

Every Heart Prepare



MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1

Vespers

EVERGREENS

“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.

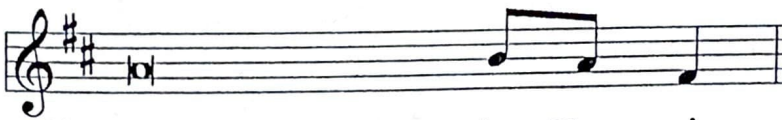
Tonight, we focus on evergreens. Perhaps the most innocuous decorations in the eyes of the world, their prickles remind us of the crown of thorns, and the berries of the holly evoke the blood-stained brow of our crucified Lord. Above all, the steadfastness of their green in the midst of death symbolizes life amid death—and the life eternal Jesus won for us on the cross.

Opening Sentences

Psalm 51:15; 70:1



L O Lord, o - pen my lips,



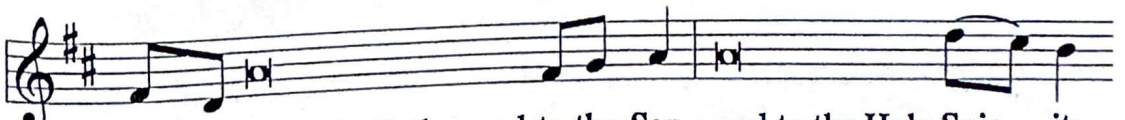
C and my mouth will de - clare Your praise.



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;



salmody

alm

Psalm 92; antiphon: v. 12



The righteous flourish like the | palm tree*
and grow like a cedar in | Lebanon.

It is good to give thanks | to the LORD,*
to sing praises to Your name, | O Most High;
to declare Your steadfast love in the | morning,*
and Your faithful- | ness by night,
to the music of the lute | and the harp,*
to the melody | of the lyre.

For You, O LORD, have made me glad | by Your work;*
at the works of Your hands I | sing for joy.

How great are Your works, | O LORD!*
Your thoughts are | very deep!

The stupid man cannot know; the fool cannot under- | stand this:*
that though the wicked sprout like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they are doomed to destruction for- | ever;

but You, | O LORD,*
are on high for- | ever.

For behold, Your enemies, O LORD,
for behold, Your enemies shall | perish;*
all evildoers shall be | scattered.

But You have exalted my horn like that of the | wild ox;*
You have poured over me | fresh oil.

My eyes have seen the downfall of my | enemies;*
my ears have heard the doom of my evil as- | sailants.

The righteous flourish like the | palm tree*
and grow like a cedar in | Lebanon.

They are planted in the house | of the LORD;*

they flourish in the courts | of our God.
 They still bear fruit in | old age; *
 they are ever full of | sap and green,
 to declare that the LORD is | upright; *
 He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness | in Him.
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 righteous flourish like the | palm tree
 and grow like a cedar in | Lebanon.

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 Adventide.
 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

Hosea 14:4–8

P A reading from Hosea, the fourteenth chapter.

- ⁴I will heal their apostasy;
 I will love them freely,
 for my anger has turned from them.
- ⁵I will be like the dew to Israel;
 he shall blossom like the lily;

he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon;
his shoots shall spread out;
his beauty shall be like the olive,
and his fragrance like Lebanon.
They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow;
they shall flourish like the grain;
they shall blossom like the vine;
their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.
O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols?
It is I who answer and look after you.
I am like an evergreen cypress;
from me comes your fruit.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

Second Reading

Revelation 22:1–5

P A reading from Revelation, the twenty-second chapter.

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

Third Reading

John 11:17–27

P A reading from John, the eleventh chapter.

¹⁷Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. ²⁰So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. ²¹Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." ²⁴Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in

the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

G 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 righ-teous Branch
2 In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will
dwell se - cure - ly.
3 Glory be to the
Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it.



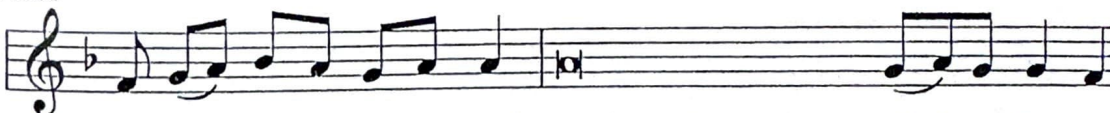
G This is the name
by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righ-teous-ness.

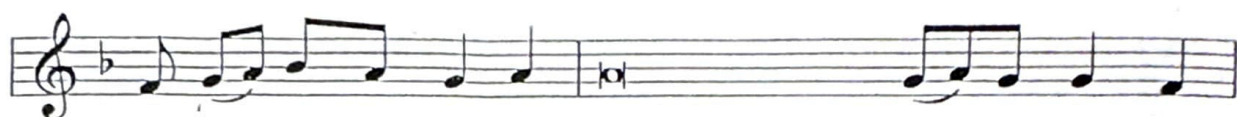
343 Prepare the Royal Highway

Sermon

Canticle

Magnificat





II For be-hold, from this day all generations will call me bless-ed.



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 gen-er-a-tion.



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.

Offering

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

P 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:

C 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:

C 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:

C 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:

C Lord, have mercy.

P Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

P Lord of all beauty, You made the heavens and the earth; the world and all its fullness are Yours. Thank You for giving us life and filling creation with signs that declare Your glory. As we behold beautiful evergreens this season, fix our eyes on their thorny leaves and red berries that we may give thanks for the crown Your Son wore and the cross He bore for us. Abide in us always, as we abide in Your Word and take heart in the promise of eternal life with Jesus, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

C Amen.

P Lord of life, You sent Your Son to bring back to life all the children of Adam. Grant that we may view the evergreens of this season through the eyes of faith so that in a world still filled with death, we may be of good

courage, knowing that, just as the evergreen prevails over death in winter, we prevail over the winter of our sin and will rise to life eternal on the Last Day; 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.

G Amen.

Benedicamus



L Let us bless the Lord.



G 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.



G 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!

4 O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. 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 3, 2025
Immanuel Lutheran Church & School
Okawville, Illinois 62271
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Pastor
Organist
Acolyte

Eric Wood
Sharon Krueger
Hudson Schneider

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 LWML Christmas lunch will be held at Bunker's on Sunday, December 7 at 11:30am. All women of the congregation and their families are welcome to join us. If you would like to join us, please contact Emily Wood by December 3. You can call or text her at 618-713-0953.

Poinsettia time is here. This year, Poinsettias may be ordered in red, white, or multicolored(red/white). The price is \$8.75 each. Please let Lois Obermeier know by December 7th at 618-977-5956, as white and multicolored are limited. Thanks in advance.

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!

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)