

**Sunday, December 6, 2020**

**Second Sunday of Advent**

**Introduction**

*John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.*

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

Rev. Althea Albright

Let us come together in this place to feel the warmth of God's presence.

**We are here to spend time with our Creator and listen for the Spirit.**

God waits for us. God calls us to place our trust in Him, our Creator and Redeemer. God calls us to listen once again for the voice of the Spirit speaking to us in our lives.

**We find ourselves weary and broken. Only You can heal us and refresh us.**

**Only You can open our hearts and minds.**

Let us remember who created us and loves us just as we are.

Let us worship together as we await the coming of the Messiah. **Amen.**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Almighty God, you know us inside and out. You are present alongside us in our past, present, and future. We cannot escape your presence.

You know us before we were born. You watch over us day and night, and always hear our prayers. We come before you now wanting to hear your voice. Forgive us when we stray and bring us closer to your Spirit once again. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection*

God of love, **We confess that we have turned away from you, God. We have not trusted in your promises to hear us. We have not believed that you are by our side through everything in our lives. We let worry and fear consume us. We do not always treat our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may know your deep love for us again and glorify your holy name in all that we say and do. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was crucified and died for us and for all our sins. As a minister of the church of Christ, I declare to you that God forgives all of your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the  $\text{✠}$  Son, and of the Holy Spirit. God has never left you. Return to the Lord your God, with joyful hearts, ready to accept God's gift of grace. **Amen.**

**Prayer of the Day**

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. **Amen.**

## **LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: Advent 2**

We praise you, O God, for all the nations of the world. We are thankful for these glimmers of light which remind us of the fire within, your Holy Spirit. As we light our second candle, remind us that we are called to be a light in darkness for all people. Shower us with your grace that we may welcome others as you first welcomed us. Grant us courage to spread your light and your everlasting Love to all the world. We pray all these things through Christ, our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **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.*

<sup>1</sup>Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

<sup>2</sup>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.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

<sup>6</sup>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.

<sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>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!"

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>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.

## **Psalm: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13**

<sup>1</sup>You have been gracious to your land, O LORD; you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup>**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins.**

<sup>8</sup>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.

<sup>9</sup>**Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,  
that your glory may dwell in our land.**

<sup>10</sup>Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;  
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

<sup>11</sup>**Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,  
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

<sup>12</sup>The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase.

<sup>13</sup>**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.*

<sup>8</sup>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. <sup>9</sup>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. <sup>10</sup>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.

<sup>11</sup>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, <sup>12</sup>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? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

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

## **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.*

<sup>1</sup>The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

<sup>2</sup>As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; <sup>3</sup>the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' "

<sup>4</sup>John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup>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. <sup>6</sup>Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate

locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup>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. <sup>8</sup>I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

### **Prayers of Intercession**

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

*A brief silence.*

*Leader:* 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. **Your mercy is great.**

*Leader:* 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. **Your mercy is great.**

*Leader:* 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. **Your mercy is great.**

*Leader:* 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. **Your mercy is great.**

*Pastor:* 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. **Your mercy is great.**

*Leader:* Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work. Make their generous lives an example for all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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

### **Offering Prayer**

Let us pray together over the gifts we have received....Almighty God,

**You are Creator of all that is in heaven and on earth. We rejoice that we have many blessings to be thankful for in our lives. You have changed our lives forever with your grace. Grant us courage to change the lives of others with your Good News. Bless our congregation, this community, and all the offerings we give back to you for your holy work, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

## **SENDING PRAYER**

Let us pray. Lord God, in this time of holy worship you have refreshed us with your Word and given us new hope. You provide manna when we are hungry, and water to renew us. Send us forth now as witnesses of your Good News for all, that we may be light for the world, as we wait for Jesus, your Son and our Lord. **Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

May the Lord bless you and keep you. Know that God is closest to you when you feel furthest away. May Christ's presence guide you in all you do. May the Holy Spirit shine in you and bring others closer to God's love and ✝ give you hope. **Amen.**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go and spread God's love as we prepare for the Messiah! **Thanks be to God**

### **In Loving Memory**



#### **Dorothea Louise Progin**

11-28-1927—12-2-2020

Dorothea (Dottie) passed away peacefully on December 2, 2020 at Royal Suites in Galloway, NJ. Dottie was married to Francois Progin who died in 1998. She is survived by a nephew, Frank Yohe and his family. Burial will be in Roslyn, PA Hillside Cemetery at the convenience of the family.

*We pray God's blessing of consolation  
and comfort upon her family.*