

**12-4-22**

**Opening Hymn** *Comfort, comfort ye my people #67*

Comfort, comfort ye my people, speak ye peace, thus saith our God; comfort those who sit in darkness mourning 'neath their sorrows' load. Speak ye to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them; tell her that her sins I cover, and her warfare now is over.

Hark, the voice of one that crieth in the desert far and near, calling us to new repentance since the kingdom now is here. Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way; let the valleys rise to meet him and the hills bow down to greet him.

Make ye straight what long was crooked, make the rougher places plain; let your hearts be true and humble, as befits his holy reign. For the glory of the Lord now o'er earth is shed abroad; and all flesh shall see the token that the word is never broken.

**Lighting of the Advent Wreath** *Creator of the Stars of Night #60*

Creator of the stars of night, your people's everlasting light, O Christ, Redeemer of us all, we pray you hear us when we call.

To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit, Three in One, praise, honor, might, and glory be from age to age eternally.

**The Collect** 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 renounce 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.**

## **The Lessons**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah *Is. 11:1-10*

A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse; a branch will sprout from his roots.

The Lord's spirit will rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of planning and strength, a spirit of knowledge and fear of the Lord.

He will delight in fearing the Lord. He will not judge by appearances, nor decide by hearsay. He will judge the needy with righteousness, and decide with equity for those who suffer in the land. He will strike the violent with the rod of his mouth; by the breath of his lips he will destroy the wicked. Righteousness will be the belt around his hips, and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

The wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat; the calf and the young lion will feed together, and a little child will lead them. The cow and the bear will graze. Their young will lie down together, and a lion will eat straw like an ox. A nursing child will play over

the snake's hole; toddlers will reach right over the serpent's den. They will not harm or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain. The earth will surely be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, just as the water covers the sea.

On that day, the root of Jesse will stand as a signal to the peoples. The nations will seek him out, and his dwelling will be glorious.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

The psalm for this morning is 72. *Ps. 72:1-7, 18-19*

Give the King your justice, O God,

**and your righteousness to the King's Son;**

That he may rule your people righteously

**and the poor with justice;**

That the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,

**and the little hills bring righteousness.**

He shall defend the needy among the people;

**he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor.**

He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure,

**from one generation to another.**

He shall come down like rain upon the mown field,

**like showers that water the earth.**

In his time shall the righteous flourish;

**there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.**

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,

**who alone does wondrous deeds!**

And blessed be his glorious Name for ever!

**and may all the earth be filled with his glory.**

**Amen. Amen.**

A reading from the Letter to the Church in Rome *Rom 15:4-13*

Whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction so that we could have hope through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures. May the God of endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude toward each other, similar to Christ Jesus' attitude. That way you can glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ together with one voice.

So welcome each other, in the same way that Christ also welcomed you, for God's glory. I am saying that Christ became a servant of those who are circumcised for the sake of God's truth, in order to confirm the promises given to the ancestors, and so that the Gentiles could glorify God for his mercy.

As it is written,

*Because of this I will confess you among the Gentiles,  
and I will sing praises to your name.*

And again, it says,

*Rejoice, Gentiles, with his people.*

And again,

*Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and all the people should sing his praises.*

And again, Isaiah says,

*There will be a root of Jesse, who will also rise to rule the Gentiles.*

*The Gentiles will place their hope in him.*

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

**Gospel Hymn** O come, O come, Emmanuel #56

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear. Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel!

The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

**Glory to you, Lord Christ.**

*Matthew 3:1-12*

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

*"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "*

*Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."*

Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance. Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

"I baptize you with water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

The Gospel of the Lord.        **Praise to you, Lord Christ.**

**Hymnal #694** God be in my head, and in my understanding;  
God be in mine eyes, and in my looking; God be in my  
mouth, and in my speaking; God be in my heart, and in my  
thinking; God be at mine end, and at my departing.

## **The Prayers of the People**

In peace, we pray to you, Lord God.

*Silence*

For all people in their daily life and work;

**For our families, friends, and neighbors, and for those who are alone.**

For this community, the nation, and the world;

**For all who work for justice, freedom, and peace.**

For the just and proper use of your creation;

**For the victims of hunger, fear, injustice, and oppression.**

For all who are in danger, sorrow, or any kind of trouble;

**For those who minister to the sick, the friendless, and the needy.**

For the peace and unity of the Church of God;

**For all who proclaim the Gospel, and all who seek the Truth.**

For Michael our Presiding Bishop, for Dabney and Doug our Bishops; for Moises the Bishop of the Dominican Republic, and for all bishops and other ministers;

**For all who serve God in his Church.**

For the special needs and concerns of this congregation.

*Silence*

We pray on behalf of all whose needs of body, soul and mind are great. Especially we lift before you the needs of:

Especially we lift before you the needs of: Downs IV, Holden, Brian, Tyler, Barbara, Anne, and Victoria. Grant healing and recovery for Nancy and Georgianna. Give peace and strength for those going through cancer treatments, especially Margaret, Bill, Downs III, Victoria, Alex, Connie and Douglas. Visit and comfort all who are under the care of skilled nursing, especially Timothy, Barbara, Kim and Mary Ann. Be near to all who are in hospice care.

*The People may add their own petitions*

Hear us, Lord; **For your mercy is great.**

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this life.

*The People may add their own thanksgivings*

We will exalt you, O God our King;

**And praise your Name for ever and ever.**

We pray for all who have died, that they may have a place in your eternal kingdom.

*The People may add their own petitions*

Lord, let your loving-kindness be upon them;

**Who put their trust in you.**

We pray to you also for the forgiveness of our sins.

**Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father; in your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone; and so uphold us by your Spirit that we may live and serve you in newness of life,**

**to the honor and glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*Celebrant:* 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.**

**Offertory Anthem** *All Earth is Hopeful* by Alberto Toulé

All Earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last! Furrows lie open for God's creative task; this, the labor of people who struggle to see how God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free.

People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell; "A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel"; she conceived him, "God with us," our brother, whose birth restores hope and courage to children of the earth.

Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared; new highways opened, new protocols declared. Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace! All clear ev'ry gateway, in hast, come out in haste!

We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib. This same Lord Jesus today has come to live in our world; he is present, in neighbors we see our Jesus is with us and ever sets us free.

**Closing Hymn** *Christ for the World we Sing! #537*

Christ for the world we sing! The world to Christ we bring  
with loving zeal;

the poor, and them that mourn, the faint and overborne,  
sin-sick and sorrow-worn, whom Christ doth heal.

Christ for the world we sing! The world to Christ we bring  
with fervent prayer;

the wayward and the lost, by restless passions tossed,  
redeemed at countless cost from dark despair.

Christ for the world we sing! The world to Christ we bring  
with one accord;

with us the work to share, with us reproach to dare,  
with us the cross to bear, for Christ our Lord.

Christ for the world we sing! The world to Christ we bring  
with joyful song;

the new-born souls, whose days, reclaimed from error's  
ways, inspired with hope and praise, to Christ belong.