

## St. James Episcopal Church \* Morning Prayer

Worship Leader Bruce Louwagie

Processional Hymn 66 Come, "Come thou long expected Jesus"

1 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.

2 Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art:  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.

3 Born thy people to deliver,  
born a child, and yet a king,  
born to reign in us for ever,  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

4 By thine own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit,  
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Opening Acclamation: Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart  
be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer.

Confession Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor BCP 79

**Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen**

Absolution Prayer

BCP 80

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Invitatory and Psalter

BCP 80

Lord, open our lips

**And our mouth shall proclaim your praise. Glory 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**

The Lord is full of compassion and mercy: Come let us adore him.

Jubilate

BCP 82

**Be joyful in the Lord, all you lands; serve the Lord with gladness and come before his presence with a song. Know this: The Lord himself is God; he himself has made us, and we are his; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving' go into his courts with praise; give thanks to him and call upon his Name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting' and his faithfulness endures from age to age.**

**Psalm 25:1-9**

*Ad te, Domine, levavi*

- 1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul;  
my God, I put my trust in you; \*  
**let me not be humiliated,  
nor let my enemies triumph over me.**
- 2 Let none who look to you be put to shame; \*  
**let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.**
- 3 Show me your ways, O LORD, \*  
**and teach me your paths.**
- 4 Lead me in your truth and teach me, \*  
**for you are the God of my salvation;  
in you have I trusted all the day long.**
- 5 Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love, \*  
**for they are from everlasting.**
- 6 Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; \*  
**remember me according to your love  
and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.**
- 7 Gracious and upright is the LORD; \*  
**therefore he teaches sinners in his way.**
- 8 He guides the humble in doing right \*  
**and teaches his way to the lowly.**
- 9 All the paths of the LORD are love and faithfulness \*  
**to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.**

## The Lessons

### First Lesson: Jeremiah 33:14-16

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 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. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

### Second Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

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

## Gradual Hymn: 56 "O Come, O Come Emanuel" V. 1,2,3,8

ADVENT

327

### O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
2 O come, O Root of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's  
3 O come, O Day-spring from on high, and cheer us by your  
4 O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen wide our

Is - ra - el that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,  
draw - ing nigh; dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,  
heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high,

*Refrain*  
un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice!  
and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.  
and close the path to mis - er - y.

Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent., *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicorum*, Köln, 1710;  
St. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.  
Tune: French, 15th cent., alt.; setting: C. Winfred Douglas, 1867–1944

VENI, EMMANUEL  
EM WITH REFRAIN

IM 2142; ME 1173; PW 48; NA 515; AN 1175; LR 1175; 236; 2142

Text and music: public domain

## Third Lesson: Luke 21:25-36

Jesus said, "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

"Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

**The Sermon:** *The Rev. Charles Wynder is the dean of chapel and spiritual life at St. Paul's School in Concord, N.H.*

We are living in a time of significant change. Whether it is the up and down of elections; the energy and tension embedded in politics in the public square, international conflicts and wars, climate change, or shifts in the economy, there is a feeling of uncertainty in the air. The whitewater rapids nature of our common life leaves many scared, questioning, and hopeless. It seems that things are out of control. Or, at least out of *our* control. Perhaps that is the point. We are not in control.

The first Sunday of Advent reminds us that we are not in control. It also provides direction and reassurance amid the chaos and confusion. This first Sunday of the church's calendar year invites us to suspend our linear notions of time. The season of Advent reminds us of *Kairos* time: deep time. A time that requires us to suspend the false control of *Chronos* time. It asks us to move away from dependence on false narratives. We are invited to make meaning of narratives that call on us to wait for God's realm.

The Gospel reinforces all of this when Jesus speaks with an apocalyptic voice. Jesus said, "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken."

It is tempting to try to parse out Jesus' words and make literal connections with our current time. Equally enticing is the desire to use Jesus' words to predict the future. This, however, is beyond the larger point of what God is communicating to us this Advent season. The famous theologian and preacher Frederick Buechner provides a framework for thinking about Luke's words as we start Advent. He writes, "Does he mean there will be real eclipses and strange comets that have never been seen before, maybe a reordering of the constellations themselves to scrawl some fateful starlit message across the night sky? Or is he speaking symbolically of some upheaval not of

the world without but of the world within – an upheaval of the hearts and minds and spirits of the human race?” He continues, “I think we are waiting. That is what is at the heart of it. Even when we don’t know that we are waiting, I think we are waiting. Even when we can’t find words for what we are waiting for, I think we are waiting.”

We are waiting during this season for the birth of baby Jesus. As Christians, we slow down from the busyness of an always-on culture and the distractions of ever-present cell phones to prepare our hearts and minds for Jesus’ birth.

We are waiting for baby Jesus to be born. We are also waiting for the healing of the world. We are waiting for a transformation of the systems and institutions that seemingly have great control over the big picture of our lives. We are waiting for just and civil relationships between people and among communities and nations. We are waiting for a new ethic of love, peace, and justice to envelop us. In the waiting, we are called to prepare ourselves and to be on guard. Our calling in the waiting is to move beyond busyness into preparation of a solidity in our interiority.

Jesus tells us, “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day catch you unexpectedly, like a trap.” It might seem strange to joyfully wait in anticipation of Jesus’ birth against the backdrop of the apocalyptic words in Luke.

Susan Garrett reminds us that the apocalyptic view of events on Earth is often used in scripture to reflect things happening on a higher plane. More is happening than what first meets the eye. We are waiting for the birth of Jesus who is also the one on whom we have been waiting to bring peace and justice on earth. And yet, we cannot take our eyes off the warning of a stirring of chaos and disruption. So, we are invited to stay awake and be ready. Jesus tells us that we are to be on guard, “alert at all times, praying that [we] may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

The tension that comes during this time of waiting can lend itself to confusion. It's in times like this that it helps to look to a prophet. Prophets point beyond "what *is*" and can help us to be ready for "what *is to come*." Prophets trouble the waters of our now and point to what can and ought to be. Our lectionary invites us to grapple with the words of the prophet Jeremiah, who found hope during difficult times with challenges well beyond our own. Angela Bauer-Levesque writes about Jeremiah in *The People's Companion to the Bible*. She observes that the Book of Jeremiah is "located in its initial layer of voices, in the seventh century BCE in the years leading up to the experiences of dislocation and exile in Babylon[. T]he book warns of impending disaster, then tells of the actual war and destruction and of the various ways the people and their leaders responded to the crisis." Furthermore, "Prophet and people search together and separately, to make sense of their experiences of war and violence, chaos and attempts at resistance, defeat and daily life."

This is what Jeremiah is doing in our reading today: "The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 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. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'"

Scholars of the text caution us to refrain from reflexively seeing the New Testament as the fulfillment of the prophetic words of the Hebrew Bible. Rather, we should, as Walter Brueggemann posits, recognize that the "prophetic promises" of Jeremiah "continue to be generative and revelatory" for the "promised newness is always yet again to be discerned and received." We listen to Jeremiah and recognize that we, too, are waiting for a righteous branch of David to spring up. Who is this one that is to come and bring forward justice and righteousness? We wait. We wait with the hopefulness of Jeremiah, "The Lord is our righteousness." In waiting for the righteousness of the Lord to come, we are focused on the Realm of God to spring forth. Walter Wink writes, "The

advent we are waiting for is not an apocalypse, but the beginning of human beings again and again as they recommit themselves to bring the Realm of God here.”

We prayed earlier for God to “give us grace to cast away the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.” On this first Sunday of Advent, let us find the hope of Jeremiah and the continued generativity of the promised newness his words give to us in this time. May we prepare ourselves and stay on guard. As we wait for the birth of baby Jesus, may we understand our anticipation as part of our recommitment to living in the Realm of God that is coming with great glory. Amen.

The Apostles Creed

BCP 96

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He 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 and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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**

Peace of the lord be with you

**Announcements**

Offertory Hymn: WLP 724 “People look East”



1. Peo - ple, look East. The time is near of the crown - ing of the  
 2. Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is plant - ed  
 3. Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be  
 4. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall  
 5. An - gels, an - nounce with shouts of mirth Christ who brings new life to

1. year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble, trim the hearth and set the  
 2. there: give up your strength the seed to nour - ish, that in course the flow'r may  
 3. filled. E - ven the hour when wings are fro - zen God for fledg - ing time has  
 4. brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er, bright as sun and moon to -  
 5. earth. Set ev - ery peak and val - ley hum - ming with the word, the Lord is

1. ta - ble. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the guest is on the way.  
 2. flour - ish. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the rose is on the way.  
 3. cho - sen. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the bird is on the way.  
 4. geth - er. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the star is on the way.  
 5. com - ing. Peo - ple, look East and sing to - day: Love the Lord is on the way.

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*Offi* The Lord be with you.  
*cian*  
*t*

*Peo* And also with you.  
*ple*

*Offi* Let us pray.  
*cian*  
*t*

### The Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

BCP 97

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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, for ever and ever. Amen.**

Suffrage B

BCP98

Save your people, Lord, and bless your inheritance;  
**Govern and uphold them, now and always.**  
Day by day we bless you;  
**We praise your Name for ever.**  
Lord, keep us from all sin today;  
**Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.**  
Lord, show us your love and mercy;  
**For we put our trust in you.**  
In you, Lord, is our hope.  
**And we shall never hope in vain.**

**The Collect of the Day:** Almighty God, give us grace to cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armor of light, now in the time of this mortal life in which your Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

The Prayers of the People, Form *III* 387

Father, we pray for your holy Catholic Church;

***That we all may be one.***

Grant that every member of the Church may truly and humbly serve you;

*That your Name may be glorified by all people.*

We pray for all bishops, priests, and deacons;

*That they may be faithful ministers of your Word and Sacraments.*

We pray for all who govern and hold authority in the nations of the world;

*That there may be justice and peace on the earth.*

Give us grace to do your will in all that we undertake;

*That our works may find favor in your sight.*

Have compassion on those who suffer from any grief or trouble;

*That they may be delivered from their distress.*

Give to the departed eternal rest.

*Let light perpetual shine upon them.*

We praise you for your saints who have entered into joy;

*May we also come to share in your heavenly kingdom.*

Let us pray for our own needs and those of others.

Silence

The General Thanksgiving

101

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for your creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.**

A Prayer of St. Chrysostem

**Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting**

**us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting.**

**Amen**

**Recessional Hymn 616 "Hail to the Lord's Anointed"**

1 Hail to the Lord's Anointed,  
great David's greater Son!  
Hail, in the time appointed,  
his reign on earth begun!  
He comes to break oppression,  
to set the captive free;  
to take away transgression,  
and rule in equity.

2 He comes with succor speedy  
to those who suffer wrong,  
to help the poor and needy,  
and bid the weak be strong;  
to give them songs for sighing,  
their darkness turn to light,  
whose souls, condemned and dying,  
were precious in his sight.

3 He shall come down like showers  
upon the fruitful earth,  
and love, joy, hope, like flowers,  
spring in his path to birth;  
before him on the mountains  
shall peace, the herald, go;  
and righteousness in fountains  
from hill to valley flow.

4 Kings shall bow down before him,  
and gold and incense bring;  
all nations shall adore him,  
his praise all people sing;  
to him shall prayer unceasing  
and daily vows ascend;  
his kingdom still increasing,  
a kingdom without end.

5 O'er every foe victorious,  
he on his throne shall rest;  
from age to age more glorious,  
all blessing and all blest;  
the tide of time shall never  
his covenant remove;  
his Name shall stand for ever,  
his changeless Name of Love.

Go in Peace to love and service the Lord –

**Thanks be to God**