

Every Heart Prepare



MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 2

Vespers

LIGHTS

“Prepare!” is often the watchword of the season as the world gets ready for another celebration of Christmas. An integral part of any preparation is decoration. We see decorations everywhere this time of year. The world may not comprehend the real meaning of Christmas, but even secular preparations use many of the same decorations beloved by Christians—an appropriation we shouldn’t mind at all, because these decorations point us to Christ. This year, as we look forward again to the coming of the Messiah, we take a fresh look at how the adornments of the season draw our eyes to Jesus, that we may more richly behold the love, peace, joy, and hope He comes to bring as this beauty is set before us.

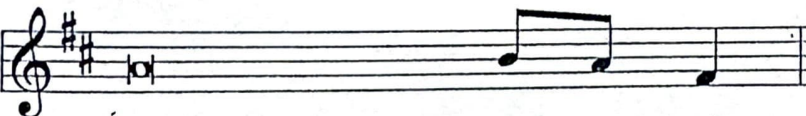
Tonight, we focus on lights. You see them everywhere this time of year. Some neighborhoods even compete, and tourist destinations spend millions on attractive light displays. Like evergreens, this is something nonreligious people do this time of year without appreciating their true significance. Yet we know that Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12). He came to restore righteousness to the world. This restoration continues to unfold through the ministry He has entrusted to His church. As Zechariah sang, “In the tender compassion of our God, the dawn from on high shall break upon us to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace” (*LSB*, Benedictus, Morning Prayer). We gather this evening to bask in the light of Jesus that His Word would have its way with us and so reflect His saving light into the darkness that remains in our world.

Opening Sentences

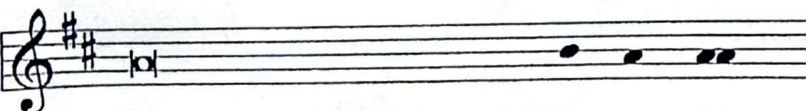
Psalm 51:15; 70:1



L O Lord, o - pen my lips,



G and my mouth will de - clare Your praise.



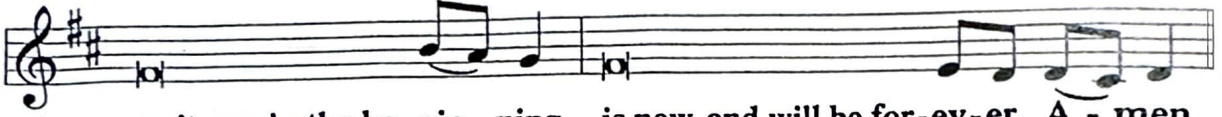
L Make haste, O God, to de - liv - er me;



C make haste to help me, O Lord.



C Glo-ry be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it;



as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for-ev-er. A - men.



Praise to You, O Christ, King who comes to save us.

Psalmody

Psalm

Psalm 118:15–29; antiphon: v. 27



The LORD is God,
and He has made His light to shine up - | on us.*

Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,
up to the horns of the | altar!

Glad songs of salvation
are in the tents of the | righteous.*

“The right hand of the LORD does | valiantly,
the right hand of the | LORD exalts,*

the right hand of the LORD does | valiantly!”

I shall not die, but | I shall live,*
and recount the deeds | of the LORD.

The LORD has disciplined me se - | verely,*
but He has not given me o - | ver to death.

Open to me the gates of | righteousness,*
that I may enter through them
and give thanks | to the LORD.

This is the gate | of the LORD;*
the righteous shall enter | through it.

I thank You that You have | answered me*
 and have become my sal- | vation.
 The stone that the builders re- | jected*
 has become the | cornerstone.
 This is the LORD's | doing;*
 it is marvelous | in our eyes.
 This is the day that the | LORD has made;*
 let us rejoice and be | glad in it.
 Save us, we pray, | O LORD!*
 O LORD, we pray, give | us success!
 Blessèd is he who comes in the name | of the LORD!*
 We bless you from the house | of the LORD.
 The LORD is God,
 and He has made His light to shine up- | on us.*
 Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,
 up to the horns of the | altar!
 You are my God, and I will give | thanks to You;*
 You are my God; I will ex- | tol You.
 Oh give thanks to the LORD, for | He is good;*
 for His steadfast love endures for- | ever!
Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.
 The LORD is God,
 and He has made His light to shine up- | on us.*
 Bind the festal sacrifice with cords,
 up to the horns of the | altar!

354 Arise, O Christian People

- 1 Arise, O Christian people!
 Prepare yourselves today;
 Prepare to greet the Savior,
 Who takes your sins away.
 To us by grace alone
 The truth and light were given;
 The promised Lord from heaven
 To all the world is shown.
- 4 Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus;
 Turn not from me aside,
 And help me to receive You

This blessed Adventtide.
From stall and manger low
Come now to dwell within me;
I'll sing Your praises gladly
And forth Your glory show.

Text: Valentin Thilo, 1607–62; tr. Arthur T. Russell, 1806–74, alt.
Text: Public domain

Readings

First Reading

Isaiah 9:1–2, 6–7

[P] A reading from Isaiah, the ninth chapter.

¹ But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

² The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shined.

⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

[P] O Lord, have mercy on us.

[C] Thanks be to God.

P A reading from Second Corinthians, the fourth chapter.

³And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

[P] O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

Third Reading

John 1:1-9

P A reading from John, the first chapter.

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

Responsory for Advent



- L** 1 Behold, the days
are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise
up for David a righteous Branch
2 In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will
dwell securely.
3 Glory be to the
Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.



C This is the name
by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.

37 The Night Will Soon Be Ending

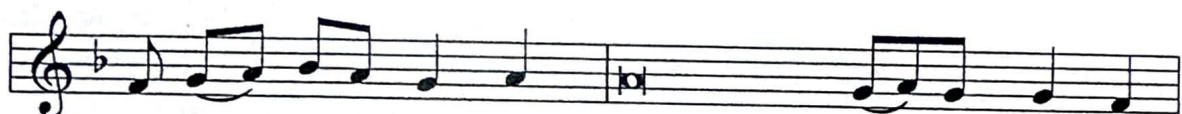
Harmon

Anticle

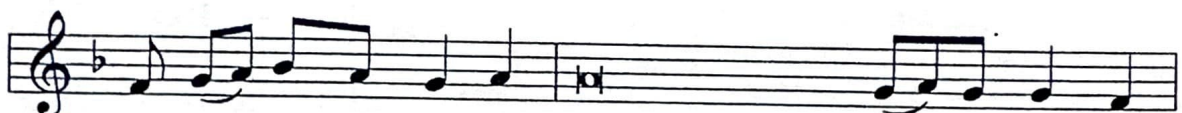
Magnificat



C My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior;



I for He has regarded the lowliness of His hand-maid-en.



II For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.



I For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;



II and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.



I He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the



imagination of their hearts. **II** He has cast down the



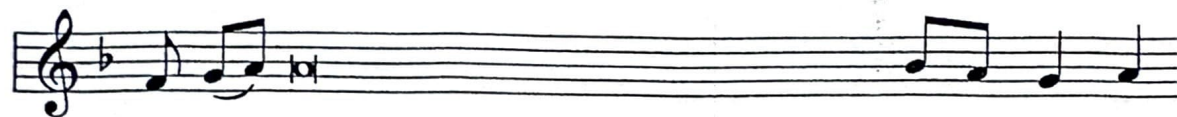
might-y from their thrones and has ex - alt - ed the low - ly.



I He has filled the hun - gry with good things,



and the rich He has sent emp - ty a - way.



II He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mer - cy



as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for-ev-er.



C Glo-ry be to the Fa-ther and to the Son and to the Ho - ly Spir-it;



as it was in the be-gin-ning, is now, and will be for-ev - er. A-men.

ffering

Prayer

Kyrie



C Lord, have mer-cy; Christ, have mer-cy; Lord, have mer-cy.

Lord's Prayer

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.

Collects



L O Lord, hear my prayer.



C And let my cry come to You.

- P** For eyes to behold the Father's hand in all creation, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** Lord, have mercy.
- P** For awareness of beauty and the living traditions of the church that bring Christ to our eyes through arts and crafts, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** Lord, have mercy.
- P** That we may see the signs of Christ's return even as we celebrate His birth, and encourage one another all the more as we see the Day drawing near, let us pray to the Lord:
- C** Lord, have mercy.

P That we may be living testimonies of new life in Christ through our loving service to our neighbor—both in word and in deed—let us pray to the Lord:

G Lord, have mercy.

P That we may be thankful for the bountiful harvest we enjoy amid the many festivities of this season, and be generous to the poor, let us pray to the Lord:

G Lord, have mercy.

P That we may love one another as God so loved us, forgive one another, and work together in the unity we have in Christ Jesus, let us pray to the Lord:

G Lord, have mercy.

P That we may not be lured into temptation or despair or be distracted by the false Christmases around us, but always hold the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord:

G Lord, have mercy.

P Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

G Amen.

P Lord of light and life, You came into our world to remove sin and restore us to righteousness. Shine Your light anew into our hearts and cleanse us from all the deceiving evils that lurk within them, that we may live without fear of this world but joyfully anticipate Your glorious return; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

G Amen.

P Father of lights, every good and perfect gift comes from You. Thank You for sending Your Son to bring the light of life into the world and shining it into our hearts through the Gospel. Give us Your Spirit to hold us fast as we walk through dark places that remain in our world. Grant that our faith not grow dim but, by Your grace, glow in us through our final journey—that we may radiate Your goodness and glory each day and many may join us in Your light and also walk with You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

G Amen.

Additional Collects of Intercession and Thanksgiving

Collect for Peace

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benedicamus



L Let us bless the Lord.

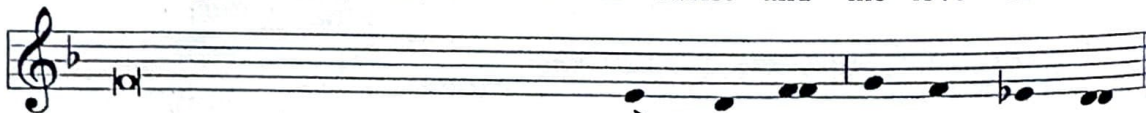


C Thanks be to God.

Benediction



P The grace of our Lord † Je - sus Christ and the love of God



and the communion of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.



C A - men.

357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear. Refrain

ref Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. Refrain

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-66, alt.
Text: Public domain

Acknowledgments

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Wednesday, December 10, 2025
Immanuel Lutheran Church & School
Okawville, Illinois 62271
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Pastor
Organist
Acolyte

Eric Wood
Sharon Krueger
Maylen Kramper

Choir Rehearsal immediately after the service tonight.

Christmas Eve Service: Children started practicing for the Christmas Eve Service on November 30th during Sunday School time. Practice will continue on Sundays during December.

The VFW and ILS are interested in hosting a blood drive at ILS and needs to conduct a interest survey, if you are interested in donating blood please add your name, email and phone # to the list on the small table in the Narthex.

ILS Christmas Program will be at the Okawville Community Club on December 11th at 6:30 p.m. Everyone is welcome!

German Christmas Service: St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Covington, will host a German Christmas service (*Der Weihnachtsgottesdienst*) on Sunday, December 14, 2025, at 2:00 p.m., in celebration of St. Luke's 140th Anniversary. Rev. Dr. Darwin P. Schrader will preach the Christmas message, and Rev. Dr. Arthur D. Eichhorn will accompany the singing of many beloved German Christmas carols. A German-English printed order of service will be furnished, and worshipers will go home with a German-English text of the sermon. *Gemütlichkeit* (fellowship hour) will follow in the Covington Township Hall. After expenses, the proceeds of the offering have been designated for Lutheran Braille Workers Workcenter #315 at New Minden. [St. Luke's is located between Okawville and New Minden, one mile north of IL 177 on Covington Road.]

The Birth of Jesus Christ

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be registered, each to his own town. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths and laid Him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. (Luke 2:1-20)