



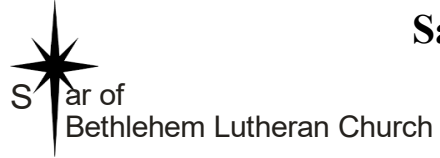
**NORTHWESTERN
PUBLISHING HOUSE**

*Prepare the way
for the Lord,
make straight paths
for him.*

Mark 1:3b



**NORTHWESTERN
PUBLISHING HOUSE**



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Pastor Michael Foley

Worship Service

Sunday, December 10, 2023 10:00 a.m.

Second Sunday of ADVENT

Theme of the day: Since Jesus' coming is sure and so important, he sends out forerunners in the footsteps of John the Baptist who help us to make proper preparation for his coming. They do that with a message not their own. They do it with the message that he himself has given. Pay close attention to those heralds of the coming Lord, the prophets and apostles, and to the pastors and teachers in our midst who have succeeded them to get us ready for his coming.

WELCOME

A warm welcome to our friends and visitors! Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church is eager to share with you the blessings of its Christ-centered ministry. If you are a new or long-time resident of the Central Coast looking for a church home, we invite you to meet with us at the close of this worship service or at your convenience. All are welcome to stay for refreshments in the fellowship hall.

Families are encouraged to worship together. If you need to step out with your children, the service can be seen and heard in the fellowship hall or narthex area. Feel free to enter and return at any time.

OUR MISSION

Our congregation exists for the purpose of "HOLDING OUT THE WORD OF LIFE." This is accomplished by faithfully preserving and proclaiming all of God's inerrant word, and administering the Sacraments as they were instituted by Christ.

OPENING HYMN: # 310 “Arise, O Christian People”

♪ **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.**

**Prepare the way before him, prepare for him the best;
cast out what would offend him,
this great, this heav’nly guest.
Make straight, make plain the way: the lowly valleys raising,
the heights of pride abasing, his path all even lay.**

**The humble heart and lowly God raises up on high;
beneath his feet in terror the haughty soul shall lie.
The heart sincere and right, that heeds God’s invitation
and makes true preparation — it is the Lord’s delight.**

Please stand for last verse:

**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.**

Minister: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and
the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

Congregation: **And also with you.** (*spoken*)

Confession of Sins

M: God invites us to come into his presence to worship him with
humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our
sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

Song: CW #341 “Away in a Manger”

♪ **Lord Jesus, I long to be cleansed and made whole;
Have pardon and mercy upon my ill soul.
By faith, for my cleansing, I see Thy blood flow,
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

♪ **Lord Jesus, have mercy, my burden is great,
Come now, and within me a new heart create;
Renew me and guide me; your mercy will show
Now wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

C: Be gracious to me, God, according to your mercy. Erase my acts of rebellion according to the greatness of your compassion. Scrub me clean from my guilt. Purify me from my sin. For I admit my rebellious acts. My sin is always in front of me. Against you, you only, have I sinned, and I have done this evil in your eyes. Remove my sin with hyssop, and I will be clean. Wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones you have crushed celebrate. Hide your face from my sins. Erase all my guilty deeds. Create in me a pure heart, O God. Renew an unwavering spirit within me.

M: The Lord is merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love. He gives us this great comfort: “As distant as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our rebellious acts from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.” “The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.” Therefore, as a called servant of Christ, and by his authority, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen. (spoken)

Please be seated.

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING INTROIT

♪ **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.**

M: The darkness of sin and unbelief are shattered by the light of the Gospel. The **Prophecy Candle gives us the first flicker of hope as we watch for the coming of the Lord.**

C: Watch! Be alert and pray, because you do not know when the time will come. (Mark 13:33)

The Prophecy Candle is lit.

M: The **Bethlehem Candle calls us to repent. See in Jesus the Light of the world. Change your hearts so that you may live as children of the light.**

**C: “Prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight.”
(Matthew 3:3)**

The Bethlehem Candle is lit.

♪ **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.**



**M: May the light of these candles call to mind the glorious light of the Gospel, shining in the birth of our Savior.
May his grace enlighten our lives, both now and forever.**

♪ **Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
prepare a bed, soft, undefiled
within my heart, made clean and new,
a quiet chamber kept for you.**

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 40:1-11

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

²**Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call out to her.**

Her warfare really is over. Her guilt is fully paid for.

Yes, she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.

³**A voice is calling out:**

In the wilderness prepare the way for the LORD.

In the wasteland make a level highway for our God.

⁴**Every valley will be raised up,**

and every mountain and hill will be made low.

The rugged ground will become level,
and the rough places will become a plain.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all flesh together will see it.

Yes, the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

⁶A voice was saying, "Cry out!"
And I said, "What shall I cry out?"

All flesh is grass,
and all its beauty is like a wildflower in the countryside.

⁷Grass withers, flowers fade,
when the breath of the LORD blows on them.

Yes, the people are grass.

⁸Grass withers, flowers fade,
but the Word of our God endures forever.

⁹Get up on a high mountain, O Zion, you herald of good news.

Lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, you herald of good news.

Lift it up! Do not be afraid!

Say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"

¹⁰Look, God the LORD will come with strength,
and his arm is ruling for him.

Look, his reward is with him.

The result of his work is in front of him.

¹¹Like a shepherd he will care for his flock.

With his arm he will gather the lambs.

He will lift them up on his lap.

He will gently lead the nursing mothers.

PSALM OF THE DAY: Psalm 85

Refrain



I will hear what the Lord pro-claims: peace to his peo - ple.

Psalm tone



**You showed favor to your land, O LORD;*
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.**

**You forgave the iniquity of your people*
and covered all their sins.**

**Show us your unfailing love, O LORD,*
and grant us your salvation.**

Refrain

**I will listen to what God the LORD will say;*
he promises peace to his people, his saints.**

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

**Love and faithfulness meet together;*
righteousness and peace kiss each other.**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Refrain

VERSE OF THE DAY

**M: Alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord! Make his paths straight.
And everyone will see the salvation of God. Alleluia.**

(Luke 3:4,6)

C: ♪ Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**These words are written that we may believe
that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

GOSPEL LESSON: Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²This is how it is written in the prophet Isaiah:

**Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare the way for you.**

**³A voice of one calling out in the wilderness,
“Prepare the way of the Lord.**

Make his paths straight.”

⁴John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

⁵The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him. They were baptized by him in the Jordan River as they confessed their sins. ⁶John was clothed in camel’s hair, and he wore a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He preached, “One more powerful than I is coming after me. I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the strap of his sandals! ⁸I baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

HYMN: # 319 “Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring”

**♪ Jesus came, the heav’ns adoring,
came with peace from realms on high;
Jesus came to win redemption, lowly came on earth to die;
Alleluia! Alleluia! came in deep humility.**

**Jesus comes again in mercy
when our hearts are worn with care;
Jesus comes again in answer to an earnest, heartfelt prayer,
Alleluia! Alleluia! comes to save us from despair.**

**Jesus comes to hearts rejoicing, bringing news of sins forgiv’n;
Jesus comes with words of gladness,
leading souls redeemed to heav’n.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Hope to all the world is giv’n.**

**Jesus comes on clouds triumphant
when the heav’ns shall pass away.
Jesus comes again in glory; let us, then, our homage pay,
Alleluia! ever singing till the dawn of endless day.**

SERMON: 2 Peter 3:8-14

⁸But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: For the Lord, one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow to do what he promised, as some consider slowness. Instead, he is patient for your sakes, not wanting anyone to perish, but all to come to repentance.

¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. On that day the heavens will pass away with a roar, the elements will be dissolved as they burn with great heat, and the earth and what was done on it will be burned up. ¹¹Therefore, since all these things will be destroyed, what kind of people ought you to be, living in holiness and godliness, ¹²as you look forward to and hasten the coming of the day of God? That day will cause the heavens to be set on fire and destroyed, and the elements to melt as they burn with great heat. ¹³But according to his promise we look forward to new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

¹⁴Therefore, dear friends, as you look forward to these things, make every effort to be found in peace, spotless and blameless in his sight.

APOSTLES' CREED

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.**

He descended into hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.

**He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right
hand of God the Father almighty.**

From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

**I believe in the Holy Spirit;
the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints;
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body;
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

HYMN: # 576 “Amazing Grace”

♪ **Amazing grace—how sweet the sound —
that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found, was blind but now I see.**

**The Lord has promised good to me,
his Word my hope secures;
he will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.**

**Through many dangers, toils, and snares
I have already come;
'tis grace has brought me safe thus far,
and grace will lead me home.**

**When we've been there ten thousand years,
bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise
than when we'd first begun.**

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

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.

M: Brothers and sisters, go in peace.

Live in harmony with one another.

Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and (+) give you peace.

C: ♪ Amen. Amen. Amen.

CLOSING HYMN: # 819:1,3,4,7 “If God Himself Be For Me”

♪ **If God himself be for me, I may a host defy;
for when I pray, before me my foes, confounded, fly.
If Christ, my head and master, befriend me from above,
what foe or what disaster can drive me from his love?**

**I build on this foundation, that Jesus and his blood
alone are my salvation, my true, eternal good.
Without him all that pleases is valueless on earth;
the gifts I have from Jesus alone have priceless worth.**

**He canceled my offenses, delivered me from death;
he is the Lord who cleanses my soul from sin through faith.
In him I can be cheerful, courageous on my way;
in him I am not fearful of God’s great Judgment Day.**

**My heart for joy is springing and can no more be sad;
my soul is filled with singing, sees only sunshine glad.
The sun that cheers my spirit is Jesus Christ, my King;
the heav’n I shall inherit makes me rejoice and sing.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FLOWERS for today’s service were given to the glory of God by Derek and Paula Ehinger on the occasion of their anniversary.

PRAYERS: Remember to pray for: Shawn Lozano, John Velasques, little Elias, Dennis Douglas, Bob Ward, George Caravana, Molly Webb (and brother, Jim), Helen Marten, Doug Ward, Kathy Jones, Art Amarillas, Roberta Gowin, Melinda Brown, Alice Taubman, Monica, Louise Perry, Rylan Downs, Sam Daugherty, Jeff Brown, Aaron Taubman, Judy Washburn, Marlene Washburn, and Rich Olerich.

BIBLE STUDIES: While we do meet in person for our weekly Bible Classes (Sundays at 9:00 a.m.; Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.), we also continue to “Zoom” all our studies. If you want to be included in the weekly e-mail with the zoom codes and print-outs, please let Pastor Foley know.

MEDITATIONS are on the shelf in the narthex. Treat yourself (and maybe someone you know) to this very beneficial devotional resource. There are also *Advent Devotion* booklets to help us get ready for *real* CHRISTmas.

THIS WEEK

Today **Living Nativity, 5:00-6:00 p.m.**
 Las Posadas, 6:00 p.m.

Tuesday **Circuit Meeting (Lancaster)**
 ESL, 6:00 p.m.

Thursday **Bible Class, 10:00 a.m.**
 ESL, 6:00 p.m.

Sunday **Sunday School & Bible Class, 9:00 a.m.**
 Worship with Holy Communion, 10:00 a.m.

COMING UP

Christmas Eve - Candlelight Service, 7:00 p.m.
Christmas Day - Festival Worship, 10:00 a.m.



