

5

PRAY THE PSALM OF THE WEEK Isaiah 45:8; Psalm 19:1, 4-6

Rain down, you heavens, | from above,*
and let the skies pour down the | Righteous One;
Let the earth o- | pen her womb,*
and bring forth Sal- | vation.
The heavens declare the glo- | ry of God;*
and the firmament shows His | handiwork.
Their voice is gone out into | all the earth,*
and their words to the end | of the world.*
In the heavens He has set a tabernacle | for the sun,*
which is like a Bridegroom coming out of His | chamber.
His going forth is from the end of the | heaven,*
and his circuit unto the | end of it.

6

SAY TOGETHER THE VERSE OF THE WEEK John 1:23

John said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."

7

READ THE SCRIPTURE AND DEVOTION (OTHER SIDE OF THE PAGE)

8

PRAY THE PRAYER OF THE WEEK

Stir up your power, O Lord, we implore You, and come among us, that by Your grace whatever is hindered by our sins may yet be speedily accomplished through Your mercy and satisfaction; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

9

PRAYER FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS

10

SING OR SAY THE HYMN OF THE WEEK
Comfort, Comfort, Ye, My People

TLH 61, LSB 347
Johann Olearius



1. 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.

3. Hark, the Herald's voice is crying
In the desert far and near,
Bidding all men to repentance
Since the Kingdom now is here.
Oh, 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.



"The Lord Has Come Proclaimed by John"

1

BLESS YOURSELF WITH THE HOLY CROSS AND SAY:

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

2

SAY THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.
And 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 sits at
the right hand of God, the Father
Almighty. From thence 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.

3

PRAY THE 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.

4

PRAY THE MORNING OR EVENING PRAYER

Morning. I thank You, my
heavenly Father, through Jesus
Christ, Your dear Son, that You
have kept me this night from all
harm and danger; and I pray that
You would keep me this day also
from sin and every evil, that all my
doings and life may please You.
For into Your hands I commend
myself, my body and soul, and all
things. Let Your holy angel be with
me, that the evil foe may have no
power over me. Amen.

Evening. I thank you, my
heavenly Father, through Jesus
Christ, Your dear Son, that You
have graciously kept me this day;
and I pray that You would forgive
me all my sins where I have done
wrong, and graciously keep me this
night. For into Your hands, I
commend myself, my body and
soul, and all things. Let Your holy
angel be with me, that the evil foe
may have no power over me. Amen.

THEME OF THE WEEK: **The Lord Has Come Proclaimed by John**

John the Baptist came in the wilderness as the voice preparing the way for the Lord. He came to those who sat in darkness and in shadow of death to point them to the One whose light pierces the darkness. John still comes today to announce and proclaim that the Lord is near, the Lord is coming! As the season of Advent comes to its climax this week, we rejoice in Him who comes to us in the name of the Lord, we rejoice in the One who was born of a virgin for us, born to save us! His name is Jesus because He has saved His people, saved you from your sin! "Welcome to earth, O noble Guest, Through whom the sinful world is blest!" (LSB, 358).

SUN

SCRIPTURE: **John 1:19-28 The Voice Proclaiming the Christ**

John the Baptist knows who he is, but most importantly he knows who he is not. He is not the Christ. He is not the Savior. He is not Elijah. He is not The Prophet (though he is a prophet) and He is not worthy to unite the sandals of the Christ. He is, however, the great confessor, "He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ" (Jn. 1:20). John is not the Christ, but there is a Christ. He is a Christ Who was born for you, a Christ Who lived for you, suffered for you, and rose from the dead for you. He is a Christ who was born to save you. John is the voice proclaiming this Christ, "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn. 1:29). *O Lord, thank You for sending John to prepare the way for the Christ, pointing men to Him. Amen.*

MON

SCRIPTURE: **Psalms 5 Let All Who Take Refuge in the Lord Rejoice and Sing for Joy!**

The world is full of those who speak lies, reject the truth, rebel against God and delight in wickedness. One day God will destroy and put an end to evil and wickedness once and for all. He will dole out justice and judgment upon all who have rejected Him. By nature we are all liars. We do not speak the truth about God or about ourselves. Before God, we confess with Isaiah, "I am a man of unclean lips" (Isa. 6:5). But the Lord in His great mercy sent His own Son into our flesh, born of a virgin, to be our Savior. He speaks the truth and delights in righteousness. He makes righteous all who take refuge in Him. Rejoice and sing for joy, "for Christ is born, The babe, the son of Mary!" (LSB, 370). *Praise be to Thee, O Lord, for Thy wondrous grace. Amen.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: **Philippians 4:4-7 Rejoice, the Lord is Near!**

Saint Paul's imperative to rejoice "always" may sound cliché and ring hollow in the depths of tragedy or when the cross is heavy to bear in this "valley of sorrow" which we now live. But even there, even in the depths of living in a broken world as broken people, even in the shadow of darkness and death, the One who is the light of the world shines and no darkness can ever snuff out His light and life (Jn. 1:5). This is why Paul says, "rejoice in the Lord" (v. 4). Rejoice in "the peace of God" for you in Christ Jesus (v. 7). Rejoice for the Lord is near (v. 5)! "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" (LSB, 341). *Help us, O Christ, to rejoice in You always. Amen.*

WED

SCRIPTURE: **Isaiah 40:1-8 Prepare Our Hearts**

What does "Prepare the way of the Lord" mean? The Lord isn't talking about earthly topography. He's talking about the topography of your heart. The devil is constantly heaving up your heart into the towering heights of pride and tearing it down into the deepest pits of despair. Pride and despair are the only possible extremes for a sinner who fears, loves, and trusts in idols. John the Baptist preaches another way, a level way. He tears down the idols of your heart by laying bare your sin. He then lifts your heart by promising God's mercy. Upon this heart leveled by Law and Gospel, Christ the King comes to dwell with you.

Prepare our hearts to receive Your mercy heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

THU

SCRIPTURE: **Luke 1:67-80 The Benedictus**

Upon John's birth, Zechariah records for us one of the greatest canticles in the Scriptures. God had indeed visited Zechariah and barren Elizabeth. He gave them a son who would prepare the way for the Lord Himself. God kept His covenant promise to Abraham to save us from our enemies; from sin, death and the devil, from guilt, shame, and despair. The Lord has indeed visited us from on high "to give light to those who sit in the darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (v. 79). *Praise be to Thee O Lord, for keeping Thy covenant promise to Abraham in Christ Jesus. Amen.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: **Hebrews 12:15-29 God Comes Down to Us in Christ**

"You do not come to Him, He comes to you," Luther writes. This is the essence of Advent, the essence of Christianity. The writer to the Hebrews reminds us that we cannot approach the living God in His majesty and holiness. At Mount Sinai, God was off limits and could not be approached without disastrous consequences. But since God has come down to us clothed in Christ's flesh and blood, we now have complete access to Him and His grace. Covered with the blood of Jesus, we can enter into His presence in the Divine Service, surrounded by the whole company of heaven, to receive His gifts of Word and Sacrament.

Thank You, O Lord, for coming down to us in Christ that we might be clothed in His righteousness and holiness. Amen.

SAT

SCRIPTURE: **Psalms 145 Words of Praise**

Our God's renown isn't like a fad that's here today and gone tomorrow. It endures forever. David explains, "One generation shall commend your works to another and shall declare your mighty acts." The fathers tell their sons and daughters that God is "gracious and merciful." The pastors proclaim to both young and old that the Lord is "slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love." Their words aren't their own. They are the Lord's, and we have the promise that nothing he says is vain, and the one who trusts in Him is never put to shame. "He fulfills the desire of those who fear Him; He also hears their cries and saves them." *Lord God, heavenly Father, thank You for these words of praise that will endure forever and ever. Amen.*