

Perley Lutheran Parish  
November 28, 2021  
First Sunday in Advent



*We preach Christ crucified ... Christ the power of God  
and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:23-24*

Opening Hymn: Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying

Wake, awake, for night is flying. The watchmen on the heights are crying. Awake Jerusalem at last

Midnight hears the welcome voices, and at the thrilling cry rejoices; Come forth, you maidens! Night is past.

The bridegroom comes! Awake; your lamps with gladness take! Alleluia!

Prepare yourselves to meet the Lord, whose light has stirred the waiting guard.

Welcome & Announcements

Invocation:

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

**C Amen.**

P For centuries, the church has used through Advent a series of responses, to prepare our hearts to celebrate Christ's birth. These seven responses, names and titles for our Savior, are often familiar to us in the hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." We light the first candle on the Advent wreath in praise to Christ, who is the Wisdom of God. The apostle John writes, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God..."

**C All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3).**

P The apostle Paul writes, "For by [Christ] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.

**C And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:16-17).**

P O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, you govern all creation with your strong yet tender

care.

**C Come show your people the way to salvation.**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

This morning, we light the first candle, the candle of hope. This candle reminds us that God's promises give us reason to be filled with hope – hope for unity in a world of division, hope for healing in a world of pain, and hope for peace in a world filled with anger and strife. We remember that Christ is our light and the source of our hope.

**O Come, O Come Emmanuel**

O come, O come Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel. Shall come to thee, O Israel

**Confession and Absolution**

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

**C Almighty God, you rule over us in wisdom, but we, your servants, do not always act wisely. Foolishly, we listen to the temptations of the devil and the world around us. We follow our own selfish desires. We have sinned against you in our thoughts, words and actions. Have mercy on us and forgive us.**

P God in his mercy sent his Son to be our Savior and our Wisdom. Jesus laid down his life and rose from the dead to win for us forgiveness and 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 O Wisdom, O holy Word of God, rule over us and keep us in your care.**

**Prayer of the Day**

**Lord Jesus, Word and Wisdom of God, you came among us as a helpless infant, and now you are exalted to rule over all creation. Crucified and risen Lord, all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to you. Rule over us in wisdom and love. Lead us by your Spirit to walk in your ways, through this Advent season and always. Help us to be bold and faithful witnesses for you so that others will come to know and worship you as Lord. Amen.**

**Old Testament Reading, Isaiah 55:8-13**

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain and the snow come down

from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall make a name for the Lord, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

**Epistle Reading, 1 Corinthians 1:20-25**

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

**Gospel Reading, Matthew 7:24-29 *Glory to you, O Lord.***

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

**Children's Message (*diploma*)**

This piece of paper filled with fancy writing is called a diploma. A diploma is a certificate, a special paper given to someone who has finished a time of study and learning. Students who graduate from high school or college receive a diploma. Teachers and doctors and lawyers and pastors receive a diploma to show that they have studied many things and passed many tests. The things they have learned will help them in the work that they do. The diploma shows that the person knows a lot!

Jesus our Savior never had a diploma, but he knows more than anyone! Jesus is God, so he knows everything there is to know. We have many special names for Je-

sus. He is our King, our Lord, our Good Shepherd and our Redeemer. Another name for Jesus is Wisdom. That means Jesus not only knows everything, but he also uses everything he knows to care for us and rule over us in the best possible way. He always knows what is right and he always does what is right. Jesus was there when the world was created. He will be there when this world ends. Jesus is with us right now, wisely ruling over us and caring for us—because he is our Wisdom, who knows all things. Let's pray:

Jesus, our Wisdom, we know that you will take care of us and wisely rule over us, today and forever. Amen.

### **Message: Come, O Wisdom**

Grace and peace to you from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen

The farthest star from earth is Icarus or, known by its official designation, MACS J1149+2223 Lensed Star 1 is five billion light years away. That is not very close by, and no one is going to get there any time soon. That is just one example of how high the heavens are above the earth.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God declares, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9). The thoughts of God, the ways of God, the reasons for his mighty acts are as far above our thoughts and plans as the star Icarus is above the ground on which we stand. In fact, God's thoughts and ways are much farther above us—beyond human understanding.

Yet as far as his thoughts are above our thoughts, God in his infinite grace and mercy came down to our level. That lofty, heavenly wisdom came down from the heavens to the earth. God continues as he speaks to us through his prophet: "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10-11).

When God speaks his mighty Word, things happen. At creation, God merely spoke the word, "Let there be light," and light appeared. By his Word he placed the star that is our sun into the sky, and called all the other stars into existence, even Icarus. As the psalmist says, "He determines the number of the stars; he gives to all of them their names" (Psalm 147:4).

The Word works, it does what God sends it to do. The Word accomplishes the purpose for which God sends it. When the time was right, he sent his Word to earth and very soon we will celebrate the birth of God's Son, the Word who was and is God, who took on human flesh, born among us to be our Savior. It's not a plan that we would have considered. God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts and his ways higher than our ways. We might have thought of a more spectacular plan, but the Word came among us as a little helpless infant who slept in a manger in Bethlehem. The Word, the Wisdom of God, came to us in a way the world could not, and would not, recognize or understand. The mighty, creating Word came among us, not in power, but in weakness as a newborn who needed to be diapered and fed and rocked to sleep.

When the young Lord Jesus, the Word and Wisdom of God, grew to adulthood, he "increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52). As he traveled among the people of God, he certainly taught wisely, with all the wisdom of God. As he himself said, his words were words on which to build our lives. To do otherwise is to be swept away in the troubles and storms of life. But then the Wisdom of God did much more. The mighty Word and Wisdom acted to win for us forgiveness and eternal life, achieving our salvation in the most unimaginable ways. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." This was the purpose for which the Word was sent. God said of the Word he sends out, that it "shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."

The helpless infant of Bethlehem, the adult who taught with such wisdom, allowed himself to be nailed up on a cross as a helpless victim. The Son of God took onto himself the penalty of death that we earned, that we deserve, for our sins. That was God's plan to save us. "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways."

The apostle Paul points out that, in the eyes of the world, God's plan of salvation simply appears foolish and weak. The world cannot figure it out. A baby in a manger? Where is the power in that? The Son of God hanging helpless on a Roman cross? Where is the wisdom in that plan? Does that even work? How can the death of one man save everyone from death? Paul asks, "Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:20-21).

The world cannot know God through wisdom, but only through the grace and power

of God himself. His thoughts are not our thoughts, and his ways are not our ways. His plans are as far above our heads as the star Icarus, and farther still than that. Yet God's Word, God's Wisdom, his own Son, came down to us. Those who are called to faith in Christ crucified, called by the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, recognize the Savior for who he is: "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men."

In just a few weeks, we will look into the manger in Bethlehem. What will you see? You will see a foolish idea, a weak and helpless infant. He won't look wise or powerful, but he is the one who called light into existence, who gave the stars their names. You will see Christ Jesus, God in human flesh, Christ who is the Wisdom of God.  
Amen

**Hymn of the Day/Offering:** Come Thou Long, Expected Jesus  
Come, Thou long expected Jesus. Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth Thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver, born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever, now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By Thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all-sufficient merit, raise us to Thy glorious throne.

Prayers: (P: King of kings and Lord of lords, **C: Hear our prayers and accept our praise.**)

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

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. King of kings and Lord of lords, **hear our prayers and accept our praise.**

P 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, locally, state-wide, national and internationally. King of kings and Lord of lords, **hear our prayers and accept our praise.**

P 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 transition of every kind. King of kings and Lord of lords, **hear our prayers and accept our praise.**

P God of compassion, 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. We lift up those within our congregation and those that have reached out to us for prayers, Today we especially lift up Tom and Chris, Roger and Sonya, Kirk and Daniel, Terry and Marlis, Whitney and Jaime, Anne and Brent, Lynn and those we now name silently in our hearts ..... King of kings and Lord of lords, **hear our prayers and accept our praise.**

P 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

### **The Meal**

P: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

**C: In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.**

### **Words of Institution**

P: 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 remembrance of me.*

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory.

**C: Pour out your Holy Spirit, that by this Holy Communion we may know the unity we share with all your people in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**

P: Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

**C: all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.**

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***

Invitation to Communion

P: Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

After Communion Prayer:

Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. Amen.

Blessing: (sung)

The Lord bless you and keep you  
Make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you  
The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace  
Amen, amen, amen. Amen, amen, amen

Sending Bell

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 he will draw nigh  
Up, watch in expectation! At midnight comes the cry.

Our hope and expectation O Jesus, now appear;  
Arise, O Son so longed for above the darkened sphere  
With hearts and hands uplifted we please, O Lord, to see  
That day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!

Dismissal: Go in peace, Christ is near. **Thanks be to God.**

**Mark Your Calendars:**

Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup> – 9am Service and 10am Sunday School at Nora  
11am Service at Kirkebo

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Pastor Michele Jenson: Phone: 701-261-0998    Email: <a href="mailto:mjenson001@luthersem.edu">mjenson001@luthersem.edu</a> Web Page: <a href="http://www.perleyparish.org">www.perleyparish.org</a> Email: <a href="mailto:perleyparish@gmail.com">perleyparish@gmail.com</a>
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