

THE THIRD WEDNESDAY IN ADVENT, December 16, 2020

(P: pastor; C: congregation)

OPENING LITANY

P: The Spirit and the Church cry out:

C: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: All those who await his appearance pray:

C: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: The whole creation pleads:

C: Come, Lord Jesus.

PRAYER:

P: Let us pray. Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to prepare the way for your only Son. By his coming give us strength in our conflicts and shed light on our path through the darkness of this world; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 46:3-13

"Listen to me, O house of Jacob, all the remnant of the house of Israel, who have been borne by me from before your birth, carried from the womb; ⁴ even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save. ⁵ "To whom will you liken me and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be alike? ⁶ Those who lavish gold from the purse, and weigh out silver in the scales, hire a goldsmith, and he makes it into a god; then they fall down and worship! ⁷ They lift it to their shoulders, they carry it, they set it in its place, and it stands there; it cannot move from its place. If one cries to it, it does not answer or save him from his trouble. ⁸ "Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, ⁹ remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,' ¹¹ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it. ¹² "Listen to me, you stubborn of heart, you who are far from righteousness: ¹³ I bring near my righteousness; it is not far off, and my salvation will not delay; I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory."

P: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

SECOND LESSON

Matthew 5:1-18

Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. ² And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: ³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷ "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸ "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹ "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. ¹⁰ "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ¹¹ "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. ¹³ "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet.

¹⁴ "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. ¹⁷ "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished.

P: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

MEDITATION, *Light of Faith and Creation*

MEDITATION RESPONSE

P: The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light,

C: they who dwelt in the land of shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.

(Isaiah 9:2)

P: The light shines in the darkness,

C: and the darkness has not overcome it.

(John. 1:5)

ADVENT HYMN

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus", LBW 30

(Text: Public Domain)

**Come, thou long-expected Jesus, Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, Let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear desire of ev'ry nation, Joy of ev'ry longing heart.**

**Born thy people to deliver, Born a child, and yet a king;
Born to reign in us forever, Now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit Raise us to thy glorious throne.**

PRAYER AND OTHER INTERCESSIONS

P: Let us pray. Be our light in the darkness, O Lord, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ.

C: Amen

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Let us pray with confidence in the words our Savior gave us:

**C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,
now and forever. Amen**

BLESSING

P: Guide us waking, O Lord, and guard us sleeping; that awake we may watch with Christ and asleep we may rest in peace.

C: Amen.

P: The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C: Amen