



# MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1

## OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTMAS

### AS WE GATHER

The weeks leading up to Christmas are filled with special memories as previous holiday seasons come to mind. The Church Year time of Advent helps us to prepare for the coming of our Lord once again. As we make those preparations, not only do we look back to the first Christmas as recorded by the Gospel writers, but we also look even further back in Scripture to when the Son of God came among His people in other times and places before His wondrous birth at Bethlehem. In the Old Testament, we find the details of earlier divine visits that are part of our sacred memory, and we recall them in these holy days.

+ PREPARATION +

HYMN      “Prepare the Royal Highway” (*LSB* 343)

### INVOCATION

**P** In the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

### CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

**P** Our help is in the name of the LORD,

**C** who made heaven and earth.

**P** In this season of penitence and reflection, let us think of our unworthiness and confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, asking for His merciful forgiveness.

**C** **God Almighty, have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to life everlasting. Amen.**

**P** Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son, our Emmanuel, to die for us, and for His sake, forgives us all our sins. May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**C** **Amen.**

#### SALUTATION

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And also with you.**

#### OPENING COLLECT

**P** Let us pray.

Almighty Father, by the advent of Your Son into the world, the kingdom of heaven now is open to all who believe in Him. Give us grace to look for the signs of His coming and to receive the Lord Jesus as our Emmanuel, God with us. By the working of Your Holy Spirit, lead us evermore to serve Him in our lives until that day when He comes again to claim us as His own for eternity. This we ask in His most blessed name.

**C** **Amen.**

- P** The theme for our Advent services in this season is “Symbols of Salvation: Foretelling Christ’s Birth.” That birth is recorded “deep in prophets’ sacred page,” as our next hymn expresses.

HYMN “O God of God, O Light of Light” (*LSB* 810:1–2)

+ WORD +

### FIRST READING

- P** A reading from Exodus, the third chapter.

<sup>1</sup>Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. <sup>2</sup>And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. <sup>3</sup>And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” <sup>4</sup>When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” <sup>5</sup>Then He said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” <sup>6</sup>And He said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

<sup>7</sup>Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry

because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, <sup>8</sup>and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. <sup>9</sup>And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. <sup>10</sup>Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” <sup>11</sup>But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” <sup>12</sup>He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

<sup>13</sup>Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” <sup>14</sup>God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## PSALM

**P** The earth is the LORD’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,

**C** for He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

- P** Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in His holy place?
- C** **He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.**
- P** He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- C** **Such is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.**
- P** Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.
- C** **Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!**
- P** Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.
- C** **Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory!**

**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.**

## SECOND READING

- P** A reading from Isaiah, the twenty-fifth chapter.

<sup>6</sup>On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples

a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,  
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

<sup>7</sup>And He will swallow up on this mountain

the covering that is cast over all peoples,  
 the veil that is spread over all nations.  
<sup>8</sup>He will swallow up death forever;  
 and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,  
 and the reproach of His people He will take away  
 from all the earth,  
 for the LORD has spoken.  
<sup>9</sup>It will be said on that day,  
 “Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him,  
 that He might save us.  
 This is the LORD; we have waited for Him;  
 let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

**P** This is the Word of the Lord.

**C** Thanks be to God.

VERSE

*Philippians 4:5*

**P** The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

**C** **Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.**

**P** Our God comes; He does not keep silence; before Him is a devouring fire, around Him a mighty tempest.

**C** **He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that He may judge His people: “Gather to Me My faithful ones, who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice!”**

**P** The heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge!

**C** **Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High.**

## HOLY GOSPEL

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fifteenth chapter.
- C** **Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>1</sup>[Jesus said:] “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

<sup>2</sup>Every branch of Mine that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. <sup>3</sup>Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. <sup>4</sup>Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. <sup>7</sup>If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples.”

- P** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- C** **Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” (*LSB* 338)

## SERMON

## CATECHISM

**C** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

**P** What does this mean?

**C** I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them.

He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life.

He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him.

This is most certainly true.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

**P** In this season of prayer and preparation, Lord, we bring You our petitions. Graciously bless the Church and all the faithful around the world who expectantly await the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child. By Your Holy Spirit, direct these days that they be for each of us a time of reflection, repentance, and preparation for the Savior's coming. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** hear our prayer.

**P** Trusting in Your mercy, we pray for the world in which we live and for our nation. Grant that the coming of Emmanuel, God with us, be known in all corners of the world as the Good News shared throughout the pages of Scripture is proclaimed once more. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** **hear our prayer.**

**P** Remembering the call to prepare our hearts and our lives, we ask that we be blessed with an extra measure of charity in these weeks. Help us to find time to be those people for whom giving in Jesus' name is a way of life. Give us fulfillment in the joy brought to others in thoughtful ways in this special season. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** **hear our prayer.**

**P** In these days, help us to hear the voices of those in need of our aid and comfort. Grant that we find ways to reach out to the lonely, the ill, the hurting, and those for whom these days bring sadness. Give us the Spirit to direct our hearts and lives, so that each day of our lives is lived to Your glory. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** **hear our prayer.**

**P** In this season of remembering, we call to mind those saints whose earthly journeys have been completed and who now rejoice in the fullness of Your eternal care. We thank You for the witness of the prophets and holy writers whose words enlighten and encourage us. In these holy days, let our gladness have no end. Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** **hear our prayer.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

- C** 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.

HYMN      “Be Still, My Soul, before the Lord” (*LSB* 771)

## OFFERING

### ADVENT ANTIPHON

- P** O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most High,  
pervading and permeating all creation, mightily ordering all  
things:
- C** Come and teach us the way of prudence.
- P** O Adonai and ruler of the house of Israel, who appeared to  
Moses in the burning bush and gave him the Law on Sinai:
- C** Come with an outstretched arm and redeem us.

## PRAYER

- P** Let us pray.

Almighty God, Judge and King, the whole creation waits for Your coming. Come, Lord Jesus, with Your grace, and fill our lives with Your presence. Use all our time for Your gracious purpose; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** Amen.

### BLESSING

**P** The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you.

**C** Amen.

HYMN            “Hark the Glad Sound” (*LSB* 349)

