

WELCOME—*Light two candles to watch for Messiah/Christ's arrival!*

GATHERING HYMN: “*Christ, Be Our Light*”#715

APOSTOLIC GREETING

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

C: And also with you.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the Lord, Jesus, the Christ, who alone does wondrous things. **C: Blessed be God's name forever. Amen.**

P: Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep, examine ourselves and our actions. Let us confront our inadequacies, our blindness, the harsh words we have used to put each other down, the unforgiveness in our hearts, the things we have done, and the things we have left undone. Confess all of these to the one who is merciful and just.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of new beginnings,

C: we confess that we have not welcomed Your reign on earth as it is in heaven. We have strayed from your paths. We prepare for war instead of peace. We dishonor one another and your creation. Purify us with your refining fire, and set us again on your way of love, that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance, and welcome Your coming among us. Amen.

P: People of God, a new thing is growing in our midst, a tender branch, a living sign of new life. By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder. You have put on Christ, like a garment that covers all of your sins. You are forgiven and made new, in the holy name of Christ, our Lord.

C: Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

P: Please join with me in the prayer of the day:

C: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

+WORD+

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 11:1-10

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. His delight shall be in the love of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; but with righteousness he shall protect the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a

little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

L: Word of God Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM 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 hills in righteousness.

Let him defend the needy among the people, rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.

May he live as long as the sun and moon endure, from one generation to another.

Let him come down like rain upon the mown field, like showers that water the earth.

In his time may the righteous flourish;

and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

Blessed are you, Lord God, the God of all people! you alone do wondrous deeds!

And blessed be your glorious name forever,

and may all the earth be filled with your glory. Amen. Amen.

SECOND READING: ROMANS 15:4-13

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written, "Therefore I will confess you among the Gentiles, and sing praises to your name"; and again he says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people"; and again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him"; and again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse shall come, the one who rises to rule the Gentiles; in him the Gentiles shall hope."

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

L: Word of God Word of Life.

C: Thanks be to God.

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 3:1-12

P: The holy Gospel according to the 23rd chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

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.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON “*God’s Vision for The World*” Pastor Stahlberg

HYMN OF THE DAY “*Light Dawns on A Weary World*”#726

APOSTLES CREED

C: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, 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, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.

PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

P: As we prepare for the fullness of Christ’s presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope. *A brief silence.*

P: God, in your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Let’s share Christ’s peace with one another.

OFFERING *You are now invited to praise God with our offering!*

OFFERTORY SONG “*GIVE THANKS*”

C: Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the holy one, give thanks because he’s given Jesus Christ, his son. And now let the weak say, I am strong, let the poor say, I am rich because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks. Give thanks.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: Let us pray:

C: Eternal God, you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground. Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and justice. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P: Remember us into your kingdom, and teach us to pray.

C: 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.

BENEDICTION

P: God the eternal Word, who dwells on the lips of Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, + bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN "*Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love*" #708

DISMISSAL

P: Go in peace. Christ is near.

C: Thanks be to God.

SONG OF PEACE (*You may join hands.*)

C: My peace I give unto you. It's a peace that the world cannot give. It's a peace that the world cannot understand. Peace to know, peace to live. My peace I give unto you.