**Second Sunday in Advent**

**CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH** | Lodi, California

*December 10, 2023*

**WELCOME TO WORSHIP**

Welcome to Christ Lutheran Church. We pray that your soul will be strengthened by the good news about God’s grace, love, and forgiveness given to us. If you would like to learn more about our church, please speak with our pastor or one of our members after the service.

* **Bathrooms** are located in the fellowship hall. A changing table is located in the women’s bathroom.

**WORSHIP THEME**

The Forerunner comes: John the Baptist comes preaching and teaching to prepare God’s people to meet their Savior. He came in humility so that he might point to Christ instead of himself. He came with the message of repentance and forgiveness. He came with the baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

As John once came long ago, so God still sends to us preachers and prophets who prepare our hearts for Christ’s coming. Through Word and Sacrament, we are prepared to welcome Jesus into our hearts and lives. Through the message of repentance and forgiveness, we are prepared for Jesus to return on the Last Day. May the Lord use this time together to prepare our hearts to receive our Savior.

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***The Service of the Word***

*We gather as a congregation to hear God’s Word proclaimed and respond with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.*

**HYMN** *Comfort, Comfort All My People* **| CW 11**

M: The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

**CONFESSION**

M: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

**C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus my Savior I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin and take away my guilt.**

# absolution

M: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

**C**: **Amen**

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

**C: ♫ Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.**

**Blessed are they who take refuge in him.**

**Your Word, O Lord, is eternal;**

**it stands firm in the heavens.**

**Your faithfulness continues forever.**

**Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.**

**Blessed are they who take refuge in him.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

M: Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only Son. By his coming give us strength in our conflicts and shed light on our path through the darkness of this world; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen**

**FIRST LESSON** *Isaiah 40:1–11*

*Before he comes, the Lord prepares the way. We humble ourselves before the Lord, since we wither and fall, but his Word stands forever.*

**40**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.

**PSALM** *Psalm 85, page 97*

**SECOND LESSON** *2 Peter 3:8–14*

*Jesus seems slow in returning because so many are not ready. Just as he sent John to prepare for his first coming, so he sends.*

**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.

**VERSE OF THE DAY** *Luke 3:4,6*

**Alleluia. Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. All mankind will see God’s salvation. Alleluia.**

**THE GOSPEL** *Mark 1:1–8*

*The forerunner comes, but he is not the Savior. John came in humility, understanding that the greater one was still to come.*

**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.”

M This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise be to you, O Christ!**

**HYMN OF THE DAY**  *On Jordan’s Bank, The Baptist’s Cry***| CW 16**

**SERMON** *Isaiah 40*

**APOSTLES’ CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,**

**maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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, died, and was buried.**

**He descended into hell.**

**The third day he rose again from the dead.**

**He ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.**

**From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy Christian Church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**OFFERING**

*In response to God’s love and forgiveness, we give back a portion of what he has given us. The members of Christ Lutheran Church have joined to proclaim the gospel to this community. These offerings support that work. While our guests are welcome to participate, they should not feel obligated to do so.*

**PRAYER OF THE CHURCH**

M: Gracious God, You sent John the Baptist to herald the coming Messiah and proclaim a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. In these latter days, You send pastors to proclaim the same repentance for the forgiveness of sins, and through them lead Your people to trust in Your salvation. Look with kindness upon all pastors, that they may be diligent and faithful heralds of Your beloved Son. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

M: God of all comfort, Your Word alone endures forever. The nations of the world come and go before You, even kings and rulers are like grass before Your breath. Preserve us from placing our trust in princes and mortal men. Give us rulers who will rule after Your good pleasure, keeping order and protecting life, that we may live peaceably in godly quietness and honesty. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

M: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, to our prayers. Give healing, courage and perseverance to all who cry to You, that they may find comfort in Your enduring Word and the certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life with Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

M: Father, we know that You are not slow in keeping Your promises. We thank You for Your patience. Do not take Your Spirit from us when we stray from Your commandments, but convict us of our sin and draw us back to You in repentance. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

M: Lord, as we in the Church on earth wait for the coming of Your Son, we remember all the saints who have gone before us and now rest in Your presence. Keep us safe in Your arms until You gather Your people together in the new heavens and new earth in which righteousness dwells. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C: Hear our prayer.**

M: All these things and whatever else You know that we need, grant us, Father, for the sake of Him who died and rose again and now lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever.

**C: Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

**C: 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.**

M: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**THE BLESSING**

M**:** The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and ✙ give you peace.

**C: Amen.**

**CLOSING HYMN** *Prepare the Royal Highway* **| CW21 302**

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Pastor Tim Leistekow

**WELCOME TO CHRIST EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH!**

We preach a message of forgiveness, hope and peace

through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Families and individuals of all ages will find opportunities

both to grow and to serve.

Our mission statement:

**Look what Christ is doing!**

He binds us together in fellowship

He gathers us in for worship

He builds us up for service

He sends us out with the gospel

*“Now you are the body of Christ,*

*and each one of you is a part of it.”*

*(1 Corinthians 12:27)*