

SECOND SUNDAY
OF
Advent

December 10, 2023

FAITH LUTHERAN

An Evangelical Lutheran Church

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Ministers: *The Disciples at Faith Lutheran Church*

Pastor: *The Rev. Thomas A. Cassem*

Organist: *Helena Bradford*

INTRODUCTION

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

WE PREPARE

WORSHIP PREPARATION

We prepare ourselves for the beginning of our worship service.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Prepare the Royal Highway



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
 Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
 Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
 His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
 God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
 All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
 So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

Refrain

Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
 Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR IIERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.
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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

As the presiding minister begins, all may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

C **Amen.**

P God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Everlasting God,

C **Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.**

P Hear these words of assurance:

God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all.

C **Amen.**

GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

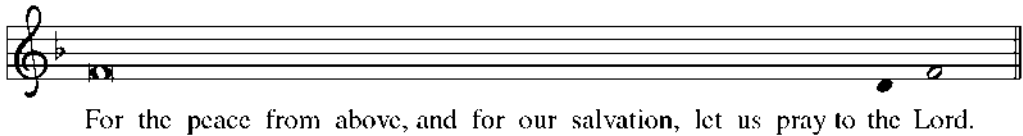
WE PRAISE GOD

KYRIE

ELW pg. 138



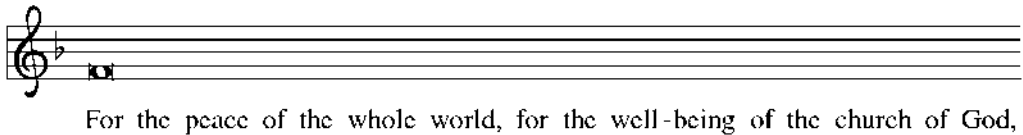
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



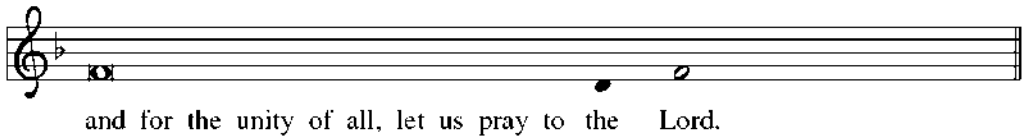
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.




Lord, have mer - cy.



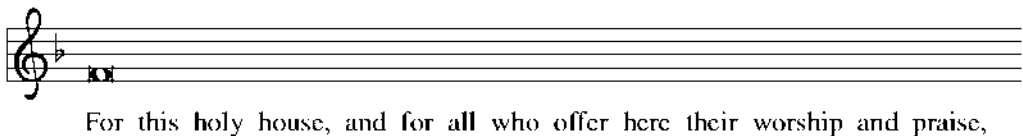
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.




Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

We Are Waiting for Jesus



1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
 2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.
 Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

Text: John Helgen, b. 1957

Music: JESUS BRINGS PEACE, John Helgen

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PRAYER FOR LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLES

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

C **We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first and second candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. Amen.**

Creator of the Stars of Night



1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er -
2 When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in
3 At your great name, O Je - sus, now all knees must bend, all
4 Come in your ho - ly might, we pray, re - deem us for e -
5 To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, and God the Spir - it,



last - ing light, O Christ, re - deem - er of us all,
splen - dor bright, not as a mon - arch, but the child
hearts must bow: all things on earth with one ac - cord,
ter - nal day; de - fend us while we dwell be - low
Three in One, praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be



we pray you hear us when we call.
of Mar - y, bless - ed moth - er mild.
like those in heav'n, shall call you Lord.
from all as - saults of our dread foe.
from age to age e - ter - nal - ly. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

P Let us pray.

C **Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out:

⁴"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every 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.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

⁶A voice says, "Cry out!"

And I said, "What shall I cry?"

All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

⁷The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.

⁸The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

⁹Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
"Here is your God!"

¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.

¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

Righteousness shall prepare a pathway for God. (Ps. 85:13)

We will read responsively by whole verse.

¹You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

²**You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.**

⁸I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;
for you speak peace to your faithful people
and to those who turn their hearts to you.

⁹**Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.**

¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

¹¹**Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.**

¹²The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.

¹³**Righteousness shall go before the LORD
and shall prepare for God a pathway.**

Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

⁸Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the 13th chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’”

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S SERMON

All children are invited to come to the Altar steps for a special "Children's message".



SERMON

Rev. Thomas A. Cassem

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

HYMN OF THE DAY

ELW 249

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 you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
way for God with - in, and let us all our
and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
has our free - dom won, 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.
on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. composite

Music: PUER NOBIS. European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621

THE APOSTLES CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

Prayers of Intercession

L With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

L Send forth your faithful people with words of promise and forgiveness. Teach your church to be bold in revealing your good news in word and in deed. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

L Reveal your majesty in mountain peaks, flowing rivers, and blossoming wilderness roads. Heal the earth where it longs for renewal. Bring wholeness to the earth and all its creatures. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

L Turn the hearts of the nations toward righteousness and peace. Increase cooperation for justice between countries, commonwealths, political parties, and diplomatic leaders. In times of prosperity, direct leaders to be generous for the sake of all. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

L Comfort your people with tender words of love and healing. Surround all who are grieving, all who know depression or anxiety, or all who feel lonely or forgotten. Be a steadfast presence when all else feels uncertain. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

L Grant holy patience to all who are waiting this season. Give hope to those seeking employment. Bring reassurance to people awaiting new diagnoses or treatments. Protect expectant parents. Watch with those who keep bedside vigil. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

L We lift up to you all who are especially on our hearts silently or spoken.
(*A Brief Silence for Petitions*) Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

L With you a thousand years is like a day. Bless the memory of the saints from ages past and the anticipation of saints yet to be born. Inspire us to live with faith as we await your new heaven and new earth. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

L Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

C Amen.

SHARING OUR LORD'S PEACE

The minister and the assembly greet each other in the peace of the risen Christ.

P The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C **And also with you.**



OFFERING

Offerings given for the mission of the church. Please place offerings in basket in Narthex.



MUSICAL OFFERING

EMMANUEL

“Emmanuel Emmanuel

His name is called Emmanuel

God with us revealed in us

His name is called Emmanuel”

OFFERING PRAYER

P Let us pray.

C God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

WE RECEIVE GOD'S GIFT

HOLY COMMUNION

Great Thanksgiving

ELW pg. 144



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.



Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give our thanks and praise.

The presiding minister continues:

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY LORD

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

The Pastor leads us in the Words of Institution (Not Printed)

Please direct your attention to the altar.

LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P The Gifts of God for the People of God.

C **Thanks be to God.**

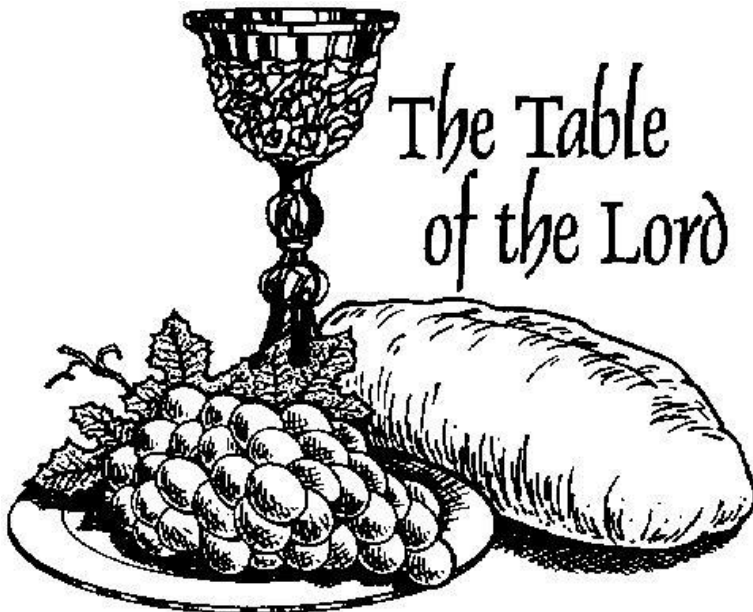


WE RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION

Communion Distribution

Please be seated. All who celebrate with us the presence of the risen Christ in Holy Communion are invited to join us for this sacrament. We receive communion at the communion rail. Please remain seated until the ushers invite you to commune by pew. When you come forward, please return to your seat by the outside aisle. Children are invited for a blessing.

If you would like to communion brought to you in your pew, please notify an usher.



Lord Jesus, Think on Me



1 Lord Je - sus, think on me, and purge a - way my sin;
 2 Lord Je - sus, think on me, by anx - ious thoughts op - pressed;
 3 Lord Je - sus, think on me, nor let me go a - stray;
 4 Lord Je - sus, think on me, that, when the flood is past,



from self - ish pas - sions set me free and make me pure with - in.
 let me your lov - ing ser - vant be and taste your prom - ised rest.
 through dark - ness and per - plex - i - ty point out your cho - sen way.
 I may the e - ter - nal bright - ness see and share your joy at last.

Text: Synesius of Cyrene, 375–430; tr. Allen W. Chatfield, 1808–1896, alt.
 Music: SOUTHWELL, W. Daman, *The Psalms of David*, 1579, alt.

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence



1 Let all mor-tal flesh keep si-lence, and with fear and trem-bling stand;
 2 King of kings, yet born of Mar-y, as of old on earth he stood,
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav-en spreads its van-guard on the way;
 4 At his feet the six-winged ser-aph, cher-u-bim with sleep-less eye,



pon-der noth-ing earth-ly - mind-ed, for with bless-ing in his hand
 Lord of lords in hu-man ves-ture, in the bod-y and the blood,
 as the Light of light, de-scend-ing from the realms of end-less day,
 veil their fac-es to the pres-ence, as with cease-less voice they cry:



Christ our God to earth de-scend-ing comes full hom-age to de-mand.
 he will give to all the faith-ful his own self for heav'n-ly food.
 comes, the pow'rs of hell to van-quish, as the dark-ness clears a-way.
 "Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia, Lord Most High!"

Text: Liturgy of St. James; tr. Gerard Moultrie, 1829–1885, alt.

Music: PICARDY, French folk tune, 17th cent.

Communion Blessing

P May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

Communion Prayer

P Let us pray.

C Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

WE ARE SENT **BENEDICTION**

P The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you ✝ peace.

C Amen

SENDING HYMN

"Give Me Oil In My Lamp" (Advent)

1. Give me oil in my lamp, keep me watching.
Give me oil in my lamp I pray.
Give me oil in my lamp, keep me watching.
Keep me watching 'till the break of day.

Chorus:

Sing Hosanna, sing Hosanna,
Sing Hosanna to the coming King.
Sing Hosanna, sing Hosanna,
Sing Hosanna to the King.

2. Give me joy in my heart, keep me waiting.
Give me joy in my heart, I pray.
Give me joy in my heart, keep me waiting.
Keep me waiting 'till the break of day.
Chorus

3. Give me love in my lamp, keep me hoping.
Give me love that's alive, I pray.
Give me love in my heart, keep me hoping.
Keep me hoping 'till the break of day.
Chorus

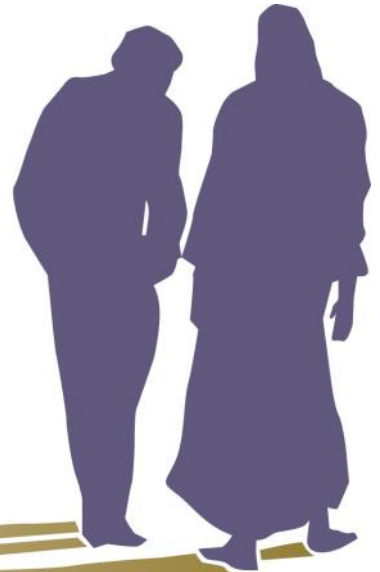
DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Keep awake.

C Thanks be to God.

Statement of Purpose

As servants of Christ, we are called
to proclaim God's saving Word in a caring, nurturing way,
to spread God's love throughout our community, and
to provide opportunities for people to grow in Christ.



The Second Sunday of Advent — December 10, 2023

New Beginnings

There are lots of ways to open a story, perhaps most famously “Once upon a time . . .” Similarly, the gospel-writer Mark starts out, “The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ,” even though his narrative lacks the birth, angelic announcements, and childhood stories Matthew and Luke tell about Jesus. And John’s gospel starts even farther back, at the beginning of creation, before skipping to Jesus’ adult years. What we can take from these varying opening narratives is that the story of Jesus does not have one beginning, but many beginnings—each a new entry point into the old, old story of God’s love breaking into the world.

Mark starts with an invitation to baptism, repentance, and forgiveness of sins. Even so, John the baptizer declares that another new start is coming, with the baptism of the Holy Spirit that Jesus will bring. What’s more, while his baptism by John is clearly not the first event in Jesus’ life, it marks a new beginning just before he heads off to the wilderness and then on to start his public ministry.

We celebrate Advent every year at this time, but each time is a new experience, a new beginning of the church year, a new chance to anticipate grace. What has changed for you since last Advent? What has changed for your family and community? What expectations or hopes do you have for God’s presence with us? What new beginning would be a blessing?

Every Sunday is a celebration of the resurrection, and each time we take part in confession and forgiveness we experience a fresh start. Mark opens with baptism, which is a new beginning for each of us. Remembering our baptism offers us daily assurance of the new things God is always unfolding around us. Today as we worship, we pray for the Holy Spirit to stir up something new in, with, and among us.