

Worship Focus: *When The Lord Comes Near, He Humbles His People - Through God's Word and the messengers who proclaim it, the Lord humbles his people, purifying our hearts so that we might stand on the Last Day.*

The Service Of The Word

Opening Hymn – 13 *There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying*

There's a voice in the wilderness crying,

A call from the ways untrod:

Prepare in the desert a highway,

A highway for our God!

The valleys shall be exalted,

The lofty hills brought low;

Make straight all the crooked places

Where the Lord our God may go!

O Christians, you bring good tidings;

Get up to the heights and sing!

Proclaim to a desolate people

The coming of their King.

Like the flow'rs of the field they perish;

Like grass their works decay.

The pow'r and pomp of nations

Shall pass like a dream away;

But the Word of our God is eternal;

The arm of the Lord is strong.

He stands in the midst of the nations,

And he shall right the wrong.

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd,

The lambs shall gently hold,

To pastures of peace shall lead them,

And bring them safe to his fold.

P: 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

P: 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.

P: 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.

Prayer and Praise

P: 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.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray together the Prayer of the Day....

C: 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. Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

M: We light two Advent candles, remembering Jesus, who came in history. He came into a world of sin and death.

C: We remember Jesus, who came as the promised Messiah. John the Baptist prepared the way of the Lord.

M: We hear his call to repent.

C: We light two Advent candles as a sign of our repentance and desire for renewal.

M: Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

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

The Word

First Lesson

Malachi 3:1-7b

¹Look! I am sending my messenger! He will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord, whom you are seeking, will come to his temple! The Messenger of the Covenant, in whom you delight, will surely come, says the LORD of Armies.

²But who can endure the day when he comes? Who will remain standing when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire, like launderers' bleach! ³He will be seated like a refiner and a purifier of silver. He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and like silver. They will belong to the LORD and bring him an offering in righteousness.

⁴Judah and Jerusalem's offerings will be pleasing to the LORD as they were in the days of old, in years long ago.

⁵I will approach you to judge you. I will be quick to give testimony against those who practice occult arts, those who commit adultery, those who swear false oaths, those who cheat workers out of their wages, those who wrong a widow and a fatherless child, those who turn away a resident alien—all those who do not fear me, says the LORD of Armies.

⁶Certainly I, the LORD, do not change. That is why you, sons of Jacob, have not come to an end. ⁷Since the days of your fathers, you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of Armies. You say, "In what way should we return?"

Psalm of the Day – 66

Refrain

At the works of your hands, O Lord, I
lift up my voice in song; I sing for joy.

Psalm tone

*

Shout with joy to God, all the earth!*

Sing the glory of his name; make his praise glorious!

Praise our God, O peoples,*

let the sound of his praise be heard.

He has preserved our lives*
and kept our feet from slipping.

Refrain

Come and listen, all you who fear God;*

let me tell you what he has done for me.

If I had cherished sin in my heart,*
the Lord would not have listened;

but God has surely listened*
and heard my voice in prayer.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Refrain

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Second Lesson

Philippians 1:3-11

³I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴Every time I pray for all of you, I always pray with joy, ⁵because of your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I am convinced of this very thing: that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ⁷I am equally convinced that it is right for me to think this way about all of you, because I have you in my heart, for both in my chains and in my defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all share in this grace with me. ⁸Yes, God is my witness of how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹And I pray that your love may still increase more and more in knowledge and every insight. ¹⁰This will result in your approval of the things that really matter, so that you will be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Verse of the Day

Alleluia. Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. All mankind will see God's salvation. Alleluia. (Luke 3:4, 6)

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!

Gospel

Luke 3:1-6

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar—while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip was tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene— ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John, the son of Zechariah, in the wilderness. ³He went into the whole region around the Jordan, preaching

a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴Just as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

A voice of one calling in the wilderness,

“Prepare the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight.

⁵Every valley will be filled, and every mountain and hill will be made low.

The crooked will become straight, and the rough ways smooth.

⁶And everyone will see the salvation of God.”

After the Gospel, the congregation sings:



Hymn of the Day – 16

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

**On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Come, then, and listen, for he brings
Good news about the King of kings.**

**Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin
And furnished for a guest within,
And let us all our hearts prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.**

**We hail you as our Savior, Lord,
Our refuge and our great reward.
Without your grace we waste away
Like flow'rs that wither and decay.**

**Stretch forth your hand, our health restore,
And lift us up to fall no more.
Oh, make your face on us to shine,
And fill the world with love divine.**

**All praise to you, eternal Son,
Whose advent has our freedom won,
Whom with the Father we adore
And Holy Spirit evermore.**

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. John Chandler, 1806-76, st. 1-3, alt.; composite, st. 4-5.

Sermon

Luke 3:1-6

God's Reconstruction of Our Hearts

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.

Prayers & 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.

Closing Hymn – 14

Arise O Christian People

Arise, O Christian people! Prepare yourselves today.

Prepare to greet the Savior,

Who takes your sins away.

To us by grace alone The truth and light was given;

The promised Lord from heaven To all the world is shown.

Prepare the way before him; Prepare for him the best.

Cast out what would offend him,

This great, this heav'nly guest.

Make straight, make plain the way: The lowly valleys raising,

The heights of pride abasing, His path all even lay.

The humble heart and lowly God raises up on high;

Beneath his feet in terror

The haughty soul shall lie.

The heart sincere and right, That heeds God's invitation

And makes true preparation-It is the Lord's delight.

**Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus; Turn not from me aside,
 And help me to receive you
 This blessed Adventtide.
 From stall and manger low
 Come now to dwell within me;
 I'll sing your praises gladly And forth your glory show.**

Text: Valentin Thilo, 1607-62, alt.; tr. Arthur T. Russell, 1806-74, st. 1-3, alt.; *The Lutheran Hymnal*, St. Louis, 1941, st. 4, alt.

P: 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.



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

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.



There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying: Text: James L. Milligan, 1876-1961, alt.
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SERVING US TODAY

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