

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Most Lutheran congregations include an Advent wreath as part of their preparation for Christmas. This brief rite provides a fitting beginning to this sacred season on the First Sunday in Advent.

P *Beloved in the Lord, as we begin the season of Advent, let this wreath remind us that Jesus Christ came to conquer the darkness of sin and to lead us into the light of His glorious kingdom, as the prophet Isaiah says, “The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined. (Isaiah 9:2)*

P *Our help is in the name of the Lord,*
C *who made heaven and earth.*

P *The Lord be with you.*
C *And also with you.*

P *Let us pray.... O Lord Jesus Christ, the true light who comes into the world to enlighten everyone, bless us as we light the candles of this wreath in preparation for Your coming, and so enkindle our hearts with the fire of Your love that we may receive You with joy and gladness and evermore remain steadfast in the faith, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

C *Amen.*

P *The Lord almighty, the Father, the + Son and the Holy Spirit, bless this wreath for use in His Church throughout this holy season of Advent.*

C *Amen.*

The service continues with the hymn “The Advent of our King” # 331

First Sunday in Advent

November 28, 2021

INTROIT

Psalm 89:6, 14-16, 18; Antiphon: Zechariah 9:9b, alt.

Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation

Who in the skies can be compared to the LORD?

Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD,

Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne;

steadfast love and faithfulness go before you.

Blessèd are the people who know the festal shout,

who walk, O LORD, in the light of your face,

who exult in your name all the day

and in your righteousness are exalted.

For our shield belongs to the LORD,

our king to the Holy One of Israel.

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.

Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation

COLLECT OF THE DAY

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**

GRADUAL

Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alt.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation

Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the LORD!

From the house of the Lord we bless you.

RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

After each petition:

P *Lord, in Your mercy,*

C **hear our prayer.**

P *...one God, now and forever.*

C **Amen.**

Jeremiah 33:14-16 (ESV)

¹⁴ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: ‘The LORD is our righteousness.’”

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13 (ESV)

⁹ For what thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, ¹⁰ as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith?

¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, ¹² and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³ so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Luke 19:28-40 (ESV)

²⁸ And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. ²⁹ When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, ³⁰ saying, “Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. ³¹ If anyone asks

you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ you shall say this: ‘The Lord has need of it.’” ³² So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. ³³ And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, “Why are you untying the colt?” ³⁴ And they said, “The Lord has need of it.” ³⁵ And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. ³⁶ And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. ³⁷ As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, ³⁸ saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” ³⁹ And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples.” ⁴⁰ He answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.”

What is Advent?

Advent is not merely a time to get ready for Christmas, but a time in which the Church prepares to meet the Lord Jesus, her heavenly Bridegroom. Reflecting upon his promised coming to the saints of the Old Testament, she contemplates the wonder of his First Advent in crib and cross, rejoices in his continual Advent through his holy Word and Sacrament, and anticipates his Second Advent at the end of time.

Advent is appropriate to new beginnings. The season signals not only the start of a new liturgical calendar, but themes of repentance, that is, newness of life, also permeate its texts. The people of God experience new beginnings. Through contrition and faith, they receive a new mind and heart, created in Christ Jesus for a new life generated by the Holy Spirit

through his saving means: the Gospel preached and the Sacraments administered. In today's *Gospel*, the Church stands shoulder to shoulder amid the pilgrims at Jesus' final entrance into Jerusalem on his relentless journey toward the cross and his redemptive sacrifice. As he entered then, so he enters in within his Church today, not to suffer and die, but to forgive and restore.

FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Jeremiah 33:14–16

1 Thessalonians 3:9–13

Luke 19:28–40 or Luke 21:25–36

The Lord Jesus Comes in Humility to Redeem Us

The Season of Advent focuses on the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this first Sunday establishes this theme for the rest of the season. The Son of God came long ago to be our Savior, “*a righteous Branch*,” descended from David (Jer. 33:15). As He then came into Jerusalem, riding on a lowly donkey to sacrifice Himself for the sins of the world (Luke 19:28–40), so does He come to His Church today in the humility of Word and Sacrament to deliver the fruits of His Passion: the forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He absolves us and establishes our hearts, “*blameless in holiness before our God and Father*” (1 Thess. 3:13). The same Lord Jesus, who came to Jerusalem then, and who comes to us now in peace, will come again with power and great glory on the Last Day. Then there will be “*distress of nations in perplexity*,” with “*people fainting in fear*.” Yet, as we anticipate that great and terrible day, He bids us to rest securely in Him: “*Raise up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near*” (Luke 21:25, 26, 28).

Next Week's Readings from God's Word:

December 5 Second Sunday in Advent (Series C):

Malachi 3:1-7b, Psalm 66:1-12, Philippians 1:2-11, Luke 3:1-14 (15-20)