

Clearing a Path



**Worship Bulletin: Mount Calvary Lutheran Church
Dec. 5 (5:30 PM) and Dec. 6 (8:45AM) 2020**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: We gather in the name of our baptism, in the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **A: Amen.**

P: Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

P: God of all time,

A: we confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us. We ignore our neighbors in need and fail in the labor of justice and peace. In your mercy forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your light and to seek the things that will endure until Christ comes again in glory. Amen.

P: Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. In ✠ Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven and all things are made new. Rejoice in this good news! **A: Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE:

"Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord"
Godsell

Prepare Ye The Way Of The Lord
(repeated numerous times)

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **A: And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **A: Amen.**

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 40:1-11

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

PSALM 85:1-2, 8-13

P: You have been gracious to your land, O LORD; you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

A: You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins.

P: I will listen to what the LORD God is saying; for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.

A: Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you, that your glory may dwell in our land.

P: Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

A: Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

P: The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase.

A: Righteousness shall go before the LORD and shall prepare for God a pathway.

SECOND READING: 2 PETER 3:8-15A

This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

⁸Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

MUSIC INTERLUDE: “There’s a Voice in the Wilderness”

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 Zion, that bringest good tidings,
go up to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people
the coming of their King.
Like the flowers of the field they perish,
like grass our works decay,
the power and pomp of nations
shall pass like a dream away,

but the word of our God is steadfast;
the arm of the Lord is strong;
God stands in the midst of nations,
and soon will right the wrong.

God shall feed the flock like a shepherd,
the lambs will gently hold,
to pastures of peace will lead them,
and bring them safe to the fold.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

P: Alleluia!

A: Prepare the way of the Lord. All flesh shall see the salvation of God.

P: Alleluia!

GOSPEL: MARK 1:1-8

The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" as interpreted by Dan Gresh



1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heav'n, to
2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - 'ry
3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us all thy
4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion, pure and spot - less



earth come down! Fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy
trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us
life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -
let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -



faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion,
find thy prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;
more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing,
ly re - stored in thee! Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,



pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
Al - pha and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as
serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise!

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788

Music: HYFRYDOL, Rowland H. Prichard, 1811–1887

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: God of power and might, comfort your people and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

P: Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

P: Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

P: Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. We pray especially for . . . (*current local, national, or international issues of peace or justice may be named*). Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us, O God. **A: Your mercy is great.**

P: Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work (*especially Nicholas of Myra*). Make their generous lives an example for all. Hear us, O God.

A: Your mercy is great.

P: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

A: Amen.

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

A: And also with you.

OFFERING PRAYER

P: Savior of the nations, come.

A: Make your home here in us. Feed us with your love, that our faith shine ever new and our lives reveal your light. Amen.

DIALOGUE

P: The Lord be with you.

A: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

A: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

A: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

A: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P: With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

A: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

A: Come, Holy Spirit.

P: All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

A: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

All: 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you. Share in the feast of salvation.

SHARING OF COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: We thank you,

A: God our host, for inviting us here to taste the future when you will feed all the hungry at your table. Keep this hope alive in us and in our communities, so that we might bring hope to a suffering world, in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

SENDING

“He Came Down”

by Marty Haugen

1He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love;
He came down that we may have love,
Hallelujah forevermore.

(X2)

He came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace;
He came down that we may have peace,
Hallelujah forevermore.

(X2)

He came down that we may have hope;
He came down that we may have hope;
He came down that we may have hope,
Hallelujah forevermore.

(X2)

He came down that we may have joy;
He came down that we may have joy;
He came down that we may have joy,
Hallelujah forevermore.

(X2)

He came down. He came down. He came down.
He came down. He came down. He came down.
Hallelujah forevermore. (X2)

He came down that we may have life;
He came down that we may have life;
He came down that we may have life,
Hallelujah forevermore.

(X2)

BLESSING OF THE SHAWLS

P: Friends in Christ: Today we give thanks to God and seek God’s Blessing as we send these shawls to those in need.

P: Let us pray. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. Yu made the whole earth for your glory; all creation praises you. We lift our voices to join the

songs of heaven and earth in thanksgiving for the many blessings you have given us.

P: Renew in us the commitment to use our gifts in the service of others, and specially of those in need. Let us be your hands to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, clothe the naked, comfort the weary and outcast, welcome the stranger, care for creation, and be loving neighbors to all people.

P: Bless these shawls. May those who receive them find dignity in their use and comfort in their warmth, and may these gifts be a sign of your love to all people. To you, O God, be glory and honor through your Son, Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in your church and in the world, now and forever.

BLESSING

P: May God direct your ways in peace, make you abound in love for one another and for all, and strengthen your hearts until the coming of our Lord Jesus.

Almighty God, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

A: Amen.

DISMISSAL

P: With faith renewed, hope restored, and loved revived, we go,

A: to invite every generation on a shared journey to Christian growth.