

The Liturgy of the Word
The Second Sunday of Advent
December 6, 2020
Grace Episcopal Church

Prelude

Choral Introit

Creator of the stars of night
Elisabeth Schrock, Alto

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Leader May the grace and peace of God be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Leader As we make our Advent pilgrimage, looking forward to the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, let us in prayer and praise, thanksgiving and song, give voice to the hope set forth in the Scriptures, that Christ's reign of love and light will indeed come among us. Let us offer ourselves anew as witnesses to the advent of Christ's glory, seeking to bring Christ's light and love to those who sit in darkness.
People **Come, O long expected Jesus, come.**

Opening Acclamation and Collect for Purity

Celebrant Blessed be the one, Holy and Living God.
People **Glory to God forever and ever. Amen.**
Celebrant Let us pray.
Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known, and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Song of Expectation

A Song of the Wilderness (Isaiah 35:1-7, 10

EOW 32

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, *
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
It shall blossom abundantly, *
and rejoice with joy and singing.
They shall see the glory of the Lord, *
the majesty of our God.
Strengthen the weary hands, *
and make firm the feeble knees.
Say to the anxious, "Be strong, do not fear! *
Here is your God, coming with judgment to save you."
Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, *
and the ears of the deaf be unstopped.
Then shall the lame leap like a deer, *
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness *
and streams in the desert;

The burning sand shall become a pool *
and the thirsty ground, springs of water.
The ransomed of God shall return with singing, *
with everlasting joy upon their heads.
Joy and gladness shall be theirs, *
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Collect of the Day

Celebrant The Lord be with you.
People **And also with you.**
Celebrant Let us pray.

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The First Lesson

Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak 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. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every 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. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get 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!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He 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.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

1 You 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.

8 I will listen to what the Lord God is saying, for he is speaking peace to his faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to him.

9 Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Mercy and truth have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

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

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

13 Righteousness shall go before him,
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

The Second Lesson

2 Peter 3:8-15a

Do 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. The 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. But 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. Since 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, waiting 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? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

Prepare the way, O Zion

Hymnal 65

The Gospel

Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, “See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.’” John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And 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. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He 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. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People **Thanks be to God.**

Sermon

The Rev. April Berends

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Anthem

Kindle a Light

Fleming

The Prayers of the People

Intercessor As we joyfully await the glorious coming of Christ, let us offer our prayers for God's people everywhere saying, Lord, in your mercy,
People Hear our prayer.

Intercessor Awaken your church throughout the world, O God, that we may bear the fruit of repentance and sow the seeds of hope and justice. Lord, in your mercy,
People Hear our prayer.

Intercessor We pray for the leaders of all nations, and for the peoples of the earth; guide us with a spirit of wisdom and understanding, that we may live in peace with one another. Lord, in your mercy,
People Hear our prayer.

Intercessor Give us all a reverence for the earth as your own creation, that we may use its resources rightly in the service of others, and all may know the abundance of your love. Lord, in your mercy,
People Hear our prayer.

Intercessor We pray for all who suffer in body, mind and spirit, especially

Nancy, Daniel, Roberta, David, Edith, Terrie, Alex, Roberta, Jeanette, Wanda, Emma, Darlene, Andrea, Steve, Jim, Celeste, Judy, Bethann, Julie, Dwight, Angela, James and Barbara, Trevor, Emily, Ted, Deb, Michael, Tom, Jeanette, Jane, Bo and Mary Minor, Helen, Nancy, Charlotte, Tyler, Jeff, Rebecca, J.R., Peggy, William, Timothy, Donald, Robert, Cooper, Sally Charles, Jonathan, Steven, John, Libby, Elaine, Jean, Barbara, Elizabeth, John, Joyce, Jim, Mary Ruth, and Ann;

We pray for Wil, Jake, Kevin, Tripp, Mike, Alexander, Russel, Logan, Jim, Sean, Evan, and all of our Armed Forces, here and abroad;

We pray for Bren who is deployed as a nurse in the pandemic.

We pray for Angela and Nicole, who are with child.

We pray for all whose homes are in peril or uprooted because of climate change, for all displaced because of hurricanes, fires or other disasters.

We pray for all who remain on the front lines of this pandemic: for health care providers, those who grow and process food, staff grocery stores, provide transit, transport supplies, care for the young and the aged and those who are sick. We pray for all suffering from illness, those who have died, and all who grieve as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Give them courage and hope in their troubles, that they may rejoice in your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy,

People Hear our prayer.

Celebrant God of hope, you call us from the exile of our sin with the good news of restoration; you build a highway through the wilderness; you come to us and bring us home. Comfort us with the expectation of your saving power, made known to us in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Confession and Absolution

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen.**

Officiant Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Peace

Celebrant The peace of the Lord be always with you.
People And also with you.

The Blessing

Postlude

Worship Leaders

Officiants	The Rev. April Berends, The Rev. David Burman
Preacher	The Rev. April Berends
Advent Wreath	Anderson, April and Kathryn Barger-Howell
Lectors	Darlene Souders, Jerry Evans
Intercessor	Andy Belcher
Guest Organist	Patrick Rice
Director of Music	David Long
Singers	Steven Hinkle, David Long, Megan Long, Elisabeth Schrock, Janelle Wagoner, Trevor Wagoner
Video	Richard Lanham, Janelle Wagoner

Announcements

Join Us for Online Worship at 9am & 10:45am Sundays

During this time of Social Distancing, we will continue to stream videos for Morning Prayer worship on our [Facebook](#) page and [website](#) at 9am and again at 10:45am. Bulletins for each week's service will be sent along with the Grace Notes weekend issue, and will be posted on the website alongside the video for the service. If you miss the 9am or 10:45am video streams, you can always go back and watch later.

In-person Worship on December 6th at 3:30pm

Weather permitting, Grace will hold outdoor, in-person on November 22nd, at **3:30pm** (please note the change of time!). We will meet on the yard just behind the pavilion and the community gardens. In an effort to protect the health of our neighbors, participants must sign up in advance, and we will be limiting the attendance for this service to 30 households. You will receive an email confirming successful registration, and if the service is over capacity at the time you sign up, you will receive priority for next week's service.

Each household unit is asked to keep 12-15 feet distance from your closest neighbor on the lawn. **Please wear a mask, and bring your own lawn chair or blanket.** If you are unable to bring your own chair, please email David Burman at dburman@saygrace.net, and we will arrange to have one available for you.

Sign up at www.saygrace.net.

Clergy Outdoor Office Hours

The Rev. April Berends will be in the courtyard on Tuesday, December 8th from 9am-noon. The Rev. David Burman will be in the courtyard from 1pm-4pm on Friday, December 11th. As always, if you would like to meet for prayer or conversation outside of office hours, our priests would be happy to see you. Contact April (aberends@saygrace.net) or David (dburman@saygrace.net) to set up an appointment.

Sacred Ground Dialogues around Racial Healing

The Sacred Ground dialogue circle on racial healing meets Wednesdays at 7pm via Zoom. Sacred Ground focuses on issues of race and racism and the difficult, transformative conversations that we need to have around these issues. Sacred Ground sessions invite participants to understand the racial history of this country and the church in order to faithfully respond to the challenges around race that surround us today. Unfortunately, this group has reached capacity. Stay tuned for additional offering on racial justice and other topics.

Morning Prayer and Compline

All are invited to escape from the madness and rest your mind and soul via Morning Prayer on weekdays and Saturday at 9:00 a.m., and services of Compline at 8:00 p.m. each evening. We all need reminders of essential realities that transcend the medical and political context in which we find ourselves.

Here are the links for Daily Morning Prayer and Compline:

[Weekday Morning Prayer](#)

[Weekday Compline](#)

Community Care in Anxious Times

Grace check-in team leaders are continuing to contact parishioners via phone, text and/ or email. Please take a moment to pick up or write back to let them know if you're okay and/or if you need help, pastorally or physically. The leaders of these groups will be in close communication with our priests and our network of volunteers. If you are a new member of Grace and we do not have your information in the directory, please fill out the New Member form [here](#) and let us know if you would like to be added to a check-in group. If you have an urgent pastoral need, please call the parish office at (423)243-3250 and leave a message on the **main line**. We will be checking these messages regularly even if we aren't in the office.