

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Other Student Publications

Resources for Ministry

11-15-2022

Devotions for Advent 2022 Canticles of Luke

Brennan DeForest

Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, deforest.brennan@ctsw.edu

Alexander Ogden

Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, ogden.alexander@ctsw.edu

Rod Stewart

Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, stewart.rod@ctsw.edu

Andrew Hill

Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, hill.andrew@ctsw.edu

Eva Aiello

Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne, aiello.eva@ctsw.edu

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/osp>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

DeForest, Brennan; Ogden, Alexander; Stewart, Rod; Hill, Andrew; Aiello, Eva; Benish, Joshua; Raugutt, Nathan; Bruss, James; Bueckman, Daniel; Steele, Joshua; Lewis, Kyle; Moore, Jacob; Thielke, Daniel; Palmer, Nick; Niemtschk, Simon; Wessel, Zachary; Hiles, Adam; Wagner, Peter; Gerrard, Claire; Zieroth, Mark; Brooks, Micah; Thornton, Zachary; Frauenhoff, Luke; Roll, Zachary; Eising, Henry; Holland, Peyton; Anklam, Garrett; Sipes, Jacob; and Lackey, Jonathan, "Devotions for Advent 2022 Canticles of Luke" (2022). *Other Student Publications*. 22.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/osp/22>

This Devotion is brought to you for free and open access by the Resources for Ministry at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Other Student Publications by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

Authors

Brennan DeForest, Alexander Ogden, Rod Stewart, Andrew Hill, Eva Aiello, Joshua Benish, Nathan Raugutt, James Bruss, Daniel Bueckman, Joshua Steele, Kyle Lewis, Jacob Moore, Daniel Thielke, Nick Palmer, Simon Niemtschk, Zachary Wessel, Adam Hiles, Peter Wagner, Claire Gerrard, Mark Zieroth, Micah Brooks, Zachary Thornton, Luke Frauenhoff, Zachary Roll, Henry Eising, Peyton Holland, Garrett Anklam, Jacob Sipes, and Jonathan Lackey

Devotions for Advent

2022



Canticles of Luke

Prepared by students of
Concordia Seminary
St. Louis, Missouri
and
Concordia Theological Seminary
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ!

The Psalmist writes in Psalm 98, “Oh sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things! His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him. The Lord has made known his salvation; he has revealed his righteousness in the sight of the nations. He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God” (Ps. 98:1-3).

In this, the Psalmist invites us to sing songs of praise to the Lord our God because we have seen his steadfast love and salvation. Indeed, we have seen this in the birth of his Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Therefore we respond with songs of praise for Jesus Christ’s first coming as a baby in Bethlehem, His continual coming today in the Word and Sacraments, and His final coming on the Last Day.

Yet, we also rejoice with St. Luke the Evangelist, who recorded four examples of words of praise from the faithful when they themselves saw the salvation of the Lord. These words of praise have been incorporated into our liturgy as songs. Therefore, this Advent we sing with Mary, with Zechariah, with the angels, and with Simeon, who saw the salvation of the Lord in the infant Jesus.

Each week of this Advent devotional will focus on one of the four Lukan canticles, putting it in its context as well as making connections to other portions of Scripture. At the end of this Advent season, may we, like those who have gone before us, “sing to the Lord, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day” (Ps. 96:2).

Many thanks to all the CSL and CTSFW students who contributed devotional reflections. A special note of thanks to my counterpart, Zachary Roll, who organized this effort at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis who has been a joy to work with and to get to know. A final note of thanks to Kim Hosier in the print shop and Rev. Dr. Paul Grime for their aid in completing this devotional booklet.

Brennan DeForest

Commemoration of Clement of Rome, 2022

First Week of Advent

The Magnificat

November 27, 2022

Alexander Ogden (Sem II, CTSFW)

Reading

Luke 1:46–55

Devotion

In the winter's light a small song of praise rolls off the lips of a virgin. Mary's soft hymn of praise is raised to the Ancient of Days and in it is the hopes of all as the promised Seed of Abraham begins to grow in her womb. Here in her words, we see a reflection of every Christian's prayer, that God would remember His servants, and raise them up, filling them with good things. Truly, in the God-Child, Jesus, the Mighty One has done great things for us. In the tender Babe, God extends mercy to those who fear Him to each generation of believers, from Abraham to believers today. All the hopes and fears of all the years find solace in the stomach of the *Theotokos*. In the belly of the blessed Virgin, we see the exaltation of the One who humbled Himself for us, not spurning the Virgin's womb. In His steadfast love and in Mary's canticle we see a Rose e'er blooming, showing us that God has remembered His servants.

Prayer

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady."

Gloria!

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came (*LSB* 356:1)

Reading

Luke 1:26–45

Devotion

Beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news, for much of the news we hear is despair. Death is our constant companion, one of the few certainties that we bear in this life. Death of relationships. Death of loved ones. Death of hope.

Beautiful were the feet of Gabriel who spoke peace to Mary, who brought news of salvation and of new life. See how quickly Mary rushed to see the word of the Lord fulfilled, to see that which was fruitless bear fruit, even when such hope had long been extinguished, to see life where there once had been death.

Beautiful were the feet of Mary who bore our Lord to Elizabeth, trusting in the fulfillment of God's word. Beautiful are the feet of our Savior, pierced so that we who were dead and fruitless might have life and bear fruit. For the Son of God came as the good news of life that we might have hope in his death.

Prayer

O Lord, as we have known the incarnation of Your Son, Jesus Christ, by the message of the angel to the virgin Mary, so by the message of His cross and passion bring us to the glory of His resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

“For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee;
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored lady.”

Gloria!

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came (*LSB* 356:2)

Reading

1 Samuel 2:1–10

Devotion

Hannah teaches us humility. She teaches us to have among ourselves the mind of Christ who humbled Himself even unto death upon the cross. Not by might shall man prevail. The One who shaped man and who was Himself incarnate in the womb of the humble Virgin is the only man to prevail over sin, death, and the devil. He is the Horn that is exalted. He raises up His glory over His enemies, even treading them beneath His feet. In that glory we rejoice. In His humility we are raised up. Our poverty of sin He exchanges for the wealth of His righteousness. The bareness of our lives He exchanges for a fullness of works of love.

When He who was laid in the manger returns to judge the earth, let us then be found in Him. Let us despair of our pride and the imaginations of our hearts and instead cling in faith to the Anointed One whose wounds exult us to sit with Him in righteousness.

Prayer

Almighty God, grant our souls to enjoy this desire, to be enkindled by Your Spirit, that being filled as lamps by the Divine gift, we may at His coming shine like blazing lights before the presence of Your Son; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Hymn

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;

“To me be as it pleaseth God,” she said.

“My soul shall laud and magnify God’s holy name.”

Most highly favored lady,

Gloria!

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came (*LSB* 356:3)

Reading

Philippians 4:4–7

Devotion

As Christmas approaches, we are bombarded by reminders that we should be in the happiest time of the year, and yet the goods of the season often leave us sick and empty. Loved ones no longer grace our tables. People cry out in hunger and cold at our street corners. How are we to rejoice in a world where there is so much sorrow?

Our rejoicing is not an empty sentiment or expression, but rather a cry of faith as we rejoice in our Lord, the one who “is at hand” and who hears our prayers. Our rejoicing is like that of faithful Mary’s Magnificat, a rejoicing that sets aside the futilities of this world and rests in the faithfulness of our God who sends salvation through Jesus Christ, our Lord. We may have sorrow in this world, but God remains with us. In these verses we are invited to rejoice in our Lord, our true source of peace who has indeed worked eternal good for us.

Prayer

O Lord our God, let us all rejoice with upright hearts being gathered together in the unity of faith, that at the coming of Your Son our Savior we may go forth undefiled to meet Him in the company of His saints; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Hymn

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
“Most highly favored lady.”

Gloria!

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came (*LSB* 356:4)

Reading

Psalm 103

Devotion

Mary sings, “And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation” (Luke 1:50). Psalm 103 is all about the LORD’s abundant mercy. In fact, one verse uses the same language as the Magnificat, “But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children” (103:17). What is the mercy of the LORD? Who is the mercy, steadfast love of the LORD? Dear Christian, lift up your head for your salvation is found, not in yourself, but rather in Him who “knows our frame, how we are formed; He remembers that we are dust” (130:14). Jesus Christ knows the frame of human suffering for He Himself experienced it in His flesh. He knows your suffering. He knows death and conquered it in His death on the cross. Your salvation is the babe in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the body and blood of Jesus given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. “O bless the LORD , my soul!”

Prayer

Almighty God, You chose the virgin Mary to be the mother of Your only Son. Grant that we, who are redeemed by His blood, may share with her in the glory of Your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation He doth bring;
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise
Your joyful songs of praise.

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Might Gates (*LSB* 340/341:1)

Reading

Titus 2:11–14

Devotion

The grace of God appeared indeed! Mary knew this by the mere fact of her pregnancy, it is right there in her song. For generation after generation, Israel waited for the promised hope. The Old Testament reveals example after example of God's working through humble means, not the haughty and proud, not the mighty, rich, and worldly. Yet, notice that in our reading from Titus — like the Magnificat — God is the actor, not us.

Jesus gave Himself and redeemed us through His perfect life, death, and resurrection. He has also promised that he will return again! His work of redemption is done, but His appearing in glory is yet to come. We, too, must wait.

In this letter to Titus, St. Paul is teaching us how to wait. He is training us to wait with lives that reflect our faith — self-controlled, upright in thoughts and actions, lives free of ungodliness and worldly passion. He did not die so that we can live in lawlessness, but to purify us. This advent season, let us heed Paul's exhortation and be trained by God to wait in humility.

Prayer

O Lord, gird up the loins of our mind by Your divine power, that at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, we may be found worthy of the banquet of eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hymn

A righteous Helper comes to thee;
His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness,
His scepter, pity in distress.
The end of all our woe He brings;
Therefore the earth is glad and sings.
To Christ the Savior raise
Your grateful hymns of praise.

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Might Gates (*LSB* 340/341:2)

Reading

Zephaniah 3:14–20

Devotion

O daughter of Zion, rejoice and exult with all your heart! This day, we anticipate our deliverance with the full expectancy that Mary knew. Even as we await the coming of our Savior, we know that the Lord our God is in our midst, for He has already done great things for us.

The Lord promised destruction to those who turn aside, who follow the gods of this world, who earn His enmity. He scatters the proud but He gathers the outcast. The message of judgment is a message of comfort to those who are hungry for His Word. He promises us that we will be blessed through the Seed of Abraham, the King of Israel, to be restored as His children.

He is the Mighty One who saves you from your faults. He takes away His judgments against you. To you who once grieved in your sin, He gives joy just as He rejoices over your deliverance in remembrance of His mercy. Sing for joy, O daughter of Zion, magnify the Lord!

Prayer

Almighty God, grant we pray this grace to Your people—to wait with all vigilance for the coming of Your only-begotten Son, that as He, the Author of our salvation, taught us, we may prepare our souls like blazing lamps to meet Him, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hymn

How blest the land, the city blest,

Where Christ the ruler is confessed!

O peaceful hearts and happy homes

To whom this King in triumph comes!

The cloudless sun of joy is He

Who comes to set His people free.

To God the Spirit raise

Your happy shouts of praise.

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Might Gates (*LSB* 340/341:3)

Second Week of Advent

The Benedictus

December 4, 2022

Daniel Bueckman (Sem II, CSL)

Reading

Luke 1: 67–79

Devotion

The prophecy of Zechariah—the Benedictus that we sing in our services—contains words that are not only applicable then, but are now able to be put in our mouths and professed to all the world. In the context of Zechariah, this is praise of the birth of John the Baptist as he will be “a prophet of the Most High, for [he] will go before the Lord to prepare His way” (v. 76). We are now in a similar position, as seminarians, to go forth and become pastors and deaconesses; to proclaim not only the blessing of salvation, but also the forgiveness of sins that is found in the battle won for us on the cross. As we look ahead in this advent season, we see that the foretold Savior has come to His people, and that His love is extended to us Gentiles. We laud and magnify the name of our Lord, as he “has visited and redeemed his people” (v. 68) and that he has “remembered His holy covenant” (v. 72).

Prayer

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

Fling wide the portals of your heart;

Make it a temple set apart

From earthly use for heaven’s employ,

Adorned with prayer and love and joy.

So shall your Sovereign enter in

And new and nobler life begin.

To God alone be praise

For word and deed and grace!

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Might Gates (*LSB* 340/341:4)

Reading

Luke 1:57–66

Devotion

“They rejoiced with her.” What a beautiful phrase to begin the account of John the Baptist’s birth! Read the words, marvel with them seeing how God is faithful to his promises. In this we see how God’s gracious acts bring the gift of fellowship among his people. Now in this account we see in John’s birth not only was Elizabeth’s reproach taken away, but the affliction Zechariah received for not believing the words of Gabriel were lifted. In this we see how God, despite our own sin and the sinful world, is good and gracious, and our faith, though imperfect, is sufficient because of who it clings to. This all occurred in the wider story of God’s love recreating his world by the advent of his son Jesus Christ. Years ago though it may be, let us look back at this birth, marvel, fear and wonder with them seeing the many blessings and joys God grants his people, knowing that this is the God we worship, a God of love, a God rich in mercy.

Prayer

Almighty God, through John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, You once proclaimed salvation. Now grant that we may know this salvation and serve You in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life; through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

Redeemer, come and open wide
My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!

O enter with Thy grace divine;
Thy face of mercy on me shine.

Thy Holy Spirit guide us on
Until our glorious goal is won.

Eternal praise and fame
We offer to Thy name.

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Might Gates (*LSB* 340/341:5)

Reading

Exodus 15:1–18

Devotion

Pangs of fear, dismay, trembling, terror and dread. These sensations gripped the other nations that heard about the Lord, about the man of war who drowned Pharaoh and crushed Egypt. This was terrifying to the other nations. God's presence had become a fearsome omen that forewarned of destruction. Death and destruction is the inevitable end of God visiting these other nations. We are not born as descendants of Israel. We're not his people. The incarnation of Jesus shouldn't spell out good news. If anything, it should be more terrifying. God is visiting the earth personally, in the flesh. He can judge you face-to-face. Despite this, Jesus became incarnate to be on the receiving end of the sword. To face judgement, death, and destruction. In doing so, He brings rejoicing, not trembling, to us and all nations as he brings down Satan who enslaved us to sin and delivers us into His Father's house as sons.

Prayer

Almighty God, through Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, You overcame death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life. We humbly pray that we may live before You in righteousness and purity forever; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

“Comfort, comfort ye My people,
 Speak ye peace,” thus saith our God;
“Comfort those who sit in darkness,
 Mourning 'neath their sorrows' load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem
Of the peace that waits for them;
 Tell her that her sins I cover
 And her warfare now is over.”

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People (*LSB* 347:1)

Reading

John 1:6–13

Devotion

The month of December brings darker days... literally. The shorter days seem to choke out any light we get to enjoy. By the time we get home from school or work, the sun begins to set. It is surprisingly fitting that advent falls during this time. While the physical light of the world seems to come and go, we wait with anticipation of the true light, the eternal light coming into the world, Jesus, the second person of the Trinity. John the Baptist falls in a long line of prophets who have proclaimed and borne witness to this light. Are we any different? Are we not privileged to bear witness to this light in our dark and dreary world? Christ has not only taken on flesh but has died and risen from the dead and reigns now and forever. For this is the light that will call sinners out of the darkness. This light gives people the right to be called children of God. And this light's message will come from your lips.

Prayer

Incline, O Lord, Your merciful ears to our voice and illuminate the darkness of our hearts by the light of Your visitation, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

Yea, her sins our God will pardon,
Blotting out each dark misdeed;
All that well deserved His anger
He no more will see or heed.
She hath suffered many a day,
Now her griefs have passed away;
God will change her pining sadness
Into ever-springing gladness.

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People (*LSB* 347:2)

Reading

Psalm 106:1–5, 47–48

Devotion

Who indeed can utter the mighty deeds of the Lord? Which one of us can speak about the eternal, immutable God on high? The fact of the matter is that we have nothing to do with God anymore ever since we made a mess of things! We are in no position to understand or speak eloquently on the great acts of our Lord. Yet, here I write, and here you read. Something happened that we dare engage in such behavior. Something must have changed that we can speak comfortably about God. Indeed, God has shown favor upon His people. He has broken into our sin-wrought world and sent His Son, Jesus, to save us. God is not far off, but rather close at hand! He has provided a way for us in which to speak about His mighty deeds, namely the mighty work of Christ our Savior. So we join Zechariah in singing, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people!”

Prayer

Make us, O Lord, to abhor our own evils with our whole heart; that at the coming of Your Son our Lord, we may be enabled to receive His good things, through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Hymn:

Hark, the herald’s voice is crying

 In the desert far and near,

Calling sinners to repentance,

 Since the Kingdom now is here.

O that warning cry obey!

Now prepare for God a way;

 Let the valleys rise to meet Him

 And the hills bow down to greet Him.

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People (*LSB* 347:3)

Reading

2 Samuel 22:1–4; 47–51

Devotion

This song is not only for David. It is for you and all who are the sons and daughters of our heavenly Father. This song describes you when enemies surround you and cut you off from all hope. But God is your refuge and deliverer. He comes down with one goal in mind. To deliver you, His son or daughter. As He delivered David from his enemies, He will also deliver you! He who rules heaven and earth has concern for you. He sees you and knows you. God does not turn a blind eye to your suffering. He comes. He comes down to be your refuge and give you the help you cannot produce in yourself. To give you the salvation you can never come up with by your own strength. He delivers you as He delivered His Son, Jesus, from the grave. He delivers you in His Son, in His offspring of David. In Jesus' resurrection, you have the promise of life and deliverance. You have a love that never ends!

Prayer

Mercifully hear, O Lord, the prayers of Your people; that as they rejoice in the Advent of Your only-begotten Son according to the flesh, so when He comes a second time in His majesty, they may receive the reward of eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hymn

Make ye straight what long was crooked;

 Make the rougher places plain.

Let your hearts be true and humble,

 As befits His holy reign.

For the glory of the Lord

Now o'er earth is shed abroad,

 And all flesh shall see the token

 That His Word is never broken.

Comfort, Comfort Ye My People (*LSB* 347:4)

Reading

Isaiah 40:1–5

Devotion

We lead busied lives on this side of eternity often seeking comfort in the anticipation of a rest to come either next weekend, next month, or perhaps even next year. God willing we do find our rest, but this is only a temporary reprieve from the burdens which continually assail us. Advent is like this same anticipation of rest, only the peace we anticipate through Christ in the world to come will be eternal. While we wait anxiously for our Lord, we take comfort in God's promise of eternal salvation. For just as all creation once waited for the promised Messiah, now we too wait for His return where on the last day he will come with glory to judge the living and the dead, raising our bodies to a new creation. On that day all our worries shall pass from us, not for a weekend or a year, but for all eternity for our Lord himself has promised his peace and comfort here in time and there again in eternity.

Prayer

Be to us, O Lord, a crown of glory in the day when You shall come to judge the world by fire, that You may graciously clothe us here with the robe of righteousness and hereafter with the perfection of a glorious liberty; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Hymn

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let every heart prepare a throne
And every voice a song.

Hark the Glad Sound (*LSB* 349:1)

Third Week of Advent

The Nunc Dimittis

December 11, 2022

Zachary Wessel (Sem II, CTSFW)

Reading

Luke 2:29–32

Devotion

Advent is a time of waiting. As we anticipate the celebration of Christ's first coming, we also wait with eager longing for His second coming. We gaze into the sky, groaning with the whole earth and saying the Church's prayer of "Come quickly, Lord Jesus." We no less than the Psalmist cry out to our Lord, saying, "My eyes long for your salvation and for the fulfillment of your righteousness."

In the midst of all of this waiting, Simeon's words are a bit of a surprise and a shock: "My eyes *have* seen your salvation." Unlike us, he does not pray "My eyes long for," but "My eyes have seen." At times when our sins, sufferings, and sorrows make the waiting grow unbearable to us impatient creatures, it is a fitting reminder to us that our salvation is not just a future event in Christ's second coming, although it is that. Our salvation is a person: the God-man Christ Jesus, born for us in Bethlehem. Along with Simeon, we too already have our salvation.

Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor.

Hark the Glad Sound (*LSB* 349:3)

Reading

Luke 2:22–38

Devotion

Simeon did not have vague ideas about who the Christ would be, or nebulous views about who his Lord was. By the revelation of the Holy Spirit, when Simeon sees the infant Christ, he sees God's salvation, the light for the revelation of the Gentiles and the glory for Israel, the one appointed for the fall and rising of many. And in this, Simeon rejoiced. In the same way, we do not await the coming of our Lord with vague ideas about who He is. Rather, we await Him as He has been revealed to us by the Holy Spirit: The Crucified One, who by His death and resurrection won for us salvation, and will return to judge the World. In this, we too rejoice.

Since we know full well who our Lord is, let us continually press on to know Him by devoting ourselves to His Word. Let us await Him by singing the very song of Simeon as we see God's salvation in the Supper, and receive His very body and blood as we are bid by Christ's own invitation. And awaiting Him, may we gladly submit to God's law, and rejoice in doing the works which He has prepared for us. Amen.

Prayer

Come to deliver us, O Lord God of hosts and show Your face that, being cleansed by Your mercy with the gift of worthy repentance, we may be enabled to stand before You in the judgment; through merits of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Hymn

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heaven's eternal arches ring
With Thy beloved name.

Hark the Glad Sound (*LSB* 349:4)

Reading

Exodus 13:1–2, 11–15

Devotion

Remember this day in which you came out from Egypt, for by a strong hand the Lord has brought you out. And consecrate all the firstborn.

What does this mean? The firstborn among many brothers has brought you out from bondage to sin. Your own eyes have seen His salvation. The first to open the Virgin's womb has redeemed you.

Baptized into His death, He now leads you in a new and greater Exodus. Behold the light of revelation for the Gentiles, the light who shines in the darkness, the pillar of fire who guides your feet into the way of peace.

Live by faith in the Passover Lamb slain in your place. By His blood, no destroyer can touch you. He leads you to the city that has foundations. For you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God. You have come to the assembly of the firstborn (Heb. 12:22–23), consecrated and made righteous by the strong hand of God, set apart by the sprinkled blood of the infant in Simeon's arms.

Prayer

Almighty God, who redeemed us by your strong hand, consecrate us as your chosen people that we may live before you in righteousness and innocence forever, through Jesus Christ our Passover Lamb, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit.

Hymn

Come, Thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art,
Dear desire of ev'ry nation,
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (*LSB* 338:1)

Reading

Galatians 4:4–7

Devotion

Imagine doing something amazing. Maybe it's getting that job, that grade, or that house. Now imagine receiving the adoration for this truly amazing thing at a time when you couldn't even remember it...when you were an infant.

The beautiful gift of Immanuel, God with us, brought an incredible treasure. Jesus' incarnation gifted us the ability to cry, "Abba, Father!" to the Lord and Creator of the cosmos. Born of a virgin, he took on human flesh in order that he may be fully under the Law and pay the wages of sin: death on a cross.

Simeon knew exactly who Jesus was when Mary and Joseph brought him into the temple. He held that light in his arms as he sang praises to his Father, thanking him for allowing his eyes to witness such a blessing, such a treasure, and unimaginable love. The Nunc Dimittis is a beautiful reminder that we may all join our brother Simeon in singing praise to our Father for the gift of His Son.

Prayer

O Lord God, Father Almighty, purify the secrets of our hearts and mercifully wash out all the stains of sin, and grant that, being cleansed from our crimes by the benediction of Your tenderness, we may without any terror await the fearful and terrible coming of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Hymn

Born Thy people to deliver;
 Born a child and yet a king!
Born to reign in us forever,
 Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
 Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all-sufficient merit
 Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus (*LSB* 338:2)

Reading

Psalm 4

Devotion

Psalm 4 is the traditional evening Psalm. The last verse, “In peace, I will both lie down and sleep, for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety,” is best prayed right before you go to bed. The Nunc Dimittis can also be prayed directly before bed, as you pray, “Lord, now You let Your servant depart in peace...” For Simeon, his prayer was for the sleep of death since he finally beheld the Savior’s face. Sleep is a rehearsal of death. Every time a Christian lies down in his bed it is a reminder to him that, just as he lies down to sleep and rises again in the morning, his Lord will one day raise him on the last and glorious day. While that may sound terrifying, it is in fact a comfort. Just as Simeon and the Psalmist had confidence in the One who would have victory over death, so too does the Christian have confidence in Christ for His cross, His resurrection, and His second Advent.

Prayer

O Christ, our God, Who will come to judge the world in the manhood which You assumed, sanctify us wholly, that in the day of Your coming our whole spirit, soul, and body may so revive to a fresh life in You that we may live and reign with Thee forever.

Hymn

Creator of the stars of night,
Thy people’s everlasting Light:
O Christ, Redeemer, save us all
And hear Thy servants when they call.

Creator of the Stars of Night (*LSB* 351:1)

Reading

Isaiah 60:1–3

Devotion

Christmas lights pierce the darkness of night around Christmas. It's a perfect reminder of the Savior of the Nations. Jesus came to be the Light of the World.

God's prophecy of Israel's future glory was fulfilled in the advent of Christ. God gave His Son to the world, to know the "glory of the LORD." This was shown in fullness on the cross, and to faithful witnesses, as the veil of Christ's human flesh was momentarily lifted at His transfiguration. Though darkness of unbelief blankets the earth, the Lord lifted up "His glory" to "be seen upon you." In Christ, our future glory is certain. Simeon rejoiced in seeing this glory with His own eyes (Luke 2:29-32). We confess in the Nunc Dimittis that we too "see" His glory and behold Him in the Lord's Supper. We also see His works of faith, forgiveness, and restoration in His Church and His people. We also receive His peace.

Christ came, revealed His true glory, and sanctifies us until His return in glory. Rest in this peace today. May Jesus, the light of the world continue to illuminate your life with the glory of the LORD.

Prayer

O God, You looked on man when he had fallen down into death and resolved to redeem him by the advent of Your only-begotten Son. Grant that all who confess His glorious Incarnation may also be admitted to the fellowship of Him, their Redeemer; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hymn

Thou, grieving that the ancient curse
Should doom to death a universe,
Hast found the healing, full of grace,
To cure and save our ruined race.

Creator of the Stars of Night (*LSB* 351:2)

Reading

John 8:12

Devotion

Taking the baby Jesus in his arms, Simeon declared, “my eyes have seen your salvation... a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.” With these words, Simeon confessed that Jesus is the light of God’s salvation who will bring glory to all people. It is no surprise, therefore, that about 30 years later Jesus says, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” With these words, Jesus confirms Simeon’s confession that He will work salvation for all people. And indeed, by His all-atoning sacrifice on the cross and glorious resurrection from the dead, Jesus brings about the salvation of the world. Today, this salvation still shines in the world through the preaching of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. Those who faithfully hear the Word and receive the Sacraments are doing as Jesus said, following Him, and they will have the light of life. It is fitting, therefore, that Simeon’s confession is sung following the Lord’s Supper, for in that meal the faithful see and taste the light of God’s salvation.

Prayer

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ; may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for You are merciful, and You love Your whole creation and we, Your creatures, glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Hymn

Thou cam’st the Bridegroom of the bride,
As drew the world to eventide,
The spotless Victim all divine
Proceeding from a virgin shrine.

Creator of the Stars of Night (*LSB* 351:3)

Fourth Week of Advent

The Gloria

December 18, 2022

Zachary Thornton (Sem I, CSL)

Reading

Luke 2:13–14

Devotion

Whenever we're granted a glimpse of heaven, Scripture shows us a picture of things as they should be—creation in perfect order, the host of heaven wrapped into and enthralled by the good and proper worship of the Creator. Such order is not found in this world, where sin's every evil clings to us so closely.

And yet, the heavenly host does not lie. God truly is glorious, and He truly bestows gracious peace on His people. In one week, we will join this same multitude of angels in praising God for His glory—His righteousness, His goodness, and His love. This child—the Prophet of grace, the Priest of redemption, the King of all creation—is our very peace. In Him, creation is set aright; in Him, we join the heavenly host's eternal anthem—glory to God indeed! Amen.

Prayer

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

At whose dread name, majestic now,
All knees must bend, all hearts must bow;
All things celestial Thee shall own,
And things terrestrial, Lord alone.

Creator of the Stars of Night (*LSB* 351:4)

Reading

Luke 2:8–20

Devotion

We hear in verse 10 “Fear not, for behold I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people.” It is difficult not to be filled with joy and gladness as you share pieces of good news. It is also difficult not to share your good news with everyone. Likewise, there was great joy surrounding the birth of the promised Savior that was to be shared with all people, a common recurring theme through Luke’s Gospel account. Amid the sadness of a fallen and sinful world we find joy and gladness in the arrival of our Savior Jesus Christ. “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!” (v. 14) Good news is contagious. The shepherds immediately proclaim the good news of what they saw and heard.

As we await the birth of our Savior Christ Jesus, we are filled with joy and gladness, eager to share the good news of the saving works of Jesus Christ.

Prayer

We pray, O Lord, that You would behold our prayers and pour out upon us Your loving tenderness, that we who are afflicted by reason of our sins may be refreshed by the Advent of our Savior; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Hymn

O Thou, whose coming is with dread
To judge the living and the dead,
Preserve us from the ancient foe
While still we dwell on earth below.

Creator of the Stars of Night (*LSB* 351:5)

Reading

Isaiah 6:1–4

Devotion

Isaiah's vision of God's glory in the Temple is the quintessential experience we might expect for such a sight. Earth shaking, fiery seraphim bursting forth in shouts of praise at the throne upon which God sits, high and lifted up, His majesty seen clearly as the train of His robe fills the Temple and smoke encompasses the scene. This is good and right. This is what an encounter with the Almighty Creator of the heavens and the earth ought to look like. The Seraphim even cover their faces in the presence of God's glory.

Then some 700 plus years later, 700 of the most bitter years for God's people, an angel of the Lord and a multitude of the heavenly host once again appear on the earth with unbridled shouts of praise. This time God's glory filled all of creation as it lay humbly in a manger in the incarnate Son of the Father, Jesus Christ. Jesus is coming again to judge the living and the dead. I can only imagine the scene.

Prayer

Make us, O Lord our God, watchful and heedful in awaiting the coming of Your Son, Christ our Lord, that when He shall come and knock, He may find us not sleeping in sins, but awake, and rejoicing in His praises; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Hymn

To God the Father and the Son
And Holy Spirit, Three in One,
Praise, honor, might, and glory be
From age to age eternally. Amen.

Creator of the Stars of Night (*LSB* 351:6)

Reading

Revelation 5:11–14

Devotion

In medieval tradition, the “Nine Worthies” were great men who informed the chivalric ideal. This list was first compiled in the *Voeux du Paon* of Jacques de Longuyon in 1312 and consisted of three pagans, three Jews, and three Christians. Among them were familiar figures like Hector of Troy, Joshua, and Charlemagne—men remembered for their courage and honor—who exemplified what it meant to be great.

We have been given someone better than these warriors and kings, honorable as they may have been. They are dust. Our heavenly Father sends to us the *everlasting* Lord, Christ Jesus, the Incarnate Word, as a baby in a manger. French poets at court did not sing of him; rather, angels sang at his birth. His honor far exceeds the perishable attributes of the Nine Worthies remembered in the courtly romances. In this Advent season, we rejoice that our Worthy comes to us as the *Agnus Dei*, who has redeemed us to God by his blood. And in the giving of this blood, he has made Worthies of us all.

Prayer

O God, our Maker and Redeemer, You wonderfully created us and in the incarnation of Your Son yet more wondrously restored our human nature. Grant that we may ever be alive in Him who made Himself to be like us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

The King shall come when morning dawns

And light triumphant breaks,

When beauty gilds the eastern hills

And life to joy awakes.

The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns (*LSB* 348:1)

Reading:

Psalm 148

Devotion

This Psalm is one of praise. From the heavens to the earth, angels to humans, and stars to storms, all of creation praises the Lord. This praise shows the true sovereignty of our God, as all things of the created order testify to His glory. Though the Lord God almighty is worthy of unending praise, we show signs of our fallen nature by being insensible to God's glory. Nevertheless, as it says in verse 14, the Lord has raised up a horn for his people. Behold, this horn prophesies Christ, as Saint Zechariah, father of Saint John the Baptist, declares. Thus, on this most holy season of Advent, let us praise God almighty in everything we do. Even more-so, let us praise God for raising up a horn for our salvation, Christ the Lowborn King.

Prayer

Most merciful God, You gave Your eternal Word to become incarnate of the pure Virgin. Grant Your people grace to put away fleshly lusts, that they may be ready for Your visitation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

Not as of old a little child,

To bear and fight and die,

But crowned with glory like the sun

That lights the morning sky.

The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns (*LSB* 348:2)

Reading

Matthew 1:18–25

Devotion

“That’s not how I would have done it.” This thought pervades many of our minds as we watch other people interact with the world around us. Whether watching somebody fold a towel the wrong way or seeing someone pour the milk in their bowl before the cereal, we think we know best. Although Joseph did not know this was the work of the Holy Spirit, he thought he knew how to best deal with Mary in her pregnancy; he would divorce her. It wasn’t until an angel appeared to him in a dream that he understood God’s plan which was much better. He was to take Mary as his wife and name the child Jesus. God coming to earth in the form of a human seems like such a strange thing to do. It is probably not what we would’ve done in God’s place. We can praise God for doing what we wouldn’t have and for coming to us in such a special way. He truly does know best.

Prayer

O God, You make us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Your only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. Grant that as we joyfully receive Him as our Redeemer, we may with sure confidence behold Him when He comes to be our Judge; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

Oh, brighter than the rising morn
When Christ, victorious, rose
And left the lonesome place of death
Despite the rage of foes.

The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns (*LSB* 348:3)

Reading

Luke 2:1–7

Devotion

It's Christmas Eve. It's time. Is your sermon ready? Did you wrap all the presents? Did you remember to marinade the steaks for tomorrow? It's time!

This night is brimming with anticipation and excitement. It always has since those moments Mary and Joseph settled into that shack of a birthing suite. Our Christmas preparations, as silly and highly spiritualized as they may be, all mimic the swelling of creation that Luke presents in Luke 2.

The introductory details might seem as irrelevant as the peanuts in your Christmas stocking. Get to Jesus, Luke! Every ocean wave builds far off the shore though. This moment has been building since "Let there be light." Even before that in the divine mind. Working backwards, this birth is for Mary and Joseph, for the residents of Bethlehem, for all under Quirinius' rule in Syria, and, ultimately, the residents of the entire world under Caesar Augustus.

Tonight is huge. Tonight, we remember the birth of the Savior of the world. Soak in the excitement. Your salvation is here.

Prayer

O God, You make this most holy night to shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that as we have known the mysteries of that Light on earth we may also come to the fullness of His joys in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

Oh, brighter than that glorious morn
Shall dawn upon our race
The day when Christ in splendor comes
And we shall see His face.

The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns (*LSB* 348:4)

Reading

John 1:1–14

In the beginning...

How many times have you heard this statement? Sometimes, when reading common texts (especially a text read at a feast like Christmas!) we can gloss over the words, thinking “yes, I know this already,” especially when we might have other things on our mind. But this text is worth stopping what we are doing, banishing all else from our mind, and paying attention. St. John takes us back to *the very beginning of the world*. He takes us to before the fall, before the intrusion of death, sin, and ugliness into the world. He assures us that in the beginning, before all of creation, was Christ. It is this Christ, who was before the foundation of the world, that was made incarnate, in the form of a helpless infant, to eventually grow into a man, a man who would take on a threefold office of prophet, priest, and king, the God-man who would take the sins of the world upon his shoulders, and stretch out his arms, and die. But now, today, he is still that helpless child, the Word incarnate, heaven and earth united in a glorious moment that will only be seen again when He comes again.

A blessed Christmas to you all!

Prayer

Almighty God, grant that the birth of Your only-begotten Son in the flesh may set us free from the bondage of sin; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Hymn

The King shall come when morning dawns

And light and beauty brings.

Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray:

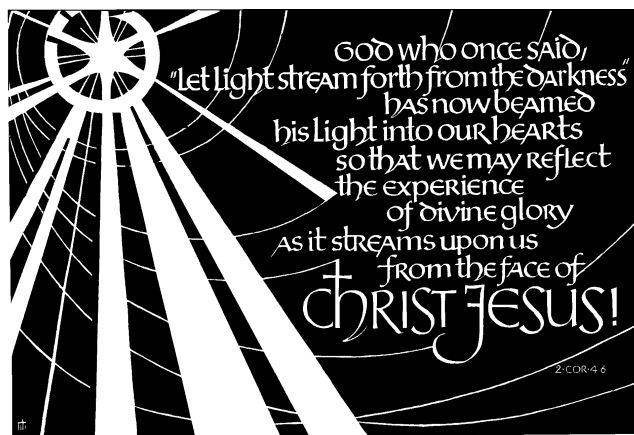
Come quickly, King of kings!

The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns (*LSB* 348:5)

December 25, 2022

That day is called the birthday of the Lord on which the Wisdom of God manifested Himself as a speechless Child and the Word of God wordlessly uttered the sound of a human voice. His divinity, although hidden, was revealed by heavenly witness to the Magi and was announced to the shepherds by angelic voices. With yearly ceremony, therefore, we celebrate this day which saw the fulfillment of the prophecy: 'Truth is sprung out of the earth: and justice hath looked down from heaven.' Truth, eternally existing in the bosom of the Father, has sprung from the earth so that He might exist also in the bosom of a mother. Truth, holding the world in place, has sprung from the earth so that He might be carried in the hands of a woman. Truth, incorruptibly nourishing the happiness of the angels, has sprung from the earth in order to be fed by human milk. Truth, whom the heavens cannot contain, has sprung from the earth so that He might be placed in a manger. For whose benefit did such unparalleled greatness come in such lowliness? Certainly for no personal advantage, but definitely for our great good, if only we believe. Arouse yourself, O man; for you God has become man. 'Awake, sleeper, and arise from among the dead, and Christ will enlighten thee.' For you, I repeat, God has become man. If He had not thus been born in time, you would have been dead for all eternity. Never would you have been freed from sinful flesh, if He had not taken upon Himself the likeness of sinful flesh. Everlasting misery would have engulfed you, if He had not taken this merciful form. You would not have been restored to life, had He not submitted to your death; you would have fallen, had He not succored you; you would have perished, had He not come.

Christmas sermon of St. Augustine (Sermon 185)



Advent Benedictional

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility, sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. *Amen.*

May He whose second Coming in power and great glory we await, make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. *Amen.* .

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer, at His second Advent be rewarded with unending life. *Amen.*

drawn from the Roman Sacramentary
as adapted by the Episcopal Church
(Pfatteicher, *Journey into the Heart of God*, 45)

