

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 3

YOU SHALL DEFEAT THEM AS ONE MAN

AS WE GATHER

A tradition carried out in some places during the weeks before Christmas is the “Secret Santa,” in which a person leaves little gifts or notes of greeting and encouragement for someone else in a mysterious way. The “Secret Santa” does not reveal his or her identity until Christmas has come. The person who received the gifts may find that the giver was someone totally unexpected, even unlikely. In the season of Advent, we find ourselves awaiting God’s unlikely Messiah. He comes to earth not in power or splendor but in humility and simplicity. God’s plan of salvation is unexpected and unlikely and amazing. With eager hearts, we anticipate the arrival of our humble Lord and rejoice in the wonder of His coming.

+ PREPARATION +

HYMN

“Let All Together Praise Our God” (*LSB* 389)

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.

Lord Jesus, You came to earth in lowliness of heart to seek and save the lost. In this season of repentance and prayer, make us ready to prepare Your way with sincere devotion that reflects Your humble service. By Your Holy Spirit, grant us a sense of peace and renewed dedication to live as faithful and courageous people, so that we welcome You with joyful hearts and hope-filled lives. This we ask in Your wonderful name.

C **Amen.**

P The theme for our Advent services in this season is “Symbols of Salvation: Foretelling Christ’s Birth.” In these weeks, we have discovered “types”—people, like Moses, and things, like the burning bush and tent of meeting of God’s Old Testament people—that pointed forward to the coming of Christ. Today, we will discover how God used Gideon to show His power. With the heavenly host, we join in the praise of the Savior as we sing our next hymn.

+ WORD +

FIRST READING

*Judges 6:11 -24 (7:2 -9)***P** A reading from Judges, the sixth (and seventh) chapter(s).

¹¹Now the angel of the LORD came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites.

¹²And the angel of the LORD appeared to him and said to him, “The LORD is with you, O mighty man of valor.” ¹³And Gideon said to Him, “Please, sir, if the LORD is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His wonderful deeds that our fathers recounted to us, saying, ‘Did not the LORD bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the LORD has forsaken us and given us into the hand of Midian.” ¹⁴And the LORD turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?”

¹⁵And he said to Him, “Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.” ¹⁶And the LORD said to him, “But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.” ¹⁷And he said to Him, “If now I have found favor in Your eyes, then show me a sign that it is You who speaks with me. ¹⁸Please do not depart from here until I come to You and bring out my present and set it before You.” And He said, “I will stay till you return.”

¹⁹So Gideon went into his house and prepared a young goat and unleavened cakes from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and the broth he put in a pot, and brought them to Him under the terebinth and presented them. ²⁰And the angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened cakes, and put them on this rock, and pour the broth over them.” And he did so. ²¹Then the angel of the LORD reached out the tip of the staff that was in His hand and touched

the meat and the unleavened cakes. And fire sprang up from the rock and consumed the flesh and the unleavened cakes. And the angel of the LORD vanished from his sight. ²²Then Gideon perceived that He was the angel of the LORD. And Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord GOD! For now I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face.” ²³But the LORD said to him, “Peace be to you. Do not fear; you shall not die.” ²⁴Then Gideon built an altar there to the LORD and called it, The LORD is Peace. To this day it still stands at Ophrah, which belongs to the Abiezrites. . . .

^{7:2}The LORD said to Gideon, “The people with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’ ³Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, ‘Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home and hurry away from Mount Gilead.’” Then 22,000 of the people returned, and 10,000 remained.

⁴And the LORD said to Gideon, “The people are still too many. Take them down to the water, and I will test them for you there, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ shall go with you, and anyone of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ shall not go.” ⁵So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, “Every one who laps the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set by himself. Likewise, every one who kneels down to drink.” ⁶And the number of those who lapped, putting their hands to their mouths, was 300 men, but all the rest of the people knelt down to drink water. ⁷And the LORD said to Gideon, “With the 300 men who lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hand, and let all the others go every man to his home.” ⁸So the people took provisions in their hands, and their trumpets. And he sent all the rest of Israel every man to his tent, but retained the 300 men. And the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

⁹That same night the LORD said to him, “Arise, go down against the camp, for I have given it into your hand.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM

- P** LORD, You were favorable to Your land; You restored the fortunes of Jacob.
- C** You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.
- P** You withdrew all Your wrath; You turned from Your hot anger.
- C** Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away Your indignation toward us!
- P** Will You be angry with us forever?
- C** Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?
- P** Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?
- C** Show us Your steadfast love, O LORD, and grant us Your salvation.
- P** Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly.
- C** Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him, that glory may dwell in our land.
- P** Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.
- C** Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky.
- P** Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.
- C** Righteousness will go before Him and make His footsteps a way.

**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 Micah, the fifth chapter.

²But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for Me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,

whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³Therefore He shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has given birth;
then the rest of His brothers shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴And He shall stand and shepherd His flock in the strength of the
LORD,

in the majesty of the name of the LORD His God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now He shall be great
to the ends of the earth.

⁵And He shall be their peace.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

VERSE

Isaiah 11:1 -2, 5 -6, 9

P There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch
from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon
Him,

C **the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and
might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.**

P Righteousness shall be the belt of His waist, and faithfulness the belt of
His loins.

C **The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down
with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf
together; and a little child shall lead them.**

P They shall not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain;

C **for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters
cover the sea.**

HOLY GOSPEL

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

⁶⁸“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for He has visited and redeemed His people
⁶⁹and has raised up a horn of salvation for us
in the house of His servant David,
⁷⁰as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old,
⁷¹that we should be saved from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us;
⁷²to show the mercy promised to our fathers
and to remember His holy covenant,
⁷³the oath that He swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
⁷⁴that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
might serve Him without fear,
⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN

“Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord” (*LSB* 352)

SERMON

CATECHISM

The Third Article

C **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.**

P What does this mean?

C **I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith.**

In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers.

On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Almighty God, we lift up our hearts in gratitude to You, and for all Your loving kindness we bless Your holy name. For life and health, for love and friendship, and for the knowledge of Your grace and truth which shapes our lives,

C **we praise You, O God, and ask Your blessing.**

P For the wonder of this holy season, and for all things true and honorable, just and pure, lovely and gracious,

C **we praise You, O God, and ask Your blessing.**

P For the gift of Jesus Christ, our Lord, for His sacrifice and service, and for His obedience unto death, even death on a cross,

C **we praise You, O God, and ask Your blessing.**

P For His glorious resurrection and ascension to Your right hand, for His kingdom and everlasting dominion, and for the promise of His return to earth in glory at the final Advent,

C **we praise You, O God, and ask Your blessing.**

P For the Holy Spirit, the Counselor, who is at work in our hearts and our lives, and who unites the hearts of the faithful through the Church

throughout the world, for the Means of Grace, and for the fellowship of the redeemed in heaven and on earth,

C we praise You, O God, and ask Your blessing.

P According to Your mercy, hear and answer the prayers and petitions we bring before You, and grant all that is needed and in accord with Your will. Glory, thanksgiving, and praise be to You, O Father almighty, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

C Amen.

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

“Hear Us, Father, When We Pray” (*LSB* 773)

OFFERING

ADVENT ANTIPHON

P O Dayspring, splendor of light everlasting:

C **Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.**

P O King of the nations, the ruler they long for, the cornerstone uniting all people:

C **Come and save us all, whom You formed out of clay.**

P O Emmanuel, our King and our Lord, the anointed for the nations and their Savior:

C **Come and save us, O Lord our God.**

PRAYER

P Let us pray.

O Lord, grant us Your grace in this present age to live with confidence and courage as we look for the fullness of Your coming among us in all of Your glory and power at the end of time. By the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, lead us and guide us through our days until at last we join with saints and angels in endless praise around Your heavenly throne. This we ask through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord.

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 “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates” (LSB340)

