

God of power and might, comfort your people and come quickly to this weary world.
Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those who find no joy in this holiday season. Comfort all who grieve, be a companion to those who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people into your healing embrace.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way through difficulty and in the wilderness. Allow their generosity to shape our lives, that we might become generous in our own ways, to reflect your love.

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.

Offering Prayer

P Generous God,
you have created all that is,
and you provide for us in every season.

*Ken As we bless our offerings this morning, and these gifts of bread and wine,
we pause to ask your blessing on our giving commitments for 2021.*

God the Father, who created us: may we be faithful to you with the gift of our whole lives. May all the ways we give of ourselves – through our interests and passions, through the gift of our time in service; by our skills and abilities; and with these promises of our financial gifts – may all bring glory to God!

C With all that we are, with all that we have, may we honor God.

Ken Lord Jesus Christ, as you reveal yourself in the breaking of the bread, so show your presence to us also in the ones we seek to serve in your name: children and families needing childcare and activities for their children; those who are hungry and cold... loving our unknown neighbors as we love our families and ourselves.

C With all that we are, with all that we have, may we honor God.

Ken God the Holy Spirit, send us into the world to witness to your love and bring us to the fullness of your peace and glory. We dedicate these Giving Cards, all of our gifts, and all of our intentions to share ourselves, to the mission of Grace and to your purposes and glory.

C With all that we are, with all that we have, may we honor God.

P O God, in whose every creation we discover a gift freely given: help us to understand that all that we have comes from the outpouring of your generosity, inspire in our hearts a deep sense of gratitude, and move us to share what we have received with the same immensity of spirit in which it was given. May our gifts of substance and service be an example of Christ's enduring presence and outreach, here at Grace, in Hatfield and beyond.

C Amen.

Invitation to Communion

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

Blessing after Communion

The body and blood of our Savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

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.

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Prayers and Offertory Prayer adapted by Interim Pastor Janet S. Peterman

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