

Second Sunday of Advent

December 5, 2021



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
28 Lincoln Avenue
Pittsford, NY 14534
www.stpaulspittsford.org

The Rev. Johanna Rehbaum, Pastor
Jonathan Madden, Minister of Music

“Freedom is Coming,” our featured song for today, is a South African freedom song from the anti-apartheid movement. It became part of global hymnody in the 1980s. Its call-and-response format reminds singers of the interdependent nature of freedom in Christ and echoes John the Baptist’s call in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord.

PRELUDE: *Intermezzo in A Major, Op. 118 No. 2* Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,
and of the ✠ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom 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 Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for reflection.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.

Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

Prepare the Royal Highway

ELW #264

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.
John the Baptist calls all people to prepare the Lord's way
for the kingdom of heaven is near.
Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.
Baptize us with the fire of your Spirit,
that we may be a light shining in the darkness
welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us,
for he is our light and our salvation.
Blessed be God forever.
Amen.

SONG:

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
vs 3 & 4

ELW #257

3 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.

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
Refrain

Refrain

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

INTRODUCTION TO READINGS

The Rev. Johanna Rehbaum

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means “my messenger”) will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God’s people, as silver and gold are refined.

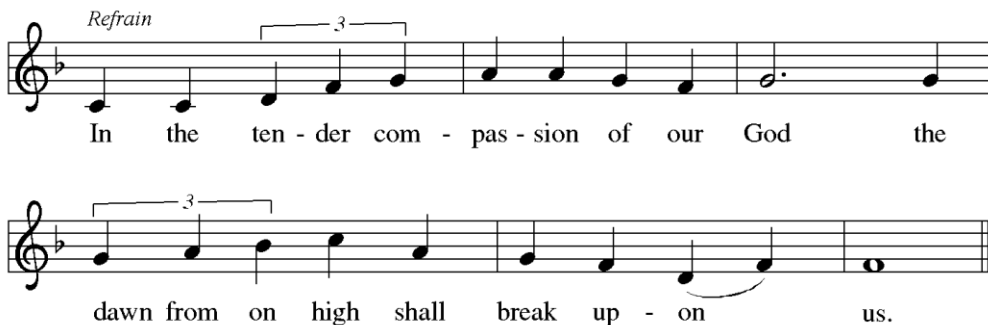
¹See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner’s fire and like fullers’ soap; ³he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM Luke 1:68-79

Today’s setting of the Psalm is from the Morning Prayer liturgy in ELW, pg. 303. The choir will sing the verses, and the congregation will sing the refrain as indicated.



⁶⁸Blessed are you, Lord, the | God of Israel,
you have come to your people and | set them free.

⁶⁹You have raised up for us a | mighty Savior,
born of the house of your | servant David. **Refrain**

⁷⁰Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us | from our enemies,
⁷¹from the hands of | all who hate us,

⁷²to show mercy | to our forebears,
and to remember your | holy covenant.

⁷³This was the oath you swore to our | father Abraham:

⁷⁴to set us free from the hands of our | enemies,
free to worship you | without fear,

⁷⁵holy and righteous before you, all the days | of our life. **Refrain**

⁷⁶And you, child, shall be called the prophet of ¹ the Most High,
 for you will go before the Lord to pre- ¹ pare the way,
⁷⁷to give God's people knowledge ¹ of salvation
 by the forgiveness ¹ of their sins.
⁷⁸In the tender compassion ¹ of our God
 the dawn from on high shall ¹ break upon us,
⁷⁹to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shad- ¹ ow of death,
 and to guide our feet into the ¹ way of peace. **Refrain**

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

The Rev. Johanna Rehbaum

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Sung by the choir: Prepare the way of the Lord. All flesh shall see the salvation of God.
Alleluia. (Luke 3:4, 6)

GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;
⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’ ”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

The Rev. Johanna Rehbaum

HYMN OF THE DAY

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

ELW #249

NICENE CREED

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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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.**

Response: ... Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

Share peace with those around you or online, or write down the name of someone you will text or call later to check up on them and spread Christ's peace to them.

To sustain the ministries of the Church, this time may be used to make a gift either online (www.stpaulspittsford.org), through the neighboring QR code which takes you directly to our Simply Giving page, or you may mail a check directly to St. Paul's or leave your donation in the offering plate during service.



How Lovely are the Messengers
(from “St. Paul”)

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

*How lovely are the messengers that preach us the Gospel of Peace!
To all the nations is gone forth the sound of their words,
throughout all the lands their glad tidings. (Romans 10:15, 18)*

OFFERTORY HYMN

What Feast of Love (v. 1)
Tune: What Child is This?

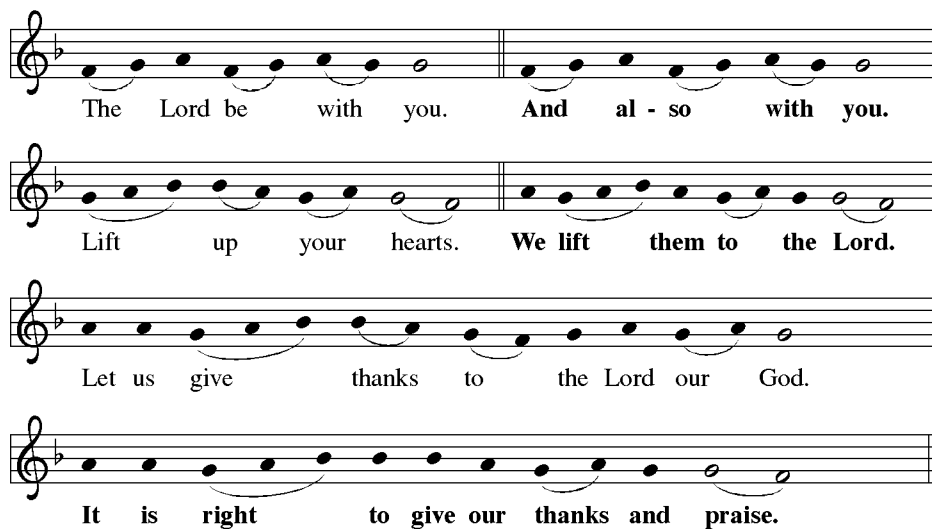
ELW #487

What feast of love is offered here, what banquet come from heaven?
What food of everlasting life, what gracious gift is given?
This, this is Christ the king, the bread come down from heaven.
Oh, taste and see and sing! How sweet the manna given!

OFFERING PRAYER

God of our waiting and watching,
we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives
to the service of all your people.
Prepare the way before us
as we meet you in this simple meal,
through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING



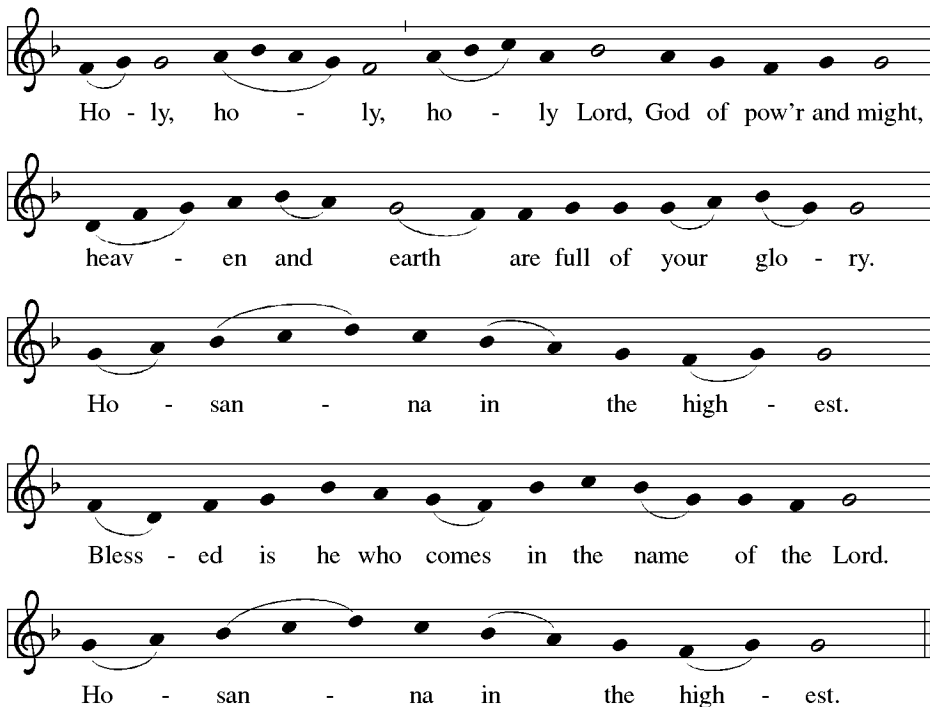
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy... [*president continues with the Proper preface*] ... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night...
Again after supper...

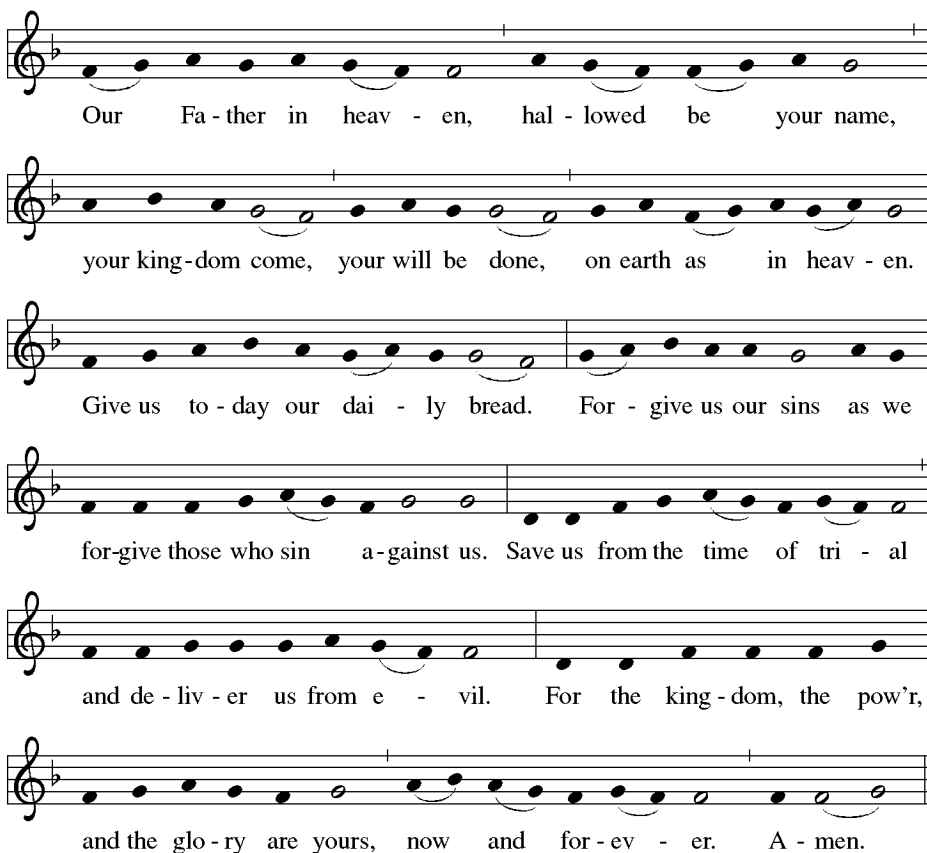
Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us,
full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.
Come among us. Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.
Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High,
one God, now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER



Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
for-give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to Christ's banquet.
Feast on God's gift of grace.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you

take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy

on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the

sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

Congregation is seated.

DISTRIBUTION

Come forward by the center aisle, keeping 6 feet (about two pews) between family units. Receive the bread from pastor. Glasses are prefilled – red is wine, white is grape juice. Please be cautious not to touch other glasses as you take yours out. Return your empty glass to the tray on the table. Return to your seat by the side aisle. We will commune first the pulpit side, then the piano side.

COMMUNION: *Chorale in Bb*

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel (1805-1847)

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ now strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Most High God,

you have come among us at this table.

By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word,

sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all,

through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

Amen.

BLESSING

The God of hope

fill us with all joy and peace in believing,

so that we may abound in hope

by the power of the Holy Spirit,

through Christ Jesus for whom we wait.

Amen.

SENDING SONG

Comfort, Comfort Now My People

ELW #256

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE:

Prelude in F Major

Fanny Mendelssohn Hensel