

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

November 29, 2020 - 10:00 AM

Living Springs Lutheran Church

4224 Hard Scrabble Road, Columbia, SC 29223
www.livingspringscolumbia.org



Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.



Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen... since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus... (Hebrews 11:1-3, 12:1-2)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GENEROSITY MISSION MOMENT

*We give thee but thine own,
whate'er the gift may be;
all that we have is thine alone,
a trust, O Lord, from thee.*

Text: William W. How

We stand as able

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

(Silence for reflection - we kneel as able)

Pastor: Loving and forgiving God,

People: **we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

Pastor: People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

We focus on the cross as it enters the sanctuary.

GATHERING SONG

"Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn"



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

*Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn; Text: Marty Haugen; Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen
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APOSTOLIC GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

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

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**



+ ADVENT CANDLE #1 – FORWARD IN HOPE +

All are invited to gather around the Advent Wreath in your home, whatever form it may be.

Pastor: As people called to prepare the way of the Lord in this world, we celebrate and live the truth that the Holy Spirit moves us forward in faith, God's love is never-ending, and Christ's light shines in our lives for others.

People: **Come, Lord Jesus! In this Advent Season, move us Forward in Hope!**

Pastor: Let us pray:

People: **We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen.**

As the first Advent candle is lit in the sanctuary and in our homes, we sing:

Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si-ah:

Let the light ban-ish dark-ness!

He shall bring sal-va-tion to Is-ra-el, God ful-fills the prom-ise.

Pastor: The Spirit and the Church cry out:

People: **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Pastor: All who await Christ's appearance pray:

People: **Come, Lord Jesus!**

Pastor: The whole creation pleads:

People: **Come, Lord Jesus!**

We are seated

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Deacon Lexanne Graves

Children, youth, and young at heart are invited for a special message. You may collect your coins or dollars at home for the bucket collection and bring them to in-person worship, to the Parking Lot Communion Distributions, or drop them off at the church office. Current collection is for the Disaster Response Fund.

For-ward in faith! (clap-clap-clap)

For-ward in faith! (clap-clap-clap)

With our eyes on Jesus

WE'RE RUNNIN' THE RACE!

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

"Waiting"

LS Quartet
by Jay Althouse

FIRST READING

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

Lector: A reading from Isaiah.

O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence—as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls on your name, or attempts to take hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us, and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people. (Isaiah 64:1-9)

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 80:1-7, 17-19

Lector: Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

**People: In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

Lector: Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

**People: O LORD God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

Lector: You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

**People: You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

Lector: Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

**People: Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

Lector: And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

**People: Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

SECOND READING

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

Lector: A reading from 1 Corinthians.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

(1 Corinthians 1:3-9)

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

People: Thanks be to God.

We stand for the reading of the Gospel

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,



al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Repeat alleluia



Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

GOSPEL LESSON

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Mark.

People: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] "In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come. It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn, or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake." (Mark 13:24-37)

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

We are seated
MESSAGE

Rev. Eric Fink

HYMN OF THE DAY

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;

Refrain
un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re-joice! Re-joice!
teach us your will and guide our way.

Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel; Text: Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Köln, tr. composite; Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French Processional Text sts. 2 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress; Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727349. All rights reserved.

We stand as able
NICENE CREED

People: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Assist: God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

+ A brief silence +

Assist: We pray for the ministry we share in Christ's name. Open our hearts to your call for justice, peace, and healing. Attune us to the needs of the world as you draw near. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: We pray for this planet in need of restoration: for devastated habitats, polluted waters, thawing ice, blazing fires, swelling floods, and long-lasting droughts. Renew the face of the earth and our relationship to it. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: We pray for all people who care for others in our community and around the world. Fill them with compassion and the power to respond with justice for those who are oppressed, with welcome for those who are excluded, and with relief for those who suffer. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: We pray for people who are in crisis as the seasons change: for those without homes facing severe weather, for those who are unemployed or underemployed, and for those in poverty or facing food insecurity. Relieve their burdens, sustain their bodies, and ease their minds. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: We pray for the people in our families and congregation who are ill or grieving, or live with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, addiction, or other invisible illnesses. Ease their suffering and support them when they struggle. We pray especially for: *Delores Harmon; Jan Epperson; Karl Schmidt; Saundra Dixon; Wendy McKenzie; Will/Angelica/Eliana/Gabby Collins; Rhea Pye; Elizabeth Maddox; Henrietta Kaiser; Debbie Smith; Ed Brennan; Margaret Blank; Charles Kauffman; Bunie Talbert; Bob Holmstrom; Kelly Koziol; Lila Bell; Wilma Bracey; Charles Levitt; Jeanne Williams; the Rodems family; and those we name before you now, either silently or aloud...* Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Pastor: O God, as we face ongoing uncertainties around coronavirus, we continue to pray for ... Hear us, O God.

People: 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.

People: Amen.

SHARING OF PEACE

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you always.

People: And also with you.

We greet one another, with the words that the risen Jesus spoke to his disciples: "Peace be with you."

OFFERINGS ARE GIVEN

Offering may be dropped off at the office during the week or sent through the mail. For those who wish to give electronically, you may use the secure Givelify app.



OFFERING PRAYER

Pastor: Let us pray.

People: Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.

THANKSGIVING FOR HOLY COMMUNION

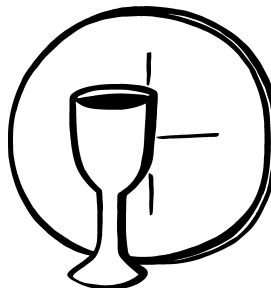
Pastor: We have been made one as the body of Christ through the waters of baptism. In our journey of faith & life, we are fed with Christ's own body and blood. Even though we do not celebrate Holy Communion in this virtual gathering, we pause to give thanks for the gift of Holy Communion — as we anticipate, with joy, those times when we are fed at your table.

Pastor: O God most mighty, O God most merciful, O God our rock and our salvation, hear us as we offer our praise and give you thanks. When the earth was a formless void, you formed order and beauty. When Abraham and Sarah were barren, you sent them a child. When the Israelites were enslaved, you led them to freedom. Ruth faced starvation; David fought Goliath; the psalmists cried out for healing, and full of compassion, you granted the people your life. You entered our sorrows in Jesus our brother. He was born among the poor, he lived under oppression, he wept over the city. With infinite love, he conquered death and granted the people your life.

We give you thanks and praise for the gift of Holy Communion and for the blessing it brings to your people. Even though we abstain from your meal in this moment of worship, for reasons you understand, we still sense the power of your forgiveness and grace offered to us and the world through your Son. Awaiting those times when we share in this meal, we still cherish in our hearts the words which Jesus gave us:

People: In the night in which He was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of Me." Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of Me."

We take time for prayer and reflection as we sing together, giving thanks to God for all the times we have been fed with our Lord's body & blood—and look forward to the time when we gather with others around the Lord's Table.



COMMUNION REFLECTION

"Your Grace is Enough"

Verse 1

*Great is Your faithfulness O God
You wrestle with the sinner's heart
You lead us by still waters into mercy
And nothing can keep us apart*

Verse 2

*Great is Your love and justice, God
You use the weak to lead the strong
You lead us in the song of Your salvation
And all Your people sing along*

PRE-CHORUS



and noth - ing can ___ keep us ___ a - part. ___ So, re -
and all ___ Your peo - ple sing ___ a - long. ___



-mem - ber ___ Your peo - ple, ___ re - mem - ber ___ Your chil - dren, ___ re -



-mem - ber ___ Your prom - ise ___ O ___ God. ___ Your

CHORUS



grace is e - nough, ___ Your grace is e - nough ___ Your



grace is e - nough, ___ for ___ me. ___

*Words & Music by Matt Maher;
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LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

People: **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

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

People: **Amen**

SENDING SONG

"Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"

(While we sing, a procession moves outside for the Planting of Disciple Commitments.)



1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers; Text: Laurentius Laurenti; Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, Swedish folk tune

DISMISSAL

Assist: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

NOVEMBER "ALTAR FLOWERS" - THANK YOU!

The following have given monetary gifts in lieu of, or in addition to, the flowers at the altar for our Sunday and Tuesday in-person services:

November 8: In memory & honor of Eleanor Lummel's birthday by Karen Kranz & Jeff Lummel

November 15: In honor of our anniversary by Karen Kranz & Jeff Lummel



God's Love Shared Through You ...



One Life Deeper in 2020!

Our prayerful goal is that God will work in every LS disciple to have an impact of faith and hope in the life of one person during 2020. **What shoes might they be wearing?** It may be someone you know already—at work, at home, at school, in the neighborhood, in your daily life. It may be a stranger whom God will bring to you this year. How will the Spirit work through you to bring someone deeper in 2020? **Deeper in Christ, Deeper in Grace, Deeper in Love!**

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS: inviting, involving, mentoring, discipling relationships 1 person at a time!

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: for the work of God's kingdom in our community and world!

SHARING GOD'S LOVE: with those who are hurting, alone, marginalized, or feeling unloved!

SHARING GOD'S STORIES: so we do not remain silent about God's ongoing work in the world!

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT:

Learn from the Figs

Fig trees mature slowly. They don't require much maintenance, but they do require plenty of time to grow. Some fig trees take years to start producing fruit. It may be tempting to give up on a fig too soon, but the patient gardener knows to wait and watch for the subtle signs that the fig tree is about to produce.

"From the fig tree learn its lesson," Jesus says in today's gospel (Mark 13:28). Just as the gardener watches for indications that a bud is about to unfold, so should believers watch for where God's presence is emerging in the world.

Jesus' words in this passage paint a picture of God's arrival as unsettling and fearsome, with darkening skies and shaking celestial orbs. It is hard to imagine how anyone could miss such an arrival, yet Jesus warns his listeners that those who are not vigilant will be caught unaware. We must watch with care and patience for the signs of the coming of the Son of Man, like the gardener who watches for the ripening fig. If you think such signs can be ignored, you will miss the surprising, gentle cry of the incarnate God come as a tiny, vulnerable baby.

Today, at the beginning of Advent, we enter a season of waiting and watching as we anticipate with hope the coming of Christ's light into the world. Yet, even as we wait, there are active signs of God's presence all around us now—in water and word, in bread and wine, in the assembly gathered for worship. These signs remind us of God's gracious love toward us. At the same time, the lesson of the fig tree reminds us to stay curious and attentive, open to what might surprise us. God is always up to something new.

November Book of the Month: Ecclesiastes & Jonah

December Book of the Month: Joel-Zechariah-Malachi

Forward in FAITH Forward in GENEROSITY



As you consider your giving to God and the church next year, please consider how you can **grow** in your own generosity. Growing can happen for everyone!

An idea for someone whose income has gone down in the last year:

Everyone can grow in generosity, even if that means the overall dollars given decrease. Perhaps, if before your income decreased, you were giving away 2% of your income, now with income being less, can you find a way to grow the percentage of giving to 3 or 4%? There are people in our congregation who will need to decrease total dollars given because of loss of work or other reasons, but are still finding a creative way to grow in their generosity.

Other ideas:

Systematic, regular giving leads to generosity: For most people, we can grow significantly in our giving just by making our gift on a regular basis. Sign up for automatic giving or just add an amount each week or month. Growing giving by \$1 per day equates to significant growth over the course of the year.

An extra gift or two during the year: During the crisis, a story was shared in a stewardship workshop about someone who said, "I'm not sure what the future holds for me, but for now I am doing okay, so I will double my giving in the month of April." Well, what if we decided to double our giving one month or even two months next year?

Grow by a percentage each year: For some, the idea of a tithe (10%) is unachievable in a single year, but something people would like to reach someday. By growing giving by a percentage each year, it is achievable over the long-term. If you currently give away 2% of income, perhaps you can reach 3% next year and 4% the year after. This takes discipline, but over the long-term is effective for some.

Some Ideas adopted by members of our Generosity Team already for next year:

Increasing monthly giving by \$100 per month.

Increasing yearly giving by 33.33%

Increasing yearly giving by 5%

Doubling giving for two specific months next year.

Increasing weekly giving by \$12 per week (in lieu of fast food stops).

You may have your own ideas for growing in generosity. As a church family, as we each grow in our generosity, it will have a tremendous overall impact – not just in other people's lives through our ministry, but in our own hearts, as committed giving draws us to a deeper place of faith -- with God at the center!

Forward in FAITH Forward in GENEROSITY



HAVE FAITH AND ASSUME SUFFICIENCY NOT SCARCITY

The world can cause us to fear we will not have enough to live on. This is called “The Scarcity Assumption.” It is human and natural, but it is not grounded in Christian faith.

Our faith teaches us that God will provide sufficiently for all our needs, as we trust fully in God’s promises. And this is so even when we give away the largest portion or amount that we have ever given!

So, we must have faith that a good and gracious God will continue to provide for us in the future as God has in the past. And as God has promised to do!

We are to trust God as did Abraham of old and so many others throughout the pages of the Bible. These examples were written for our instruction and for our assurance. We learn to give in faith - with the assumption of sufficiency, not scarcity. God will provide, for God cares for us!

