Advent OURSANIER CHURCH

Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 6, 2020



OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH

745 Front Street S., Issaquah, WA 98027 425-392-4169

SERVICE OF THE WORD—SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

GATHERING: THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

CALL TO WORSHIP O Come, O Come, Emmanuel — French processional, 15th century Cantor

O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on Sinai's height In ancient times you gave the law in cloud, and majesty, and awe.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

WELCOME Pastor Jim Kruse

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

PM: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

PM: When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, the Word made flesh, a burst of love and light shining in a world of darkness. Gathered in a season of lengthening shadows, we look to our God who calls us by name.

For we are God's beloved. We are children of the light. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

Therefore, let us live as children of the light. Mindful of our baptism, let us clothe ourselves in the love of Christ and put on the hope revealed to us.

C: Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Light Two Candles to Watch for Messiah — Yiddish folk tune

Cantor

Light two candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness. He shall feed the flock like a shepherd, gently lead them homeward.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

PM: Let us pray. Stir up our hearts, Lord God,

C: to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD: GOD SPEAKS TO US IN SCRIPTURE READING, PREACHING AND SONG.

FIRST READING Isaiah 40:1-11

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the

glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

AM: Word of God, word of life. C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING 2 Peter 3:8-15a

⁸Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a} and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

AM: Word of God, word of life. C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Come Now, O God of Love — Geoyong Lee, b. 1947 Cantor

Come now, O God of Love, make us one body. Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

THE GOSPEL Mark 1:1-8

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

PM: The Gospel of the Lord. C: Praise to you, O Christ.

In the summer of 1961, when I was only 8 years old, my great-grandmother, Grandma Schweppe, moved with my Grandparents, my father's parents, from the Chicago area to live close to us in Boulder, Colorado. Although Grandma Schweppe was 92 years old, she was not frail of body, nor of spirit, but she was frail of mind. She had long since past the time when she recognized most of her friends and family. She barely recognized her own daughter, my Grandmother, who cared for in her home 24 hours a day, every day. And none of us, her great grandchildren, had ever known her to have known us.

My great-grandparents had been laborers in Chicago, a city of laborers, at the turn of the 20th Century. Grandpa Schweppe had worked in the excavation business, at a time when excavation was done with picks and shovels and wheelbarrows. Most of his life had been spent cutting down the hills, filling in the valleys, and making the curves straight so that road could be built. It was a hard life, filled with hard work. And it was work that was done by people who peppered their language with the expletives of the street. Society gave such allowances to the people who were willing to do this back-breaking work so the rest of us could travel faster, and farther, and more often.

My only real memory I have of my great-grandmother was of her sitting in a large upholstered arm chair, covered from the waist down with a hand-tied quilt, staring out of the picture window in the living room, and muttering thoughts which made sense only in the imagination of her own mind. The picture window of my grandparents' house in Colorado looked directly out across a large field where horses grazed, then across about a small collection of homes and businesses, and finally straight out against the dramatic "Flatiron" formation of the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

To my dear Grandma Schweppe this view was anything but attractive. To her, a beautiful view was fields of wheat and corn, expansive rivers, and long straight highways. When Grandma Schweppe sat in that chair staring out that window, all that she knew was that she could not see very far. Something was blocking her view. It did not seem to matter to her that the thing that was blocking her view was one of the highest, most dramatic mountain ranges in the world. Every now and then she would blurt out, "Why don't they cut down those $\%\#\sqrt{a}$, hills? I can not see a $\%\#\sqrt{a}$, thing."

Each time this happened, my grandmother, who was a patient and kind woman, carefully explained to Grandma Scheweppe that these were not hills, but the Rocky Mountains; and that they were not blocking her view, but that they were her view. And more than once, my mother took my grandmother and Grandma Scheweppe on a long drive into the mountains. "See these rocks, Grandma?" she would say. "See these trees and this stream? This is what you are looking at out of the big window at home." And Grandma Scheweppe would say, "Oh." And say how beautiful it all was. But then the next day, there she was again sitting in her chair staring out the picture window and muttering, "Why don't they cut down those % $\#\sqrt{@}$ hills? I can not see a $\%\#\sqrt{@}$ thing."

As silly as it may sound to us, who know that the thing that was blocking Grandma Scheweppe's view was one of God's most spectacular creations, the prophet Isaiah would have agreed with her, "Why don't they cut down those $\%\#\sqrt{@}$ hills?" In the First Lesson for

this Second Sunday of Advent, Isaiah talks about a day in the future when the mountains will be cut down. The valleys and low points will all be filled in. Uneven ground will be leveled off, and the rough places smoothed out.

Isaiah's words are a message of hope to the small remnant of God's chosen people who are living in exile in Babylon. A rugged wilderness stands between them and the land God had given to their ancestors—the land they had called home for many centuries. In the imagination of their own minds, they are remembering what life was like on the other side of those mountains, and they longed to get back home. "Hang in there," Isaiah says to them. "Someday these mountains will be cut down. And a broad and beautiful highway will be built to carry you to this home you long for. "Be hopeful! Someday soon you will get your chance to go home."

The problem, for the people of God living in exile, and for my dear great-grandmother, and maybe even for us, was that the home they thought was on the other side of the mountain and hills was no longer there. By the time they got back, something else had replaced it.

When the Persian King, Cyrus, defeated the Babylonians and freed the Israelites to go back home, they found out that Solomon's temple in Jerusalem was in ruins, that those who had been left behind had assimilated into the land and culture of their conquerors, and that the ritual worship of other gods now dominated the landscape. The returning exiles had to revision their future. They came up with a new way of worship. And a new understanding of their current, dynamic relationship with the God of their ancestors, whose powerful action had ended their captivity in Babylon. Eventually a new way of life emerged.

Fear, isolation, and the severed routines of our lives over the year 2020 are just the latest and greatest of all of the mountains and hills, valleys and crooked streets that fill our lives.

We get tired, in this world, of staring at the mountains, waiting and waiting to see where we are headed—to see what is on the other side. We grow weary of the changes happening around us so quickly that we do not understand. We struggle against circumstances that we cannot control, like this $\%\#\sqrt{@}$ pandemic that keeps getting worse and worse, our dreams that lose their luster and fade with the years. Missteps from our past that keep coming back as deep sadness that never turns to joy, unhealthy living that never is addressed, and lost opportunities that never return.

But what is it that awaits us on the other side?

Six months ago, in the middle of the first spike in Coronavirus infections, an organization called, "The Center for Healthy Churches (CHC)," sent out an article about what congregation life might look like after the pandemic has been conquered—after we get through the mountains and back home, so to speak. Bill Wilson, the CHC director writes, "When we try and peer into the future, we genuinely 'see through a glass darkly' and find ourselves anxious about what we may face as we endeavor to do church in the 2020 decade. ... Here is a tentative and admittedly limited list of things I expect us to see LESS of and things I believe we will see MORE of as we venture into our hazy future:"

On his list of what we will see less of is:

Full-time ministry positions are going to continue to decline as fewer churches can afford the staff models of the past.

The number of denominational employees and the assistance they offer churches will continue its precipitous decline. Fewer dollars, on top of a decade of declining income, will have a devastating impact upon their staff, missionaries, agencies and institutions.

Now, with our facilities sidelined, facility-focused ministry models been revealed as inadequate and based upon a world that may not reappear for several years.

On his list of what we will see more of is:

As facilities become less and less relevant to a church's survival and ability to thrive. Those that re-envision how to utilize their property will consider a variety of ways out of the corner we have painted ourselves into. These will include: multiple tenants, sharing spaces with other congregations, seeking collaborative acquisition agreements with other churches or entities, mergers, selling unneeded or necessary real estate.

Laity will increasingly take the lead as program coordinators and ministry facilitators, while partnering with others for theological content.

Churches will continue to awaken to the pressing call to allow the Gospel to speak to the challenging issues of daily life. We will recognize that our voice must be heard if we are going to be relevant to those who are part of our church and those who live their lives around our church.

For us today, these words of Isaiah take on a new, more exciting meaning. We have the advantage of knowing all about the highway construction project that God has already begun, and that John the Baptist proclaimed. We know that the Christ of God did not come with some sort of super pick and shovel making dramatic changes in the political or social or even spiritual landscape of the people. The Christ of God came as a simple human being, entering in to a simple life of faithfulness to God and compassionate care to anyone who was in need. Jesus did not come to be known as the one John was proclaiming because he cut the forces of sin and evil down to size. He came to be known as the Messiah because, through his life and death and resurrection, people discovered that the destructive forces of sin and evil could not, in the end, win out.

"Your savior is going to come," God promises. The Christ Child will again enter your life and your world. With his life, he will reveal the heart of God to love all things. With his death, he will fulfill the intentions of God to do away with all pain and evil. And with his resurrection from death, he will be given the power to navigate the hills and smooth out any and all highways. No matter how big. No matter how long. No matter how old. God will do it! God is faithful!

I suppose that, if we had been wiser, or if we had been kinder, or if we had been a little more of both, we as a family together would have taken Grandma Scheweppe more seriously as she sat in her chair, day after day, cursing the Rocky Mountains, yearning for the day when she would see what was on the other side. What would it have hurt to tell her, "Some day, Grandma, some day. Some day they will come and cut down those blankety-blank hills.

"Some day Grandma, the uneven ground will be made level and the rough places

smoothed out. Some day Grandma, and you will be able to see everything and everywhere."

If we had been wiser, or kinder, or a little of both, we would have given her the gift of hope. What would it hurt?

AMEN

HYMN OF THE DAY

Comfort, Comfort Now My People
Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635-1711; Tune: Freu Dich Sehr

Cantor

Cantor

Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!" So says our God. Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow's load. To God's people now proclaim that God's pardon waits for them! Tell them that their war is over; God will reign in peace forever.

For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near, Calling us to true repentance, since the reign of God is here. Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way. Valleys, rise to greet the Savior; hills, bow down to in humble favor.

Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain. Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits God's holy reign. For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad, And all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.

OFFERING

As you consider how your life has been sustained emotionally, physically and financially, during the challenging events of 2020, please take this opportunity to give your gratitude to God through your generous financial support of the ongoing ministries of Our Savior Lutheran Church.

OFFERING PRAYER

PM: God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

OFFERING SONG

In the Lord — Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994; Taizé Community

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, in the Lord I will rejoice! Look to God, do not be afraid; lift up your voices, the Lord is near.

APOSTLES' CREED

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 OF THE PEOPLE

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

[A brief silence.]

God of prophets and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, musicians, congregational leaders, and all people who contribute to public worship. Open our hearts and minds to hear your word and call. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of every living creature, extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Inspire us to be your hands and voice in your world on behalf of all living things. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation. Guide them to serve those communities where insecurity, violence, and fear are the norm. Help them to bring healing, wholeness, and safety to all their citizens. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. We lift up all in our communities who respond first to bring aid: medical workers, firefighters, community volunteers, and police. Grant them wisdom and safety in their work. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. We pray for those who are awaiting diagnoses and treatment plans. Grant them peace and courage. Remind them that they are not alone. And we pray for: Mayah, Gail, Judy, Jerry, Mary, Ron, Carol, JD, Marlene, Nancy, communities across the country, Dave, Guests of the Community Meals Program, Sonja, Nicole, Josee and Jeannie. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For what and for whom else do the people of God pray this morning?

[Here other intercessions may be offered.]

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

SENDING SONG O Come, O Come, Emmanuel — French processional, 15th century Cantor O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny; From depths of hell your people save, and give them victory o'er the grave.

*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

BLESSING

PM: Having been justified by God's grace, you are now heirs of hope – a hope born in a manger. And with this hope, you have been blessed – a hope for all people. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

POSTLUDE

Sleepers Wake — Miles I'A Martin

Jiyoung Lee



Commemorations for the Week

Nicholas, Bishop of Myra, died around 342

Sunday, December 6

Little is known about Nicholas, except that he was a bishop in present-day Turkey. According to legend, he was famous for his giving to the poor, and so has become a symbol of anonymous gift-giving.

Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, died 397

Monday, December 7

While a governor of northern Italy, Ambrose was elected bishop of Milan on the same day he was baptized. He was a famous preacher, a writer of hymns we still sing today, and helped lead St. Augustine to faith.

Serving in Worship:

Worship Leader:

Pastor Jim Kruse

Assisting Minister:

Shari Lundberg

Lector:

Karen Hansen

Cantors:

Lori Downey, Marc Montague

Flute:

Jan Hazelton

Videographer:

Leslie Waltzer Dave Carlson

Video Editor: Banner:

Elaine Stamm

Bulletin Cover:

Brad Marx

Readings for Next Sunday: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24;

John 1:6-8, 19-28

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Our Savior Lutheran Church Staff

Rev. James R. Kruse, *Transition Pastor* Shari Lundberg, *Parish Administrator* Dr. Jiyoung Lee, *Parish Organist*

Scott Hafso Director of Worship & Music Kate Gagnon, Lay Visitation Minister



Additional worship resources:

Reading: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

Suggested Hymn for Listening: *Prepare the Royal Highway*Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772-1847 Music: Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.

++Share & Prayer --

Prayer is putting our faith into action. We invite you to include these people in your daily prayers. You can make prayer requests via email at office@oslcissaquah.org. All written requests will remain on this list for 4 weeks.

Mayah healing. (Connie Fletcher)

Gail comfort and peace following cancer diagnosis. (sister of Sandy Aldworth)

Judy Shaffer comfort and peace of mind. (Sandy Aldworth)

Jerry Nack preparing for upcoming surgery for spinal stenosis. (Kate Gagnon)

Mary healing, wholeness, comfort and a clear sense that God is in control. (Marilyn Carlson) Ron Gerde healing for recent medical issues. (Brother to Bob Gerde)

Carol Johnson ongoing medical issues, and mourning the recent loss of her husband & her brothers. (Mary Fricke)

JD Golick diagnosed with stage 3 stomach cancer, completed one cycle of chemotherapy. (nephew to Patty Gerde)

Marlene Pickering discernment in medical decisions to alleviate pain. (Mary Fricke)

Nancy Cumming peace as she awaits an opportunity to move into Timber Ridge. (Mary Fricke)

Nancy Anderson comfort and healing. (Cheryl Neeb) Washington, Oregon and California Wildfires peace for those affected. (Marilyn Carlson)

Safety and peace for communities being torn apart during these difficult times. (Karen Hansen)

Dave Carlson continued healing and following kidney transplant surgery.

Guests of the Community Meals Program safety, health and peace of mind. (Connie Fletcher)
Sonja 3 years old undergoing treatment for cancer. (granddaughter of Henrik & Patty Christopherson)
Nicole DeCamp healing and strength. (Ken DeCamp and Cheryl Leiter)

Josee Jordan peace of mind as she faces health challenges. (Dianne Tanner)

Jeannie Lindquist continued healing and strength.

Healing and peace of mind: Henrik & Patty Christopherson (Dianne Tanner); Vern Lindquist; Mike Golick (Patty Gerde); Marian James; Gregory (nephew of Joanne Suttmeier); Doug Patur; Katie Moeller; Margot Inman; Ken Acker (son of Lucy Acker); Marilyn Carlson; Taufik Hidayut (Ken Konigsmark); Don Wilkinson (husband of Gwynn Wilkinson); Rebecca Thomas; Tanisha Foote (Marilyn Carlson); Dorothy Soland; Randi Strom; Jeanne Kuipers; John Pass; Florence Kinnune; Carol Harbolt; Sandy Aldworth; Jen Winslow; Larry Pruitt.

Undergoing cancer treatment: Les Carlson (father of Dave Carlson); Harold Mandt (brother of Mary Ann Hult and Lorna Robertson); Chris Howe (brother of Mark Howe); Peggy Scalise (cousin of Mark Howe); Eileen Letts (cousin of Mark Howe); Keith DeCamp (brother of Ken DeCamp); Barbara Jones (mother of Ron Sordahl); Doug McVety (Helen Nychay); Al Batt (Connie Fletcher); Larry Harbolt (Ray Harbolt); Gerald Welch (Vern and Jeannie Lindquist); Christy Williams (Bill Bergsma); Dana Mancini (Jan Setterlund); Greg Petersen (Wes Collum); Barry Donker (Joan Parish); Germaine Korum (Lyle and Alice Lewis); Kathryn Aitcheson (Gerrie Hendrickson); Yuko Takiguchi (Teiko Soland); Barb (Janette Singley)

Living with cancer: Liz Kidd (Bob Beck); Duane Jacobson; Mary Lewis (sister-in-law of Lyle and Alice Lewis); Mark Becker (uncle of Paula Seeger); Barbara Krogh Jarvis (sister of Steve Krogh); Suzanne Lewis (daughter-in-law of Lyle & Alice Lewis); Mira Bergsma

Expectant Mothers: Alyssa Saavedra (Cheryl Neeb); Shawna McIntyre (Cheryl Neeb)

Mourning the death of loved ones: For peace and comfort during this time of grieving for the family and friends of: Tom Wiese (Sandy Aldworth); Talton Johnson (husband of Carol Johnson); Jean Stanley (sister-in-law to Alice Lewis); Delores "Dee" Bakamus (Dar Boni); Marlene Braun (sister to Cheryl Neeb); Nikki (niece to Doug & Dianne Tanner); Richard "Dick" Birdsall (Dianne Tanner); Germaine Korum (Lyle & Alice Lewis); Bob Gray (Doug & Dianne Tanner)

Members and friends serving in the military; fire & police departments, & emergency rooms: Mike special ops, unexpectedly called up. (nephew of Dave and Marilyn Carlson)

Global Missions and Missionaries: Alexandra, Miriam, and Kati, recipients of our Global Missions Peru Scholarships. Congregations in Chiclayo, Peru: Pepe at Las Brisas, Merci in San Antonio and Harold at Las Lomas. MaaSae Girls Lutheran Secondary School in Tanzania.