



# Evening Prayer

Sunday, December 6, 2020

Second Sunday of Advent

## THE ADVENT WREATH *(by David Miller Kohlmeier, adapted with permission)*

Each year, many of us observe the tradition of lighting the candles of an Advent Wreath. These candles mark the Sundays of the season of Advent. They remind us Advent is a time for reflection as we prepare our hearts to come close to the mystery of Christmas. In most years we light a new candle each week, and the light grows brighter each Sunday. This year, however, we're doing something a little different; because light is not the only path toward Christmas. Darkness, too, can draw us close. And, perhaps, is the better path to follow in this strange and often troubling year. We begin with all the candles lit, and each week we extinguish another flame, until, gradually, we enter into the full darkness.

### *The Second Candle*

Today, we extinguish the second candle as we reflect on the gift of dreams. Darkness gives our dreams space to take flight. In our dreams, in our imagination, we can cease to be earthbound and burdened with practicality.\* Instead, we can imagine any future and dream any possibility. In moments when the future feels bleak, we pause and give thanks for the dream-filled space of darkness. May we be blessed by the gifts of dreams.

## OPENING SENTENCE

*Officiant:* The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together. (Isaiah 40:5)

## CONFESSION OF SIN

*Officiant:* Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

**People:** **Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your name. Amen.**

*Officiant:* Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. Amen.

## THE INVITATORY

*Officiant:* O God, make speed to save us.

**People:** **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

**All:** **Glory 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!**

## O GRACIOUS LIGHT *(Phos hilaron)*

**All:** **O gracious light, pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven, O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed! Now as we come to the setting of the sun, and our eyes behold the vesper light, we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices, O Son of God, O Giver of Life, and to be glorified through all the worlds.**

## PSALM 80:1-7, 16-18

You have been gracious to your land, O Lord,  
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.  
You have forgiven the iniquity of your people  
and blotted out all their sins.

I will listen to what the Lord God is saying,  
for he is speaking peace to his faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to him.  
Truly, his salvation is very near to those who fear him,  
that his glory may dwell in our land.  
Mercy and truth have met together;  
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.  
Truth shall spring up from the earth,  
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.  
The Lord will indeed grant prosperity,  
and our land will yield its increase.  
Righteousness shall go before him,  
and peace shall be a pathway for his feet.

**All: Glory 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!**

### **A READING FROM THE BOOK OF ISAIAH (64:1-9)**

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. Speak 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. A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every 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. Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken." A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand for ever. Get 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!" See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He 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.

*Reader:* The Word of the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

### **A SONG OF THE WILDERNESS**

*Isaiah 35:1-7,10*

**All: The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weary hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to the anxious, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God, coming with judgment to save you." Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped. Then shall the lame leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; The burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground, springs of water. The ransomed of God shall return with singing, with everlasting joy upon their heads. Joy and gladness shall be theirs, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.**

### **A READING FROM PETER'S SECOND LETTER (3:8-15A)**

Do 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. The 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. But 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.

Since 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, waiting 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? But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

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

*Reader:* The Word of the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

## A SONG OF FAITH

*1 Peter 1:3-4,18-21*

**All:** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by divine mercy we have a new birth into a living hope; Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, we have an inheritance that is imperishable in heaven. The ransom that was paid to free us was not paid in silver or gold, But in the precious blood of Christ, the Lamb without spot or stain. God raised Jesus from the dead and gave him glory so that we might have faith and hope in God.

## A READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK (13:24-37)

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And 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. Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He 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. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

*Reader:* The Word of the Lord.

**People:** Thanks be to God.

## THE SERMON

### THE APOSTLES' CREED

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He 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, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.

### THE PRAYERS

*Officiant:* The Lord be with you.

**People:** And also with you.

*Officiant:* Let us 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

*Officiant:* That this evening may be holy, good, and peaceful,

**People:** We entreat you, O Lord.

*Officiant:* That your holy angels may lead us in paths of peace and goodwill,

**People:** We entreat you, O Lord.

*Officiant:* That we may be pardoned and forgiven for our sins and offenses,

**People:** We entreat you, O Lord.

*Officiant:* That there may be peace to your Church and to the whole world,

**People:** We entreat you, O Lord.

*Officiant:* That we may depart this life in your faith and fear, and not be condemned before the great judgment seat of Christ,

**People:** We entreat you, O Lord.

*Officiant:* That we may be bound together by your Holy Spirit in the communion of all your saints, entrusting one another and all our life to Christ,

**People:** We entreat you, O Lord.

## THE COLLECTS

### *The Collect of the Day*

Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### *A Collect for Sundays*

Lord God, whose Son our Savior Jesus Christ triumphed over the powers of death and prepared for us our place in the new Jerusalem: Grant that we, who have this day given thanks for his resurrection, may praise you in that City of which he is the light, and where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

### *A Collect for Peace*

Most holy God, the source of all good desires, all right judgements, and all just works: Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, so that our minds may be fixed on the doing of your will, and that we, being delivered from the fear of all enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through the mercies of Christ Jesus our Savior. Amen.

### *A Collect for Mission*

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work, or watch, or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, Lord Christ; give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, pity the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. Amen.

## THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING

**All:** Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days;

through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.

### **A PRAYER OF ST. CHRYSOSTOM**

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

### **THE DISMISSAL**

*Officiant:* Let us bless the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.  
(*Romans 15:13*)

\*This phrase was adapted from *The West Wing*, Season 2, Episode 7 “The Portland Trip”