

STIR UP YOUR POWER, O LORD, AND COME!



A Daily Adventide Devotional

Provided by *Christ Academy* – Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne

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Our devotion authors who have served Christ Academy over the years and continue to serve the Church today.

The Christ Academy Staff, Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt, Sem. Sawyer Meyers and Sem. Ian Kinney, for organizing and executing this project.

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Introduction

For many years now, Christ Academy has reached young students of theology with events that provide confessional catechesis, liturgical worship and fun on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary (CTSFW). I often stand in awe when pondering the rippling effects of this organization. In 1999, one student worker of the Admission Department was given the task of organizing the first high school academy. Since then, over 50 graduates of Academy events have been called into the Office of the Holy Ministry. Many more are currently attending one of our Concordia Universities or are enrolled in seminary. A conservative estimate shows that well over 500 young men and women have heard God's Word, have sung the Church's liturgy and have formed lasting friendships by attending a Christ Academy event. As a graduate of Christ Academy High School and Christ Academy College, as a former dorm proctor and now as the student director of Christ Academy, it is truly my honor to play a small role in this faithful legacy.

Although I often yield credit to Christ Academy for forming me into a distinctly Lutheran student of theology, I recognize that the work of being formed as a theologian and as a Christian is done only by that Word which is "a lamp to our feet and a light to our path." Christ Academy seeks to be an avenue of free course for that word. Therefore, it is with tremendous joy that I present to you the first *Christ Academy Adventide Devotional*. I pray that in these devotions you see the Christ who comes to you in power and for you in Word and Sacrament as we pray together "Stir up Your Power O Lord, and Come!"

Sem. Sawyer A. Meyers
Commemoration of Paul Gerhardt, Hymnwriter–2017

How to Use This devotional

This devotional is based on the Propers of the Day for the Season of Advent as found in the *Lutheran Service Book (LSB) Series B* Lectionary. Propers are the parts of the divine service that change from Sunday to Sunday. In this devotion, we focused on the following: Collect of the Day, Introit, Psalm, Old Testament Lesson, Gospel Lesson, Epistle Lesson and Hymn of the Day. Each day takes up a different proper. This way, you will take what you hear on Sunday morning at the divine service and continue to read, study and live it throughout the following week.

Each devotion is also connected to the Collect for that week and the overall theme of this devotion. The theme is drawn from the collects: “Stir Up Your Power, O Lord, and Come!” As you pray through this devotional daily, we pray that Christ will continue to stir up His power by His Word and come into your heart.

December 3, 2017

Collect for the First Sunday in Advent

“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.”

Advent is the season of preparation. It prepares us for the birth of Jesus, but it also causes us to look ahead at everything that comes with that birth. Jesus’ birth is not the full culmination of all His works. Rather, Advent prepares us for His life, His death, His resurrection and His second coming. We pray throughout Advent, “Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come,...” Only through His coming are we made ready and well-prepared. He continues to come to us with all which is His. He brings His gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation. It is here, in the incarnation, that God comes and touches your own sinful flesh with these things. Through watery Word, Body and Blood, He gives you all that is His. In this glorious exchange, Christ takes all that is yours by birth: sin, death and hell. He removes these things from you and gives you His righteousness. He who does all of this for you is your incarnate Lord Jesus, who will prepare you well for His return.

Rev. Matthew Wietfeldt

Director of Christ Academy, 2016–Present

Admission Counselor, 2015–Present

Director of Admission, 2017–Present

December 4, 2017

Introit for the First Sunday in Advent

Psalm 25:1–3; antiphon: Zechariah 9:9b

*Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

*To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.
O my God, in you I trust;
let me not be put to shame;
let not my enemies exult over me.*

*Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;
they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.*

*Behold, your king is coming to you;
righteous and having salvation is he,
humble and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*

The Lord Jesus comes to you. You don't go to Him. It's not up to you to pursue the Lord and beat down the doors of heaven with your own works and self-made righteousness. You couldn't do that even if you tried. But great Gospel! Jesus comes to you. He takes the initiative, makes the journey from heaven to earth, from God's throne to human flesh to save you. Jesus comes to you.

So watch Him come, Zion. See Him riding into the Holy City as a king. But what kind of king? Humble king and lowly king. Not like the kings of this world with all their pomp and glory. A king whose crown is woven of thorns, whose throne is a cross. Behold! Your king doesn't come fighting and conquering. He comes suffering and dying—humble, lowly, mounted on a donkey.

Remember that donkey when the devil accuses you of your sins. Remember it when regret swells up in your heart and chokes you. Remember when you fail, when you fall, when you sin—remember Jesus on the donkey. Remember Jesus on the cross. He comes to you humble, patient and lowly—not in anger, but in love—bringing the gifts of life and salvation!

Rev. Andrew Yeager
Zion Lutheran Church
Garrett, Indiana

Director of Christ Academy, 2010–2012
Admission Counselor, 2010–2013

December 5, 2017

Psalm for the First Sunday in Advent

Psalm 80:1–7

*Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh,
stir up your might
and come to save us!
Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!
O Lord God of hosts,
how long will you be angry with your people's prayers?
You have fed them with the bread of tears
and given them tears to drink in full measure.
You make us an object of contention for our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh among themselves.
Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

“...[S]tir up Your might and come to save us. Restore us, O God; let your face shine, that we may be saved.” These words were written in the wake of devastation that befell God’s people. Driven from their homes in the Northern Kingdom by the Assyrians, the exiles who came to Jerusalem cried out to God for restoration and salvation. “Restore us, O God.”

That was then, this is now. We see ourselves in this Psalm. Ridiculed for the Christian faith we confess, with tears over the recent church shooting, broken relationships. “Save us,” we cry! Save us from what? From sin: of the world, our neighbor’s, ours. We are afflicted by sin, not that we would wallow in it, but turn to God for help.

“Come and deliver us.” By sending Jesus God stirred up His might and saved us through the birth, life, suffering and resurrection of His only Son. God’s might is hidden in weakness when Jesus was nailed to the cross. And in weak looking things like Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, God’s grace is delivered to us, so that we might look forward to the day when our prayer, “Come Lord Jesus,” is fulfilled.

Rev. Timothy D. Storck
Trinity Lutheran Church
Fort Morgan, Colorado

Christ Academy High School, 1999
Christ Academy Germany, 2002
Christ Academy Proctor, 2002–2003
Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2003
Christ Academy Student Director, 2004–2005

December 6, 2017

Old Testament Lesson for the First Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 64:1–9

*Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains might quake at your presence –
as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil –
to make your name known to your adversaries,
and that the nations might tremble at your presence!
When you did awesome things that we did not look for,
you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence.
From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear,
no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.
You meet him who joyfully works righteousness,
those who remember you in your ways.
Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;
in our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved?
We have all become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.
We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
and have made us melt in the hand of our iniquities.
But now, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
Be not so terribly angry, O Lord, and remember not iniquity forever.
Behold, please look, we are all your people.*

In the midst of prayer for mercy, Isaiah calls upon God to remember his former deeds. Though Abraham did not know them, and Israel did not acknowledge them, Isaiah calls upon “our Father” to rend the heavens and come down to save (Is. 63:16). The Lord worked great and miraculous things in the past by establishing covenants with Abraham (Gen. 12) and Israel (Ex. 19ff.), and by saving His people from slavery in Egypt. But Israel, forgetting both covenants and seeking after foreign gods for protection and blessings, became a “soiled garment.” Isaiah cries for mercy, confessing the sin that polluted, and calls for God to rend the heavens. And in the dark night that covered Bethlehem, the glory of the Lord did split through the darkness with songs of peace to all men. God did rend the heavens and come down. But Isaiah’s prayer does not end there. Isaiah proclaims that “we are the clay and you are our potter” recalling Genesis when the Lord first formed Man and called him “good.” So also shall the Lord recall when He rends the heavens again with a trumpet blast, raises the dead and brings us to the new, beautiful and good creation.

Sem. Christian Schultz
Christ Academy High School, 2012
Christ Academy College, 2013; 2015

December 7, 2017

Epistle Lesson for the First Sunday in Advent

1 Corinthians 1:3–9

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge—even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you— so that you are not lacking in any gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

For Paul, Jesus is more than a spiritual guru or an affirming friend—He is the Truth of God, the embodiment of God's promises. Paul rejoiced that the testimony about Jesus was confirmed among the Corinthians. Jesus would sustain them to the end—God is faithful, and the proof is in the Resurrection. That Jesus died, was buried and was raised on the third day (1 Cor. 15:3-4) is the testimony about God that proves He is faithful (1 Cor. 15:15). And as He was faithful for the Corinthians, so He is faithful for us. The same testimony is confirmed among us through the preaching of Jesus and through the fellowship of His body and blood.

But it is not ours to grasp. We are in the position of receiving and God of giving. And so it must be, for we are saturated in our own sins; we are in need of rescue even from ourselves. So we pray that Jesus would continue to come to our aid. We approach Him empty, that He might fill us. We receive all things from Him and so we do not lack any spiritual gift. Save us now, Lord!

Sem. Josef Muench

Christ Academy College, 2014–2016

Christ Academy Proctor, 2016–2017

December 8, 2017

Gospel Lesson for the First Sunday in Advent

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!”

The wild is an untamed place, domesticated only by design and with purpose. It is a most difficult thing to enter such a place, unsettled in chaos and disarray. Some, however, are quite satisfied with this evolutionary madness—survival by brute strength and wit. Whatever a person may think of the wild, it is always consuming, unyielding and barbarous.

Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem is upon an untamed colt, “on which no one has ever sat.” By this unruly beast the King of Power and Might would come and be made low and humble on the cross—fulfilling the hosanna cries. Whatever you may think of sin, it is always consuming, unyielding and barbarous. Sin has made you an unbridled animal, furious and raging against creation and Creator. You glory in earthly power and might, and your heart refutes the weakness of Christ’s humility. Even so, “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men” (1 Cor. 1:25). Stirred up in the cross of Christ is power unknown to fallen flesh. By this Gospel wild men are made tame, domesticated through faith and sins forgiven. “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” And blessed are you who have been delivered in Jesus’ name!

Rev. Jared DeBlieck
Trinity Lutheran Ministries
Edwardsville, Illinois

Christ Academy High School, 2006
Christ Academy Proctor, 2007–2010
Admission Student Worker, 2010–2014
Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2011
Christ Academy Student Director, 2012, 2014

December 9, 2017

Hymn of the Day for the First Sunday in Advent

Savior of the Nations, Come (*LSB 332*)

*Savior of the nations, come, Virgin's Son, make here Thy home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth.
Not by human flesh and blood, By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh – Woman's offspring, pure and fresh.
Here a maid was found with child, But remained a virgin mild.
In her womb this truth was shown; God was there upon His throne.
Then stepped forth the Lord of all From His pure and kingly hall;
God of God yet fully man, His heroic course began.
God the Father was His source, Back to God He ran His course.
Into hell His road went down, Back then to His throne and crown.
For You are the Father's Son Who in flesh the vict'ry won.
By Your mighty pow'r make whole All our ills of flesh and soul.
From the manger newborn light Shines in glory through the night.
Darkness there no more resides; In this light faith now abides.
Glory to the Father sing, Glory to the Son, our king,
Glory to the Spirit be Now and through eternity.*

Savior of the Nations Come, text sts, 3, 6-7 © 2006 Concordia Publishing House; sts. 4, 5, 8
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Stir up your power, O Lord, and come! Come in glory! Come in majesty! “Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence,” (Is. 64:1). Deliver us from the shackles of sin and the fetters of death!

And then, the Savior of the Nations did come. Heaven and the Earth did marvel, not at His might, His glory and His power but at His meekness, His lowliness, His humility. The Spirit of God Almighty overshadowed a mere maid, making her virginal womb into the very Throne of the Most High. Stepping forth from His kingly hall, He was laid not into a soft, regal crib but into a manger—a rough feeding trough. Heaven and earth marvel at the humility of God, that His power is perfected in poverty—that His might is manifested in meekness.

May we ever remain humble in this life, whether facing trial and tribulation or victory and success, trusting always in our Savior, Jesus Christ, who, by His humble death on the cross, conquered even death itself, opening to us the way of everlasting life.

Vicar Kyle Brown
*St. Peter's Lutheran Church
Arlington, Wisconsin*

Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2015
Christ Academy Student Director, 2016

December 10, 2017

Collect of the Day for the Second Sunday in Advent

“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.”

The Christian life is always one of anticipation and examination. In repentance we turn, but only to see the coming of the Lord. We hear such words from Christ, “Repent and believe in the gospel” (Mark 1:15) and “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38).

When we go to church, we anticipate the coming of the Lord as the preacher calls out to his people like John the Baptist, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matt. 3:2). That kingdom is in Christ as He comes to the faithful in His body and blood. The congregation sings, “Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord” much like we hear on Palm Sunday. We live in anticipation and preparation to receive the body and blood as Paul says, “Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup” (1 Cor. 11:28). Anytime we live in anticipation, we are always preparing, always examining ourselves and repenting as we anticipate the coming of the Lord.

This Advent season we examine our lives, repent from our sins and anticipate the coming of the Lord who comes to forgive our sins, bring life and salvation.

Rev. John Dreyer

Director of Christ Academy, 2007; 2013
Christ Academy (Various Teaching Positions), 2001–Present
Admission Counselor, 2001–2008; 2011–Present
Director of Admission, 2013–2017

December 11, 2017

Introit for the Second Sunday in Advent

Psalm 80:1, 8a, 9b, 7; antiphon: Psalm 80:3

*Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!
Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.
You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.
You brought a vine out of Egypt;
it took deep root and filled the land.
Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!
Restore us, O God;
let your face shine, that we may be saved!*

The days continue to shorten this time of year as the sun shines less and less. Darkness increases. If you rise early and get home late, you're lucky to see the sun at all! And darkness is on the increase in our society and culture as well. God's enemies have the loudest voice and they seem to win. Like sheep, we are lost in this. Sin and evil are spoken and done before our very eyes. At the very least, we stand by and do nothing. "Restore us, O God; let Your face shine, that we may be saved! Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come!"

And the Lord answers our prayer. By His Advent and Incarnation, He shows not only His majesty but His lowliness. For the Christ is the Shepherd of His people. He is our Leader and Savior against the enemies of darkness. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for us, the sheep. He brings us back on His shoulders to rejoin the 99. He turns back those who have gone astray, recovers the lost, binds up the broken, protects and gathers us into the heavenly fold of His Church.

Rev. Brandon Froiland
Christ Lutheran Church
Platte Woods, Missouri

Christ Academy High School, 1999–2000
Christ Academy Proctor, 2002–2004
Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2005
Christ Academy Student Director, 2006
Admission Student Worker, 2008

December 12, 2017

Psalm for the Second Sunday in Advent

Psalm 85

*Lord, you were favorable to your land; you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
You forgave the iniquity of your people; you covered all their sin. Selah
You withdrew all your wrath; you turned from your hot anger.*

*Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away your indignation toward us!
Will you be angry with us forever? Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?
Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.*

*Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people,
to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.*

Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.

*Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.
Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky.
Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way.*

Certainly, the Lord has been favorable to His land. He restored the fortunes of Jacob, forgave the iniquity of His people and covered their sin, He withdrew His wrath. He was favorable toward His land in that favor that was shown to our land, to the Virgin, in whom steadfast love and faithfulness met. Faithfulness sprung up from the womb and righteousness looked down from heaven. Born to our land, was the Salvation of the earth. He, who is true God from eternity and also true man, is where righteousness and peace kissed each other. First, Christ took into Himself our humanity and second, our sin. Through His sacrificial death, God's wrath is turned away from us. His righteousness has been given to us as a gift, and He has made a way for our footsteps to serve the Lord with pure hearts and minds. Surely His salvation is near to us who fear Him. We cry out from the land with sure hope that Christ will come again, "Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints."

Sem. Trac Fistler

Christ Academy High School, 2012
Christ Academy College, 2013–2014
Christ Academy Proctor, 2015

December 13, 2017

Old Testament Lesson for the Second Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 40:1–11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every 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. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.

Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" Behold, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

With these words we hear the preaching of John the Baptizer, the Apostles and their successors. In unison, they proclaim the Good News. With our ears, we see the mystery of the Incarnation. Behold your God! Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! Behold Christ the King! His Kingdom is not like earthly kingdoms that come through the power of physical swords. His Kingdom is a heavenly kingdom which comes through the power of the Sword of the Spirit, that is, the Word of the Lord. It is a spiritual kingdom through which the Holy Spirit is given through preaching the message of the person and work of Christ. Christ is our crucified Shepherd King. He gathers those scattered by sin. He alone rules and reigns over the heart with pardon and peace. His Kingdom brings comfort to the terrified conscience and consolation to the troubled heart. For Christ's sake we are no longer enemies of God, we are friends. Our warfare is ended. Our iniquity is ended. We have received double for all our sins (comfort, comfort!). Thus, we rejoice in the voice of God which speaks tenderly, literally to/upon the heart.

Rev. Brian Kachelmeier
Redeemer Lutheran Church
Los Alamos, New Mexico

Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2004
Christ Academy Student Director, 2005
Admissions Student Worker, 2004–2005

December 14, 2017

Epistle Lesson for the Second Sunday in Advent

2 Peter 3:8–14

But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance. But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.

Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of people ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set on fire and dissolved, and the heavenly bodies will melt as they burn! But according to his promise we are waiting for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.

Therefore, beloved, since you are waiting for these, be diligent to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace.

Christ's righteousness in us is like the tiny cocoa particles which give hot chocolate its sweet flavor. The particles are the essence of the beverage. Left unattended for a long period of time, those tiny sediments of chocolate will sink to the bottom of the mug. The cup of holiday joy will be unbalanced—emptied of value, without flavor. That is, unless it is stirred up and the cocoa particles again resume activity throughout the drink.

Now, this is certainly a silly analogy, yet it does speak to your Christian condition—to your life in this world. If you do not hear God's Word on a regular basis, if you despise preaching and His Word, you will be a Christian without the flavor of Christ. And this is not how you want to be found on judgment day.

Fret not though, for God gives you the help you need in this earthly life. He stirs you up. Christ's righteousness is already yours because you received it in Baptism. And the work which God began in you at Baptism is still at work today. The good works of Jesus abound in the life of the baptized. Thanks be to God!

Vicar Matthias Wollberg
Mount Olive Evangelical Lutheran Church
Billings, Montana

Christ Academy High School, 2010–2011
Christ Academy College, 2013
Christ Academy Proctor, 2014–2015
Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2016
Christ Academy Student Director, 2017

Gospel Lesson for the Second Sunday in Advent

Mark 1:1–8

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

How tempting it is to focus on ourselves, to take ourselves too seriously, to think of ourselves more highly than we ought. Like the people at the tower of Babel, we want to make a name for ourselves. We are tempted by pride and vain glory. But when we do that, Christ is hidden from view.

John the Baptist fought that temptation. He pushed the spotlight away from himself. This lesson says John was a voice, a voice of one crying in the wilderness, only a voice. His person wasn't important; it was his message that counted. He pointed people, not to himself, but to Christ. Elsewhere, he is described as a witness to the Light, a messenger, a herald preparing the way for the King of kings. On one occasion he insisted, "He must become greater; I must become less. He must increase; I must decrease." Two delegations of Jewish authorities once came out to John from Jerusalem to investigate. They kept trying to focus on John. "You, who are you?" ("I am not the Christ.") "What, then, Elijah?" ("I am not.") "Are you the Prophet?" ("No.") John's answers get shorter and shorter. You can sense his distaste for answering questions about himself. "Quit asking about me! Don't look at me! I'm not the important one! Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

If only we were more and more like that! But our sinful nature is not content to be but a voice. We take ourselves too seriously, we are wrapped up in ourselves, turned in on ourselves, belly-button gazers, like a scorpion with its tail turned in on itself.

So stop looking in the mirror. Focus on Christ. That's where you'll find comfort this Advent. Behold Jesus and His work. If you think the man John was humble, then look at the God-man Jesus Christ. "He made Himself nothing, taking the very form of a servant ... He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross!" We marvel at the humility of John the Baptist, but, of course, John was not perfect in humility. Jesus is the perfect One.

Jesus empowers you through Word and Sacrament to make yourself less and less, to make Jesus more and more. May that be our Advent prayer, "Stir up Your Power, O Lord, and come. Work in me repentance, faith, and the holy life that I desire that You become greater and I become less; that You must increase and I must decrease. Grant me contentment in being but a voice."

Rev. James Fundum

Admission Counselor, 2017–Present

December 16, 2017

Hymn of the Day for the Second Sunday in Advent

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry (LSB 344)

*On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings Glad tidings of the King of kings!
Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin; Make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare For Christ to come and enter there.
We hail Thee as our Savior, Lord, Our refuge and our great reward;
Without Thy grace we waste away Like flow'rs that wither and decay.
Lay on the sick Thy healing hand And make the fallen strong to stand;
Show us the glory of Thy face Till beauty springs in ev'ry place.
All praise, eternal Son, to Thee Whose advent sets Thy people free,
Whom with the Father we adore And Holy Spirit evermore.*

In our Advent preparation for the celebration of our Lord's coming into the flesh, we once again hear the voice of John the Baptist, "Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight" (Matt. 3:3; Is. 40:3). We often think of John's message as being one primarily of Law as we notice how John calls the Pharisees and Sadducees a brood of vipers, he threatens fire for every tree that does not bear good fruit, and he seems to indicate that Jesus is coming in judgment. However, this hymn helps us hear the Baptist's preaching rightly.

The goal and purpose of John's preaching is the same as that of Jesus: cleansing from sin and acknowledging Jesus as Savior and Lord. This is precisely what Jesus preaches to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus: Moses and all the prophets testify of Jesus—of His death and resurrection—(Luke 24:26–27) and of the prophets, none is greater than John (Luke 7:28). John preaches to us proclaiming Jesus, our refuge and great reward, for without His coming we are left to die in our sins. It is He who leads us to repentance, He who changes our minds.

Rev. Aaron Yaeger
Our Savior Lutheran Church
Lynchburg, Virginia

Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2013

December 17, 2017

Collect of the Day for the Third Sunday in Advent

“Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.”

Our Lord certainly does lighten the darkness of our hearts in His visitation. But what exactly is this visitation in which He enlightens our hearts? Although we find ourselves focused on the eschaton and the final coming of the Lord, we also confess that our Lord once came in His Holy Incarnation, and He continues to come to us every time we receive Him in His blessed Eucharist.

In His Holy Incarnation, He brought our humanity into His own divinity and bound these two natures together in Himself forever to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace. In His blessed Eucharist, He personally binds Himself to each and every one of us as we take the body and blood of God into ourselves. In this, we receive Him who is Life and the Light of men. As we receive Him in the Eucharist, He shines in the midst of the darkness of our hearts and our darkness cannot overcome Him.

Sem. Ian Kinney

Christ Academy High School, 2013

Christ Academy Proctor, 2015–2016

Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2017–Present

December 18, 2017

Introit for the Third Sunday in Advent

Psalm 85:8–9, 12–13; antiphon: Psalm 85:7

*Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.*

*Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.*

*Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.*

*Yes, the Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.*

*Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.*

*Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,
and grant us your salvation.*

“Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.” This is how the power of the Lord is stirred up for us. The power of the Lord is stirred up for us in the revelation of God’s steadfast love for us. His steadfast love is shown to us solely by His grace and mercy. We see the steadfast love of the Lord in the giving of His Son on the cross for our salvation. We more than see the love of the Lord; we also, and more importantly, receive the love of the Lord in the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus the Christ. Jesus doesn’t now wait for us to come to Him and ask for His mercy, but rather He comes to us in the Means of Grace and delivers His mercy directly into our ears, mouths and hearts. We receive the gifts of the cross, not according to our merit and sacrifices, but according to Jesus’ merit and sacrificial life and death. May we continue to receive our Lord who visits us graciously this Advent Season as we receive Him in water, bread, wine and the spoken Word. Amen.

Rev. Christopher Hull
Zion Lutheran Church
Tomball, Texas

Christ Academy High School, 2000–2002
Christ Academy Proctor, 2003–2004

December 19, 2017

Psalm for the Third Sunday in Advent

Psalm 126

*When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”
The Lord has done great things for us;
we are glad.
Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like streams in the Negeb!
Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!
He who goes out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his sheaves with him.*

Every now and then, like a sports team losing with only seconds left, we find ourselves fighting against the clock. The end is now! On other occasions, however, we find ourselves playing the waiting game, with more time on our hands than we want. And therein lies the beauty of Advent: when it comes to time, it's not an either/or, but a both/and.

So it is that the psalmist says in one line, “When the Lord *restored* the fortunes of Zion ...,” but then just a few lines later also says, “*Restore* our fortunes, O Lord.” Well, which one is it? It's both!

As we pray for our Lord's gracious visitation this season, we also remember that He *has* already come and that He *continues* to come to us time and time again. With Christ, the “not yet” is always spilling over into the now. At this very moment, everything we lack has already been restored by the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Even in the worst of waiting games, we know for certain that “those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!”

Rev. Dr. Brian German
*Director, Concordia Bible Institute
and Assistant Professor of Theology
Concordia University Wisconsin*

Christ Academy High School, 2002
Christ Academy Proctor, 2003–2005
Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2006
Christ Academy Student Director, 2007; 2008; 2010

December 20, 2017

Old Testament Lesson for the Third Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me,
because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor;
he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and the opening of the prison to those who are bound;
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to grant to those who mourn in Zion –
to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit;
that they may be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified.
They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.*

*For I the Lord love justice;
I hate robbery and wrong;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
Their offspring shall be known among the nations,
and their descendants in the midst of the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge them,
that they are an offspring the Lord has blessed.*

*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord;
my soul shall exult in my God,
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation;
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.*

*For as the earth brings forth its sprouts,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up,
so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise
to sprout up before all the nations.*

(continues next page)

Here we see Christ, the One proclaiming the Gospel to those who are poor, brokenhearted and in captivity. He is the Bridegroom, coming to His bride, the Church; clothing her in the beautiful white garment of His salvation, washed in the blood of His death on the cross. He has come as the One taking the fullness of God's wrath in Himself, dying as the Just One, bearing the injustice of this world.

So who are you? Are you poor, only possessing your dirty works? Jesus comes, giving the riches of His forgiveness won on the cross. Are you brokenhearted, seeing your heart as the evil thing it is? Jesus comes, giving you a new and perfect heart, one that trusts in Him. Are you in captivity, slave to sin's mastery? Jesus comes, setting you free from sin's bonds to live in the glorious freedom of His love for you.

Jesus comes not in strength, but in the weakness of a bridegroom, sacrificing Himself for His bride. He comes to you with His free gifts of forgiveness, life and salvation through His Word, Baptism and Supper. So, stir up Your power and come, Lord Jesus, to save us in Your humility.

Mr. Isaiah Armbrecht

Christ Academy High School, 2013–2015

Christ Academy College, 2016–2017

December 21, 2017

Epistle Lesson for the Third Sunday in Advent

1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

“Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come!” Christ’s return will not come upon you like a trap if you but stay awake at all times, fervent in prayer and diligent in hearing God’s Word. That is, whether our bodies are awake or sleeping, our hearts should always be awake, having no higher love or desire than to see the Bridegroom when He comes. And so our text tells us that we ought to “rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and test everything.”

The Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing on His wings. He is coming to heal you of all your ills of body and soul, even the illness of spiritual sluggishness. What news could be better for us than that the Lord who died, rose and ascended into heaven for us, is coming again with healing in His wings? You will stand before the Son of Man on that Day not on your own merits, but on His. “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.”

Rev. Dr. Benjamin Mayes

Assistant Professor of Historical Theology

Concordia Theological Seminary

Christ Academy Director/Student Director, 1999–2000

December 22, 2017

Gospel Lesson for the Third Sunday in Advent

John 1:6–8, 19–28

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

And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The heart of man is rank with the darkness of death. It is deceitful above all things and desperately sick (Jer. 17:9). It is encrusted with the blackness of desire and hardened against its Creator. John’s words bring hope in the midst of this darkness. He testifies about the Light that comes, *the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie*. This light is one great enough to penetrate the inner blackness of the sinner’s heart. The light to which John points shatters the unknown, cuts through the darkness, softens the heart of stone and delivers God Himself into creation from the womb of a virgin. John is not our Christ. This Light is our Christ, come to lighten our hearts while He Himself is engulfed by the dark mouth of a tomb—a tomb that hungered for us, but which has been eternally filled. The Light breaks over creation, a Son dawning upon the horizon of unbelief, leading His people away from the stench of black death and into the glorious company of God. The whole Church sings:

*O gladsome Light, O Grace
Of God the Father’s face,
Eternal splendor wearing:
Celestial, holy, blest,
Our Savior Jesus Christ,
Joyful in Thine appearing!*

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come!

Sem. Eamonn Ferguson

(Masters in Sacred Theology Candidate)

Christ Academy High School, 2007

Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2014

Christ Academy Student Director, 2015

December 23, 2017

Hymn of the Day for the Third Sunday in Advent

Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding (LSB 345)

*Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding! "Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness, All you children of the day!"*

*Startled at the solemn warning, Let the earth-bound soul arise;
Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling, Shines upon the morning skies.*

*See, the Lamb, so long expected, Comes with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow, One and all, to be forgiv'n;*

*So, when next He comes in glory And the world is wrapped in fear,
He will shield us with His mercy And with words of love draw near.*

*Honor, glory, might, dominion To the Father and the Son
With the ever-living Spirit While eternal ages run!*

The voice that announces Christ's arrival is always vividly clear. When a man proclaims the Word of God, the thing stands permanent. A horror to the world, it is the decree of God's victory. Soberly, therefore, and cheerfully, we will obey its summons. It meets our ears as a thrilling intonation from the sanctuary of God. "Christ is near," we hear it say. If you would reflect on this, and acknowledge that it is true (and nearer now than before!), won't He Himself stir you up from your spiritual lethargy?

I don't need to remind about the *works of darkness*. You know those empty dreams in all their graphic detail. Cast them away with the shining star of Christ. Your darkness will become the light of morning, because no soul that abstains from sin can be left for long in the sludge of sloth. The Lamb of God descends from heaven with pardon for all transgressors. Thus, Scripture testifies that Jesus will not react to your faults with punishment, but instead will protect you from them in His faithfulness. So add your voice to that strong voice of the Church and praise the honor of the Holy Trinity forever.

Rev. Collin Duling
Immanuel Lutheran Church
and
St. John Lutheran Church
Racine, Minnesota

Christ Academy High School, 2003–2005
Admission Office, 2013–2014

December 24, 2017

Collect for the Fourth Sunday in Advent

“Stir up Your Power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.”

One of the lies Satan tells us is that sin leads to freedom, that is, doing what you want, when you want and how you want leads to true freedom and happiness in this life. Yet those who have followed such a lie know that the opposite occurs. The weight of sin becomes heavy. It manifests itself in guilt, shame, isolation and draws us away from Christ into the wilderness of desolation and hiddenness. In such hiddenness and silence our bones waste away (Ps 32:3), leaving its imprint on our physical life.

True freedom from the “sins which weigh us down” comes through an honest and open reflection of our life and which sins cause hiddenness and desolation. However, such confession must lead our eyes to the One who lifts the burden of sin: Jesus Christ. Only His flesh and blood can lift the unbearable weight for His flesh and blood overflow with grace, mercy and an everlasting love. When the weight of sin becomes unbearable, we cry out with our eyes focused on Jesus saying, “Stir up Your Power, O Lord, and come!” and in the power of His incarnation we are given true freedom.

Rev. Chad Smith
St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2012
Christ Academy Student Director, 2013
Christ Academy High School Guest Professor, 2017

December 25, 2017

Gospel Lesson for Christmas Day

John 1:1–14

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

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

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

When the earth was without form and void, the Father's love was still active. Of the Father's love begotten is that eternal Word who is both our genesis and our *telos*—Christ Himself. In Creation, light was spoken into the formless world by this Word. However, it wasn't long before a sin-stained tree cast a long, dark shadow over all of creation. From that moment, the cry of God's people has been "Stir Up Your Power, O Lord, and Come! Come with Your powerful Word whose light can break through the darkness!"

Our prayers have been answered. When the earth was cast down with darkness, the Father's love was still active. Of the Father's love begotten is the Lord who came. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us!" And Christ's great light, full of glory, grace and truth has shattered the darkness, "and the darkness cannot overcome it." God stirred up His power in the meek manger and in the blessed Virgin. And it wouldn't be long after the world's Redeemer showed His sacred face that a blood-stained tree would cast a long, brilliant shadow of hope and light throughout all of creation. Thus, on this Christmas day, we praise the incarnate Son of God—the lowly baby Jesus—singing with the whole church:

*Christ, to Thee, with God the Father,
And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving
And unending praises be,
Honor, glory, and dominion,
And eternal victory
Evermore and evermore.*

Sem. Sawyer Meyers

Christ Academy High School, 2012–2013

Christ Academy College, 2013–2015

Christ Academy Proctor, 2014–2015

Christ Academy Assistant Student Director, 2017

Christ Academy Student Director, 2017–Present

Appendix A

Proper for LSB Series B: Advent – Christmas Day

Sunday	Introit [Gradual]	Old Testament	Psalms	Epistle	Gospel	Verse
Advent 1	Ps 25:1-3 (antiphon: Zech 9:9b) [Zech. 9:9; Ps. 118:26]	Is 64:1-9	Ps: 80:1-7 (antiphon: v. 7)	1 Cor 1:3-9	Mk 11:1-10 or Mk 13:24-37	Ps 24:7
Advent 2	Ps 80:1, 8a, 9b, 7 (antiphon: 80:3) [Zech. 9:9; Ps. 118:26]	Is 40:1-11	Ps 85 (antiphon: v. 9)	2 Ptr 3:8-14	Mk 1:1-8	Lk 3: 4b,6
Advent 3	Ps 85:8-9, 12-13 (antiphon: 85:7) [Zech. 9:9; Ps. 118:26]	Is 61:1-4, 8-11	Ps 126 (antiphon: v. 5)	1 Thess 5:16-24	Jn 1:6-8, 19-28	Mt 11:10
Advent 4	Ps 19:1, 4c, 5-6 (antiphon: Is 45:8a, b) [Zech. 9:9; Ps. 118:26]	2 Sam 7:1-11, 16	Ps 89:1-5 (19-29) (antiphon: v. 8)	Rom 16:25-27	Lk 1:26-38	Mt 1:23a
Christmas Eve Early	Ps 24:1, 3-5 (antiphon: 2:7) [Is. 9:6; Ps. 98:1a]	Is 7:10-14	Ps 110:1-4 (antiphon: Ps v. 2a)	1 John 4:7-16	Mt 1:18-25	Mt 1:21
Christmas Eve Midnight	Ps 2:1-2, 4-6 (antiphon: Lit Text) [Is. 9:6; Ps. 98:1a]	Is 9:2-7	Ps 96 (antiphon: v. 2)	Ti 2:11-14	Lk 2:1-14 (15-20)	Lk 2:11
Christmas Dawn	Ps 93:1, 2, 5 (antiphon: Is 9:2) [Is. 9:6; Ps. 98:1a]	Is 62:10-12	Ps 98 (antiphon: v. 2)	Ti 3:4-7	Lk 2:(1-14) 15-20	Lk 2:14
Christmas Day	Ps 98:1-4 (antiphon: Is 9:6) [Is. 9:6; Ps. 98:1a]	Is 52:7-10	Ps 2 (antiphon: v. 7)	Heb 1:1-6 (7- 12)	Jn 1:1-14 (15-18)	Jn 1:14

Appendix B

Advent and Christmas Hymns

332 Savior of the Nations, Come

1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come, Vir - gin's Son, make
2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, By the Spir - it
3 Here a maid was found with child, Yet re - mained a
4 Then stepped forth the Lord of all From His pure and

here Your home! Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth,
of our God, Was the Word of God made flesh—
vir - gin mild. In her womb this truth was shown:
king - ly hall; God of God, yet ful - ly man,

That the Lord chose such a birth,
Wom - an's off - spring, pure and fresh,
God was there up - on His throne,
His he - ro - ic course be - gan.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | God the Father was His source,
Back to God He ran His course.
Into hell His road went down,
Back then to His throne and crown. | 7 | From the manger newborn light
Shines in glory through the night.
Darkness there no more resides;
In this light faith now abides. |
| 6 | For You are the Father's Son
Who in flesh the vict'ry won.
By Your mighty pow'r make whole
All our ills of flesh and soul. | 8 | Glory to the Father sing,
Glory to the Son, our king,
Glory to the Spirit be
Now and through eternity. |

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336 Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

1 Lo! He comes with clouds de - scend - ing,
 2 Ev - 'ry eye shall now be - hold Him
 3 Those dear to - kens of His pas - sion
 4 Yea, a - men, let all a - dore Thee,

Once for ev - 'ry sin - ner slain;
 Robed in glo - rious maj - es - ty;
 Still His daz - zling bod - y bears,
 High on Thine e - ter - nal throne;

Thou - sand thou - sand saints at - tend - ing
 Those who set at naught and sold Him,
 Cause of end - less ex - ul - ta - tion
 Sav - ior, take the pow'r and glo - ry,

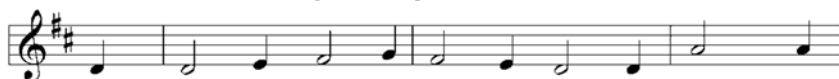
Swell the tri - umph of His train:
 Pierced and nailed Him to the tree,
 To His ran - somed wor - ship - ers,
 Claim the king - dom as Thine own.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
 Deep - ly wail - ing, deep - ly wail - ing, deep - ly
 With what rap - ture, with what rap - ture, with what
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -

lu - ia! Christ the Lord re - turns to reign.
 wail - ing, Shall their true Mes - si - ah see.
 rap - ture Gaze we on those glo - rious scars!
 lu - ia! Thou shalt reign, and Thou a - lone!

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344 On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry An - nounc - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; Make straight the
 3 We hail Thee as our Sav - ior, Lord, Our ref - uge
 4 Lay on the sick Thy heal - ing hand And make the
 5 All praise, e - ter - nal Son, to Thee Whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; A - wake and hear - ken,
 way for God with - in, And let us all our
 and our great re - ward; With - out Thy grace we
 fall - en strong to stand; Show us the glo - ry
 sets Thy peo - ple free, Whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings Glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare For Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way Like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 of Thy face Till beau - ty springs in ev - 'ry place.
 we a - dore And Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more.

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345 Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding



1 Hark! A thrill - ing voice is sound - ing! "Christ is
 2 Star - tled at the sol - emn warn - ing, Let the
 3 See, the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, Comes with
 4 So, when next He comes in glo - ry And the
 5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, do - min - ion To the



near," we hear it say. "Cast a - way the
 earth - bound soul a - rise; Christ, its sun, all
 par - don down from heav'n. Let us haste, with
 world is wrapped in fear, He will shield us
 Fa - ther and the Son With the ev - er -



works of dark - ness, All you chil - dren of the day!"
 sloth dis - pel - ling, Shines up - on the morn - ing skies.
 tears of sor - row, One and all, to be for - giv'n;
 with His mer - cy And with words of love draw near.
 liv - ing Spir - it While e - ter - nal a - ges run!

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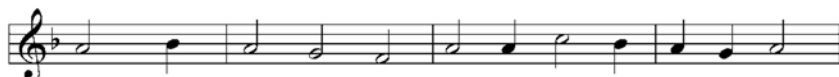
347 Comfort, Comfort Ye My People



1 "Com - fort, com - fort ye My peo - ple, Speak ye peace," thus
 2 Yea, her sins our God will par - don, Blot - ting out each
 3 Hark, the her - ald's voice is cry - ing In the des - ert
 4 Make ye straight what long was crook - ed; Make the rough - er



saith our God: "Com - fort those who sit in dark - ness, Mourn - ing
 dark mis - deed; All that well de - served His an - ger He no
 far and near, Call - ing sin - ners to re - pen - tance, Since the
 plac - es plain. Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, As be -



'neath their sor - rows' load. Speak ye to Je - ru - sa - lem
 more will see or heed. She hath suf - fered man - y a day,
 King - dom now is here. O that warn - ing cry o - bey!
 fits His ho - ly reign. For the glo - ry of the Lord



Of the peace that waits for them; Tell her that her
 Now her griefs have passed a - way; God will change her
 Now pre - pare for God a way; Let the val - leys shall
 Now o'er earth is shed a - broad, And all flesh shall



sins I cov - er And her war - fare now is o - ver."
 pin - ing sad - ness In - to ev - er - spring - ing glad - ness.
 rise to meet Him And the hills bow down to greet Him.
 see the to - ken That His Word is nev - er bro - ken.

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357 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive
 2 O come, Thou Wis - dom from on high, Who or - d' rest all things
 3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes on
 4 O come, Thou Branch of Jes - se's tree, Free them from Sa - tan's
 5 O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen wide our



Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 might - i - ly; To us the path of knowl - edge show,
 Si - nai's height In an - cient times didst give the Law
 tyr - an - ny That trust Thy might - y pow'r to save,
 heav'n - ly home; Make safe the way that leads on high,



Un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re - joice! Re - joice!
 And teach us in her ways to go. Re - joice! Re - joice!
 In cloud and maj - es - ty and awe. Re - joice! Re - joice!
 And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice!
 And close the path to mis - er - y. Re - joice! Re - joice!



Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!
 Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!
 Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!
 Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!
 Em - man - u - el Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

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

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
 In one the hearts of all mankind;
 Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
 And be Thyself our King of Peace. Refrain

358 From Heaven Above to Earth I Come



1 "From heav'n a - bove to earth I come To bear good
 2 "To you this night is born a child Of Mar - y,
 3 "This is the Christ, our God Most High, Who hears your
 4 "He will on you the gifts be - stow Pre - pared by
 5 "These are the signs that you shall mark: The swad - dling



news to ev - 'ry home; Glad tid - ings of great
 cho - sen vir - gin mild; This lit - tle child of
 sad and bit - ter cry; He will Him - self your
 God for all be - low, That in His king - dom,
 clothes and man - ger dark. There you will find the



joy I bring, Where - of I now will say and sing:
 low - ly birth Shall be the joy of all the earth.
 Sav - ior be From all your sins to set you free.
 bright and fair, You may with us His glo - ry share,
 in - fant laid By whom the heav'ns and earth were made."

- | | | | |
|----|---|----|---|
| 6 | How glad we'll be to find it so!
Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done
In sending us His own dear Son. | 11 | Instead of soft and silken stuff
You have but hay and straw so rough
On which as King, so rich and great,
To be enthroned in royal state. |
| 7 | Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,
And see what in the manger lies.
Who is this child, so young and fair?
It is the Christ Child lying there. | 12 | And so it pleases You to see
This simple truth revealed to me:
That worldly honor, wealth, and might
Are weak and worthless in Your sight. |
| 8 | Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
Through whom the sinful world is blest!
You came to share my misery
That You might share Your joy with me. | 13 | Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
A quiet chamber set apart
For You to dwell within my heart. |
| 9 | Ah, Lord, though You created all,
How weak You are, so poor and small,
That You should choose to lay Your head
Where lowly cattle lately fed! | 14 | My heart for very joy must leap;
My lips no more can silence keep.
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue
That sweetest ancient cradlesong: |
| 10 | Were earth a thousand times as fair
And set with gold and jewels rare,
It would be far too poor and small
A cradle for the Lord of all. | 15 | Glory to God in highest heav'n,
Who unto us His Son has giv'n!
While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad new year to all the earth. |

359 Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming



1 Lo, how a rose e'er bloom-ing From ten-der stem hath
 2 I - sa - iah 'twas fore - told it, The rose I have in
 3 This flow'r, whose fra-grance ten-der With sweet-ness fills the
 4 O Sav - ior, child of Mar - y, Who felt our hu - man



sprung! Of Jes - se's lin - eage com - ing As proph-ets long have
 mind; With Mar - y we be - hold it, The vir - gin moth - er
 air, Dis - pels with glo - rious splen - dor The dark-ness ev - 'ry -
 woe; O Sav - ior, King of glo - ry, Who dost our weak - ness



sung, It came, a flow - 'ret bright, A - mid the
 kind. To show God's love a - right, She bore to
 where. True man, yet ver - y God, From sin and
 know: Bring us at length we pray To the bright



cold of win - ter, When half - spent was the night.
 us a Sav - ior, When half - spent was the night.
 death He saves us And light - ens ev - 'ry load.
 courts of heav - en, And to the end - less day.

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376 Once in Royal David's City



1 Once in roy - al Da - vid's cit - y Stood a
 2 He came down to earth from heav - en, Who is
 3 For He is our child - hood's pat - tern, Day by
 4 And our eyes at last shall see Him, Through His

low - ly cat - tle shed, Where a moth - er laid her
 God and Lord of all, And His shel - ter was a
 day like us He grew; He was lit - tle, weak, and
 own re - deem - ing love; For that child so dear and

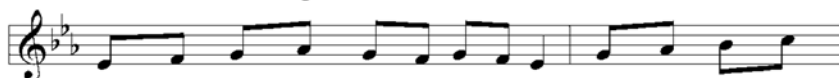
ba - by In a man - ger for His bed; Mar - y
 sta - ble, And His cra - dle was a stall; With the
 help - less, Tears and smiles like us He knew; And He
 gen - tle Is our Lord in heav'n a - bove; And He

was that moth - er mild, Je - sus Christ her lit - tle child.
 poor and mean and low - ly Lived on earth our Sav - ior ho - ly.
 feels for all our sad - ness, And He shares in all our glad - ness.
 leads His chil - dren on To the place where He is gone.

- 5 Not in that poor, lowly stable
 With the oxen standing by
 Shall we see Him, but in heaven,
 Set at God's right hand on high.
 Then like stars His children, crowned,
 All in white, His praise will sound!

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384 Of the Father's Love Begotten



1 Of the Fa - ther's love be - got - ten Ere the worlds be -
 2 Oh, that birth for - ev - er bless - ed, When the vir - gin,
 3 This is He whom seers in old time Chant - ed of with
 4 O ye heights of heav'n, a - dore Him; An - gel hosts, His
 5 Christ, to Thee, with God the Fa - ther, And, O Ho - ly



gan to be, He is Al - pha and O - me - ga,
 full of grace, By the Ho - ly Ghost con - ceiv - ing,
 one ac - cord, Whom the voic - es of the proph - ets
 prais - es sing. Pow'rs, do - min - ions, bow be - fore Him
 Ghost, to Thee Hymn and chant and high thanks - giv - ing



He the source, the end - ing He, Of the things that are, that
 Bore the Sav - ior of our race, And the babe, the world's Re -
 Prom - ised in their faith - ful word. Now He shines, the long - ex -
 And ex - tol our God and King. Let no tongue on earth be
 And un - end - ing prais - es be, Hon - or, glo - ry, and do -



have been, And that fu - ture years shall see
 deem - er, First re - vealed His sa - cred face
 pect - ed; Let cre - a - tion praise its Lord
 si - lent, Ev - 'ry voice in con - cert ring
 min - ion, And e - ter - nal vic - to - ry



Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more.
 Ev - er - more and ev - er - more. A - men.

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