



3rd Sunday of Advent

When God comes near, He humbles his enemies

CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH | Lodi, California

December 12, 2021

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.

WHEN THE LORD COMES NEAR

"Advent" is a Latin word that means "coming." The season of Advent is the four week period before Christmas that the Church uses to connect the two "comings" of Christ. The first time the Lord came into our world it was as a tiny, helpless baby, born in a manger in Bethlehem. However, when Jesus comes again, it will be in all his power and glory with his angelic army behind him. He will be coming as judge at the end of time. Let us use these four weeks to see how the events of Jesus' first coming remove all our fears about his second coming. We can hold our heads high when the Lord comes near.

WORSHIP THEME

Last week we saw that the Lord sends messengers to call us to repentance. This week we learn that those who refuse to heed that call to humble themselves will be humbled anyway. The Lord who once came near in flesh and now comes near in Word and sacrament will one day come near with consuming fire and judgment. The Lord will humble his enemies. This truth does two important things. First, it adds urgency to God's Advent call to repentance. Second, it gives us comfort when we, as God's people, experience opposition from the world. Those who oppress and harm God's people will face justice.

OPENING HYMN

Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates | CW 306

INVOCATION

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 OF SINS

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.

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.

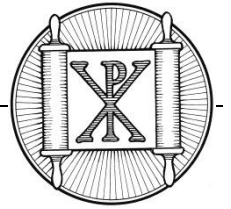
C: Amen.

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

C: Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good. Bless - ed are
they who take ref - uge in him. Your Word, O Lord, is e -
ter - nal; it stands firm in the heav -
ens. Your faith - ful - ness con - tin - ues for -
ev - er. Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Bless - ed are they who take ref - uge in him.

The Service of the Word

Having just received absolution for their sins, believers now gather around the Word of God to find encouragement and peace for their lives on earth.



LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

M: We light three Advent candles remembering Jesus, the Light of the world. He came to defeat the prince of darkness.

C: **We remember Jesus, who came in answer to his people's prayers. John proclaimed him the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.**

M: We hear his call to see the light.

C: **We light three Advent candles as a sign of our trust and confidence.**

M: Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

C: **Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.**

Three Advent candles are lit.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

M: Let us pray.

Almighty God and Savior, you have set the final day and hour when we shall be delivered from this world of sin and death. Keep us ever watchful for the coming of your Son that we may sit with him and all your holy ones at the marriage feast in heaven; 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

The prophet Zephaniah urges us to rejoice. Not only has the Lord taken away our punishment, but he will defeat all the enemies of God's people.

¹⁴ Sing for joy, Daughter Zion;
shout loudly, Israel!

Be glad and celebrate with all your heart,
Daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The LORD has removed your punishment;
he has turned back your enemy.

The King of Israel, the LORD, is among you;
you need no longer fear harm.

*The **Collect** (also known as the "Prayer of the Day") is a concise prayer which "collects" the thoughts of the day and presents them to God in his mercy. Many of these prayers have been in use in the church for more than 1,500 years.*

Zephaniah 3:14-17

¹⁶ On that day it will be said to Jerusalem:
“Do not fear;
Zion, do not let your hands grow weak.
¹⁷ The LORD your God is among you,
a warrior who saves.
He will rejoice over you with gladness.
He will be quiet^(a) in his love.
He will delight in you with singing.”

PSALM OF THE DAY

Psalm 130

SECOND LESSON

Philippians 4:4-7

When the world opposes Christ and his Church, Christians do not respond with anxiety or anger, but gentleness. We bring all our concerns to God in prayer and rest in his peace of knowing the Lord will humble his enemies in due time.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your graciousness^(a) be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

VERSE OF THE DAY

Matthew 12:18,21

Alleluia. Sing and shout aloud, O Israel; rejoice with all your heart. God removed your punishment. Alleluia.



C: Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!



These words are writ - ten that we may be - lieve that



Je - sus is the Christ, the Son of God.



Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia!

THE GOSPEL

Luke 7:18-28

Who is Christ's enemy? Sin, death, devil. Though John remains in prison death is being disarmed, eyes are opened, the deaf hear, and the dead are raised.

¹⁸Then John's disciples told him about all these things. So John summoned two of his disciples ¹⁹and sent them to the Lord, asking, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

²⁰When the men reached him, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to ask you, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'"

²¹At that time Jesus healed many people of diseases, afflictions, and evil spirits, and he granted sight to many blind people. ²²He replied to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with leprosy^[a] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor are told the good news, ²³and blessed is the one who isn't offended by me."

²⁴After John's messengers left, he began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the wind? ²⁵What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothes? See, those who are splendidly dressed and live in luxury are in royal palaces. ²⁶What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ²⁷This is the one about whom it is written:

**See, I am sending my messenger
ahead of you;
he will prepare your way before you.^[a]**

²⁸I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John,^[a] but the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

M: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You | **CW 324**

SERMON

Philippians 4:4-7

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.

2 Cor. 6:18

Is. 51:13

1 Cor. 8:6; Jn. 3:18

Lk. 1:35

Lk. 1:34; 2:7

Lk. 23:16

Mt. 27:32-61; Mk 15:21-47

Lk. 23:26-56; Jn. 19:16b-42

1 Pet. 3:19

1 Cor. 15:4b

Ac. 2:33-34

Heb. 1:13

Mt. 25:31

2 Tim. 4:1

Mt. 3:16-17

Eph. 5:23

Eph. 4:3-6

Rom. 4:6-8

1 Cor. 15:13-19

1 Th. 4:17

*Upon hearing the Word preached, the congregation unites in one voice to speak a summary of the Christian faith that **all Christians profess.** The creeds signify our allegiance to the Christian faith and unite us with over 2,000 years of Christian history. By repeating the creeds weekly, we equip ourselves for public witness by grounding our confession in the fundamentals of our faith.*

OFFERING

Of all the gifts God gives to us, forgiveness in Jesus Christ is the most precious. No gift we could give back to God for what he did through his Son Jesus Christ could ever balance the debt we owe for what our Lord accomplished for us on the cross. Yet Jesus says the debt we owe has been canceled, that means that we do not give out of obligation but as an act of worship and thanks to God. The offerings of the members of Christ Lutheran are gathered at this time. Guests need not feel obligated to give an offering.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: Eternal Father, throughout the centuries you repeated and affirmed your promise to send the offspring of the woman to crush the serpent's head. Through your prophets of old, you continually directed the eyes of your people to the advent of their Savior.

C: We praise you, O Lord, for keeping your promise and sending your Son to destroy the works of the devil.

M: As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our King, use your mighty Word to shatter our pride and to rouse us from spiritual slumber and apathy.

C: Move us to take to heart the words of John: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near."

M: You sent your Son to redeem us from sin. Let this good news be our joy and strength. Use it to cheer the lonely, encourage the fearful, and give hope to the despairing. In these days before Christmas, spare us from the stress of deadlines and the frenzy of commercialism.

C: Fill our lives with the message of your peace and the music of your grace.

M: Direct our eyes not only to the manger but also to the skies, where we will see your Son coming again, not as a lowly child but as the Lord of lords.

C: Lift up our hearts in joyful anticipation of that day.

Special prayers and intercessions may follow.

M: Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

Silent prayer.

M: Come quickly, Lord Jesus, in your grace, in your power, and in your glory.

Come, Lord Jesus! Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.

HYMN

Rejoice, the Lord Is King | **CW 524**

PRAYER

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, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

THE BLESSING

Numbers 6:22-27

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

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.

*The **blessing** of Aaron has been spoken over God's people for 3,500 years. The Lord said, "So I will put my name on them, and I will bless them."*



C: A - men. A - men. A - men.

Be seated

CLOSING HYMN

Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing | **CW 827**



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Pastor Joshua Hanson

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

*“Now you are the body of Christ,
and each one of you is a part of it.”
(1 Corinthians 12:27)*

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The ancient church had Latin titles for all their Sundays. They called the third Sunday in Advent “Gaudete Sunday.” The Latin word gaudete means rejoice. On some Advent wreaths, the third candle is a pinkish rose color, symbolizing joy.

An encouragement to rejoice might sound odd in light of this Advent season’s themes, especially Christ’s second coming to this world. We have seen that when Jesus comes again he is going to judge all mankind and destroy the universe. Even the gospel reading for today warns about “the coming wrath” which will include “unquenchable fire.” If that is what Christ will bring at his second coming, how can we possibly live joyfully?

Answer: because of Christ’s first coming. When Jesus came that first Christmas, it wasn’t to bring judgment, but to bear judgment. Jesus was born, not to punish sin, but to be punished for sin. All those with

faith in Christ know that when he comes for the second time, it will be to deliver us, not destroy us. He will not increase our pain but take every pain away. Then, and not a moment before, our lives will finally be perfect! And so, we live joyfully and thankfully, looking forward to Christ's return.