

Today's Theme for Worship: We praise God! He made us members of his family out of his great love. He also moves us to live according to his will.

Hymn 6 Come, O Long Expected Jesus

1 Come, O long-expected Jesus,
Born to set your people free;
From our sins and fears release us
By your death on Calvary.
Israel's Strength and Consolation,
Hope to all the earth impart,
Dear Desire of ev'ry nation,
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

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

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88, alt.

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

C: And also with you.

Confession of Sins

P: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

P: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: Amen.

P: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

♪ Oh Taste And See

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Bless-ed are they who take re-fuge in him.

Your Word, O Lord, is e-ter-nal;
it stands firm in the heav-ens.
Your faith-ful-ness con-tin-ues for-ev-er.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Bless-ed are they who take re-fuge in him.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us Pray.

Almighty God, in mercy you sent your one and only Son to take upon himself our human nature. By his gracious coming deliver us from the corruption of our sin and transform us into the likeness of his glory; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: ♪ Amen.**

First Lesson: Isaiah 45:22-25

God calls the world to seek salvation in him. "Turn to me and be saved."

²⁰Gather! Come! Draw near together,
you survivors from the nations.
They have no knowledge
—those who are lifting up their idols of wood
and praying to a god that cannot save.

²¹Make an announcement and come close.

Let them consult together.
Who made this known ahead of time?
From time past who announced it?
Was it not I, the LORD?

There is no god except me,
a righteous God and Savior.
There is no one except me.

²²Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth,
because I am God,
and there is no other.

²³I have sworn by myself.
From my mouth a righteous word has gone out,
and it will not return unfulfilled.
Indeed, to me every knee will bow,
and every tongue will swear allegiance.

²⁴“Only in the LORD,” they will say of me,
“Only in the LORD is there true righteousness and strength.”
To him they will come and be ashamed—
all those who are angry at him.

²⁵In the LORD, all the descendants of Israel will be justified.
They will be praised by him.

Psalm of the Day – Psalm 111

Refrain

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

Great are the works of the LORD;*
they are pondered by all who delight in them.

Glorious and majestic are his deeds,*
and his righteousness endures forever.

He has caused his wonders to be remembered;*
the LORD is gracious and compassionate.

Refrain

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

The works of his hands are faithful and just;*
all his precepts are trustworthy.

He provided redemption for his people;*
he ordained his covenant forever.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;*
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.

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

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things.

Second Lesson: Colossians 3:12-21

Paul calls us “God’s chosen people,” and urges us to “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

¹²Therefore, as God’s elect, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and forgive each other if anyone has a complaint against anyone else. Forgive, just as Christ forgave you. ¹⁴And, in addition to all these things, put on love, which ties things together in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ control your hearts, to which you were also called, in one body. And be thankful.

¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And everything you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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: Luke 2:25-40

When Joseph and Mary bring the Christchild to the Temple, Simeon praises God for keeping his promise of sending the Savior.

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, waiting for the comfort of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ.

²⁷Moved by the Spirit he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary according to the law, ²⁸Simeon took him into his arms and praised God. He said,

²⁹Lord, you now dismiss your servant in peace, according to your word,

³⁰because my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared before the face of all people,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.

³³Joseph and the child’s mother were amazed at the things that were spoken about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Listen carefully, this child is appointed for the falling and rising of many in Israel and for a sign that is spoken against, ³⁵so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

³⁶Anna, a prophetess, was there. She was a daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old. She had lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷and then she was a widow of eighty-four years. She did not leave the temple complex, since she was worshipping with fasting and prayers night and day. ³⁸Standing nearby at that very hour, she gave thanks to the Lord. She kept speaking about the child to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had accomplished everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town, Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and God's favor was on him. **C: ♪ Praise be to you, O Christ!**

Hymn of the Day: 577 Rise, O Light of Gentile Nations

1 Rise, O Light of Gentile nations, Jesus, bright and Morning Star;
Let your Word, the gladsome tidings, Ring out loudly near and far,
Bringing freedom to the captives, Peace and comfort to the slave,
That the heathen, free from bondage, May proclaim your pow'r to save.

2 Knowing you and your salvation, Grateful love dare never cease
To proclaim your tender mercies, Gracious Lord, your heav'nly peace.
Let us sound the gospel tidings To the earth's remotest bound
That the sinner has been pardoned And forgiveness can be found.

3 May our zeal to help the heathen Be increased from day to day,
As we plead in true compassion And for their conversion pray.
For the many faithful workers, For the gospel they proclaim,
Let us all be cheerful givers To the glory of your name.

4 Savior, shine in all your glory On the nations near and far;
From the highways and the byways Call them forth, O Morning Star.
Guide them whom your grace has chosen Out of Satan's dreadful thrall
To the mansions of your Father-There is room for sinners all.

Text: Herman Fick, 1822-85, abr.; tr. *The Lutheran Hymnal*, St. Louis, 1941, alt.

Sermon

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.

Offering Prayer

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Prayer of the Church

Lord's Prayer

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.

Hymn: 608 I Fall Asleep in Jesus' Wounds

1 I fall asleep in Jesus' wounds;
There pardon for my sin abounds.
Yea, Jesus' blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress.
In these before my God I'll stand
When I shall reach the heav'nly land.

2 In peace and joy I now depart;
God's child I am with all my heart.
I thank you, death, for leading me
To that true life, where I would be.
So cleansed by Christ, I fear not death.
Lord Jesus, strengthen now my faith.

Text: attr. Paul Eber, 1511-69; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-78, alt.

Prayer and Blessing

P: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

or

P: Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: ♪ A-men.

P: 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: ♪ A-men, A-men, A-men

Closing Hymn: 707 Peace Came to Earth

1 Peace came to earth at last that chosen night
When angels clove the sky with song and light
And God embodied love and sheathed his might-
Who could but gasp: Immanuel! Who could but sing: Immanuel!

2 And who could be the same for having held
The infant in their arms and later felt
The wounded hands and side, all doubts dispelled-
Who could but sigh: Immanuel! Who could but shout: Immanuel!

3 You show the Father none has ever seen,
In flesh and blood you bore our griefs and pain,
In bread and wine you visit us again-
Who could but see: Immanuel! Who could but thrill: Immanuel!

4 How else could I have known you, O my God!
How else could I have loved you, O my God!
How else could I embrace you, O my God!
Who could but pray: Immanuel! Who could but praise: Immanuel!

The picturesque language of this Jaroslav Vajda hymn vividly illustrates the weighty significance of God becoming man in Christ.

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