

Prelude

GATHERING

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

“Light of Hope, Light of Peace”

Mark Patterson

Litany (*responsively*)

In a world torn asunder by violence, Jesus says, “No more.”

As it is written, a new command I give, ‘Love one another as I have loved you’.”

In a world where hurting people are too often neglected, Jesus says, “No more.”

As it is written, a new command I give, ‘Love one another as I have loved you’.”

In a world where another’s needs are too often overlooked, Jesus says, “No more.”

As it is written, a new command I give, ‘Love one another as I have loved you’.”

Candle Lighting

Prayer

Gathering Hymn

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

Hymn No.254

(*Tune Hyfrydol*)

Greeting

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

Prayer of the Day

(*Together*) **Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

WORD

Children’s Sermon

Lesson

Isaiah 35:1-10

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.” ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then the lame shall 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; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean

(*Continued on next page*)

shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

(After the reading:) The word of the Lord. **R/ Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia

Page 142

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia**

Holy Gospel

Matthew 11:2-11

(Spoken after the announcement) **R/ Glory to you, O Lord.**

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." ⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' ¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

(Spoken after the reading) The Gospel of the Lord. **R/ Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Pastor Christine Thomas-Echelbarger

Hymn of the Day

"Blessed Be the God of Israel"

Hymn No. 250

Prayers of Intercession

As we anticipate the fullness of Christ, we join with the church throughout the world, praying for all who are in need.

(After each petition:) let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, those spoken aloud and those known only to you, and grant us peace through Jesus Christ, our coming Savior.

Amen.

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Offering

Offering Prayer

(Together) **Savior of the nations, come. Make your home here in us. Feed us with your love, that our faith shine ever new and our lives reveal your light.**

Amen.

<p style="text-align:center">“A Noel Celebration” <i>Sounds and Stories of Christmas by Lloyd Larson</i></p> <p style="text-align:center">“Sing Noel!” “Prepare the Way” Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming” “Manger Carol” “Noel Festival” “What Child is This?” “A Noel Celebration”</p>

Music for the Cantata is given in memory of Fred Petersen to the glory of God.

Lord's Prayer

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.

SENDING

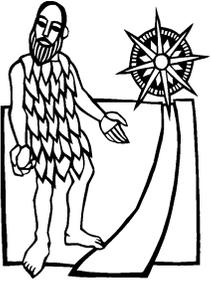
Benediction

May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path. Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude



A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom. Jesus points to signs of God's reign: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.