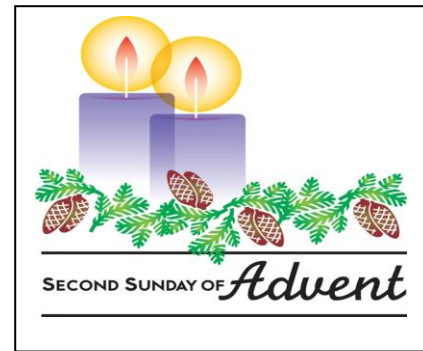


Perley Lutheran Parish
December 6, 2020
Second Sunday in Advent



Opening Hymn: Prepare the Royal Highway

Prepare the royal highway, the king of kings is near
Let every hill and valley, a level road appear
Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story
Hosanna to the Lord, for He fulfills God's word.

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good,

C For his steadfast love endures forever!

P Some wandered in desert wastes,

C Finding no way to a city to dwell in;

P Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

C Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,

P And he delivered them from their distress.

C He led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath



In this season of Advent, we pray for God's peace

Christ is our light and the source of our peace

We witness the hostility between nations and neighbors

Christ is our light and the source of our peace

We see a world full of fractured relationships and unforgiving hearts.

Christ is our light and the source of our peace

We seek relief from our own inner turmoil and restlessness

Christ is our light and the source of our peace

This morning we light two candles, the candle of hope and the candle of peace. This candle reminds us that Christ came into our world to restore peace, and that is only through trust in God's word and his promises that we can find our own inner peace. We remember that Christ is the Prince of Peace who taught us that through the simple acts of love and forgiveness peace is spread throughout the world.

Confession and Absolution

P Let us confess our sins to God and ask his forgiveness.

C Almighty God, in our journey of faith we often wander away from your Word and your will. We choose our own paths to follow and satisfy our own desires. We sin against you each day in our thoughts, words and actions. Have mercy on us and forgive us.

P God has had mercy on us. He sent his Son to be our Savior. Jesus walked the path to the cross, never turning from his purpose, never turning from his Father's will. He suffered, died and rose from the dead to give us forgiveness and eternal life. I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

C Heavenly Father, lead us in the paths of righteousness, following in the footsteps of Jesus our Savior.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, as they trusted you to keep your promises, Joseph and Mary journeyed to Bethlehem, where the Savior of the world was to be born. At the time you had appointed, Jesus set out on another journey, taking up his path to the cross for the sake of our salvation. Help us by your Spirit to walk in faith, trusting you and following faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus our Savior. Guide us throughout our earthly journey until we enjoy eternal life in our Savior's presence. Hear our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

Children's Message

Needed: a picture of Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem

Many people like to travel at Christmas time as they go to visit family and friends. Maybe you are going to travel for Christmas, or visitors are coming to your house. People were traveling on the first Christmas too. Long before Jesus was born, God said that his Son would be born in Bethlehem. But Joseph and Mary, Jesus' mother, lived in Nazareth! So God led them to follow the emperor's decree and travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem. We don't know how they traveled. Maybe they walked or rode a cart, or maybe Mary rode a donkey. (*Show the picture of Mary and Joseph.*) But they finally arrived in the town of Bethlehem, and there the baby Jesus was born.

Many years later, when he was grown up, Jesus would ride a donkey into a city that was not far from Bethlehem. That city was Jerusalem, and when Jesus rode by, people waved palm branches to welcome him and placed their coats in the street like a red carpet. Do you know the name of that day? (*Let children answer.*) That was the day we call Palm Sunday, and on the Friday after that, Jesus walked on another road, to the cross, where he died for us to take away our sins.

Because Jesus died for us and rose from the dead, our sins are forgiven and we have eternal life. Now we are traveling too; we are traveling through life, on our way to eternal life in heaven! Jesus promised us, "I am with you always." Every day of our lives, wherever we are, Jesus is with us, just as he promised. He walks with us, he stays with us always, so we are never alone. Let's pray:

Lord Jesus, Mary and Joseph walked to Bethlehem, where you were born. You grew up and walked the road to the cross to die for us. Now we know you are walking with us every day. Keep us safe in your care. Amen.

Old Testament Reading, Isaiah 35:8-10

And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not go astray. No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Epistle Reading, Romans 6:1-4

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

Gospel Reading, Mark 11:1-10

Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’” And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

Message: To the City of David

OK so obviously this year’s Christmas isn’t going to be a normal one. Think back to times when you may have traveled for Christmas. Or maybe a Christmas that you prepared your own home to receive visitors for the holiday season. It can be a difficult time to travel, considering the crowds of fellow travelers, the high costs and difficulty getting reservations. Some of those same issues may have been concerns for Mary and Joseph too, the very first Christmas travelers. They may have been worried about the costs of travel and paying taxes, and about the crowds in Bethlehem—apparently they had no reservation at the inn. There was the greatest concern of all—Mary was expecting a child, the holy, long-promised, long-awaited child, the Son of God.

Mary and Joseph, of course, were not the first people in Scripture to set out on a journey. In fact, the people of God always seemed to be on the move, one way or another, right from the beginning. Although they probably did not want to go (or were they anxious to leave “the scene of the crime”?), Adam and Eve were driven away from the garden of Eden, prevented from eating of the tree of life. Their descendant Noah and his family set sail in an ark, saved at God’s command from the flood that destroyed the sin-filled world. God told the patriarch Abraham to leave his homeland and set out towards an as-yet unseen but rich Promised Land that would belong to him and to his descendants.

One of Abraham’s descendants, Joseph, was an unwilling traveler, sold into slavery in Egypt by his jealous brothers. That trip to Egypt resulted in a long rest stop on the journey of the people of God. It was a rest stop without rest—four hundred years of slavery—until God set his people on the move again. God sent Moses to lead them, a man who had done some traveling himself, including a Nile River cruise as an infant in a basket. After 40 years of trav-

el, wandering through the wilderness, the people of Israel finally reached the land that God had promised to them. They were home, but it would not last. The Israelites rebelled against the God who had led them home. They disobeyed his laws and worshiped other gods. For their disobedience they would be sent away from the land God had given them.

Other nations were on the move too, and those nations moved right over and through Israel, conquering the people of God, destroying Jerusalem and the temple and taking many of the people captive. That meant another terrible journey for them, from their homeland of Israel into exile in Babylon. But at the right time, God caused a pagan king to release his people from captivity and send them home again. Jerusalem and the temple were rebuilt, but there were more rebellions and more enemies, within and without. Finally, the Roman Empire conquered Israel. The people stayed in their land this time, but they became subjects of a foreign power. It was the ruler of that foreign power, Caesar Augustus, who issued the decree that set Joseph and Mary on the road to Bethlehem, where—according to the prophet—Mary’s son must be born. The traveling did not stop there. Sometime after Jesus’ birth, wise men traveled from the east, following a star to find the newborn King. Their visit prompted a quick and frightening escape, as Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt to save the infant King from the murderous wrath of King Herod.

When Jesus was about thirty years old, he set out on the road again, traveling throughout Palestine for the three years of his earthly ministry, teaching, feeding and healing the people. Finally the day came for him to begin his final earthly journey. He entered into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey. His excited followers waved palm branches like flags and threw down coats and branches to make a red carpet for the humble King. They shouted “Hosanna!” That shout of praise means, “Save us now!” and that is exactly what Jesus had come to Jerusalem to do—to save them, to save us all by shedding his blood on the cross.

Less than a week later, the Child of Bethlehem—now a King crowned with thorns—would travel again through the streets of Jerusalem, bent beneath the heavy burden of his cross. On the cross he suffered and died, taking onto himself the penalty of death that we had earned for our sins, the penalty we deserved. When that Good Friday was over, Jesus would be carried on his last earthly journey, as friends prepared him for burial and sealed his body in a borrowed tomb. Was that the end of the road?

Not at all! The journey was really just beginning! Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, and that is where our journey with our Lord begins—at that empty tomb. We were buried with Jesus in our Baptism, buried into that tomb with him, and raised up to walk in newness of life. We are no longer captive to sin and death and we now walk in love as Jesus our Savior walked, living in love and service toward others as he did.

Jesus our Savior left his heavenly home and walked the dusty roads of this earth because you

and I still like to travel—usually in the wrong direction. Every day, in our thoughts, words and actions, we turn away from walking in the paths of righteousness, from walking in God’s commandments, and find some tempting path of our own choosing. We know that God wants us to walk in love, but often we choose to walk along paths of gossip or jealousy or hate. We are to serve others just as Jesus came to serve us, but we would rather serve ourselves and put our own interests ahead of the needs of others. Jesus took all of those sinful thoughts, words and actions onto himself and carried them in his own body to the tree of the cross. There he suffered and died in our place, so that our sins are forgiven for his sake. Forgiven and restored, we daily rise up to walk in newness of life, led by the Holy Spirit and living by faith in our crucified and risen Lord.

We travel now, trusting in Jesus, our crucified and risen Lord. Our Savior, the Child of Bethlehem whose birth we will soon celebrate, is an experienced, seasoned traveler. We may not know what lies ahead for us on our journey, what good times and frightening times may lie ahead for us, but Jesus knows. And so we walk by faith and not by sight, trusting him to lead us and to travel with us on the road as we journey through life now into eternal life in his presence. You are traveling this Christmas after all! Amen.

Hymn of the Day – I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light

I want to walk as a child of the light, I want to follow Jesus
God set the stars to give light to the world, the star of my life is Jesus
In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.

Prayers (Lord and Savior, travel with us each day)

Lord Jesus, you came from heaven to earth to be born among us, God in human flesh, sleeping in a manger in Bethlehem. You entered Jerusalem to begin your last earthly journey and walked the road to the cross for the sake of our salvation. Lord and Savior, **travel with us each day.**

Lord Jesus, as we travel through life, we pray that you would walk with us during this Advent season and always, as you have promised. Help us to share the good news of your saving love with all those we meet on the way. Lord and Savior, **travel with us each day.**

Lord Jesus, we pray that you would be present with those who travel during this busy holiday season. Watch over them and keep them safe so that they will arrive safely at their destinations, gathering with family and friends to celebrate your birth. Lord and Savior, **travel with us each day.**

Lord Jesus, even when we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us, deliver us, and fulfill your purpose for us. According to your steadfast love, grant healing and wholeness to those who are mourning as they deal with tremendous loss, we ask that you continue to send healing to those dealing with illness and recovery. We lift up those within our congregation and those that have reached out to us for prayers, Jeff, Kirk, Brent, Paxley, Vern,



Veronica, Lisa and all of those that we now name silently in our own hearts. Lord and Savior, **travel with us each day.**

Lord's Prayer

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. 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 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father,

C We too might walk in newness of life.

P The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. In the name of the Father, and of the +Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Sending Song: Rejoice, Rejoice Believers

Rejoice, rejoice believers, and let your lights appear
The evening is advancing, and darker night is near
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.

Dismissal: Go in peace, prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Mark Your Calendars:

Wednesday, December 9th – Devotion @ 7PM Live Stream on Facebook.

Sunday, December 13th - 9AM Facebook Live Stream from Kirkebo. Kirkebo Council meeting @9:45am

Tuesday, December 15th – Joint Council meeting at 6:30PM - Kirkebo

Service adapted from *In those Days Advent Series* written by Carol Geisler. © 2018 Creative Communications for the Parish. All rights reserved.

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