



Celebrate

First Sunday of Advent
November 28, 2021

Advent is about the “coming days.” God’s people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a “righteous Branch to spring up for David.” The Thessalonians awaited “the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.” Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for the time “to stand before the Son of Man.” With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

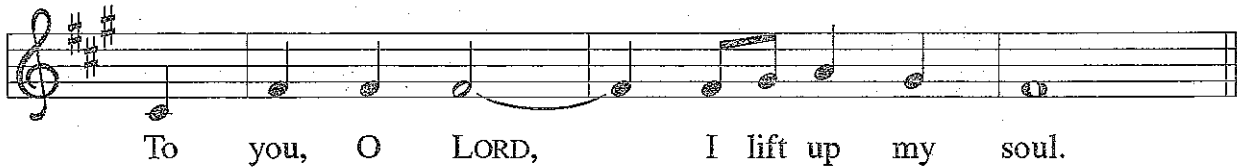
First Reading

Jeremiah 33:14-16

In the Old Testament, “righteousness” often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today’s reading, Jerusalem’s future name—“The LORD is our righteousness”—proclaims that God is even now working salvation for Israel.

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for

David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”



To ¹ you, O LORD,
I lift ¹ up my soul.

² My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be ¹ put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph ¹ over me.

³ Let none who look to you be ¹ put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame ¹ who are treacherous.

⁴ Show me your ¹ ways, O LORD,
and teach ¹ me your paths. **R**

⁵ Lead me in your ¹ truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
in you have I trusted all ¹ the day long.

⁶ Remember, O LORD, your compas- ¹ sion and love,
for they are from ¹ everlasting. **R**

⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth and ¹ my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love
and for the sake of your good- ¹ ness, O LORD.

⁸ You are gracious and up- ¹ right, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners ¹ in your way.

⁹ You lead the low- ¹ ly in justice
and teach the low- ¹ ly your way.

¹⁰ All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast ¹ love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your ¹ testimonies. **R**

Upon Timothy's report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessings for the people of this growing church.

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?

¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct

our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. ¹³ And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Gospel

Luke 21:25-36

God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.

[Jesus said:] "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶ People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

²⁹ Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰ as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹ So

also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴ "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵ like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

A brief silence.

God of presence and peace, strengthen your church around the globe to proclaim the message of your love coming to the world. Open our hearts to recognize your face in all people and in all of creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mighty redwoods and microscopic plants, fields and city parks, the wind and the waves, be a healing balm to our wounded planet. May we nurture what you have lovingly created. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of equity and compassion, bring righteousness and goodness to all peoples of the earth. Give a heart of discernment and integrity to leaders in our communities (*local, state, and national government officials may be named*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Preparing for Next Week

Monday Psalm 90. **Tuesday** (Andrew, Apostle) John 1:35-42. **Wednesday** Luke 11:29-32. **Thursday** Luke 1:68-79. **Friday** (commemoration of Francis Xavier, missionary to Asia, 1552) Malachi 3:13-18. **Saturday** (commemoration of John of Damascus, theologian and hymnwriter, c. 749) Luke 9:1-6. **Second Sunday of Advent** Malachi 3:1-4 or Baruch 5:1-9; Luke 1:68-79; Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6.

CELEBRATE November 28, 2021

Volume 53, Number 1

CELEBRATE (ISSN 1083-3242, USPS 763-460) is published quarterly by Augsburg Fortress, 411 Washington Avenue North, Third Floor, Minneapolis, MN, 55401. Periodicals postage paid in St. Paul, MN and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Celebrate, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, P.O. Box 1553, Minneapolis, MN 55440-8730. Printed in U.S.A. Price per weekly part \$4.90 per 100 copies; price in Canada subject to exchange rates. Minimum order 50 copies of each issue; all orders must be in multiples of 50. Copyright © 2021 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. May not be reproduced. Revised Common Lectionary © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts. Readings from New Revised Standard Version Bible with Apocrypha © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Prayer of the day, psalm, and readings during the week from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* © 2006, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Refrain music by Carolyn Jennings. Refrain accompaniment is in *Psalter for Worship, Year C* (Augsburg Fortress, 2006). Please visit our website at augsburgfortress.org. Lectionary year C.

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Tracks 1 and 2

God of comfort and care, be present with those who watch and wait. Come to all who await births, deaths, divorces, new unions, new jobs, retirements, healing, and life transitions of every kind (*especially*). Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of promises kept and new dreams awakened, shelter your people from destructive storms. We pray for those whose lives have been upended by natural disasters (*especially*), for the work of Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief, and other relief organizations. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

God of companionship and community, we give you thanks for the saints who journeyed with us and now abide in you. Even in distress and uncertainty, make us confident that your promises endure forever. Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.
Amen.