

John prepared the way for the Messiah. From before his birth his mission was established by God. This text speaks of Baptism in reference to John four times. Which makes, "Go, Baptize and Teach" the message that begins and ends the Gospel of Christ. Baptism depends on the person and work of Christ. Preparation for His coming, forgiveness of sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit all center in Christ, His coming, His death, and His Resurrection guarantee forgiveness and life as gifts through the means of Baptism. Baptism is the connection in our preparation for receiving the Messiah.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

© O Lord God, You are the Father of all light and wisdom, there is righteous in all Your ways and truth in all Your judgments. We give thanks to You for Your Word, for the Law which has been written on our hearts, for Your Commandments, for Your sure Word of prophecy, and especially for the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. For this Holy Counsel which You have given to us we praise You. We ask Your blessing on all who preach, teach, read and study Your Word, that all may hear the joyful sound of the Holy Gospel and by hearing may come to the right understanding of Your Word of Love.

Fill us all with joy and peace in believing, that we abound in an expectation of holiness through the power of the Holy Spirit. Help us serve You with clean hands, love You with pure hearts, worship You with a beautiful mouth, obey You with willing minds, trust You with perfect confidence, believe You and none other, and follow You to the ends of the world.

Guard us that the devil, the world and our own sinful flesh may not deceive us or lead us into error, unbelief or sin. Teach us to pray always, that, remaining faithful to the end, we may be found worthy to stand before the Son of Man and obtain the inheritance which He has prepared for all who love and serve Him.

We pray a special blessing on our homes and families, be with us each and everyone. Assist us in our bad times with Your comfort, and help us in our good times to sing Your praise. Rule the hearts of parents and children. Give strength and healing to the sick; give comfort to those who sorrow; give guidance to the perplexed; and lead all of us to look now and always to Jesus.

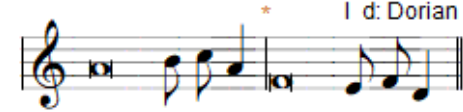
Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (Time of silent prayer.)

For all of these things we pray in the Holy name of Jesus, Who in His Second Advent will come as the Judge of all mankind and receive to Himself all on whom He has bestowed the gift of faith to believe.

© Amen.

ADVENT TWO

Chant Tone



Introit Restore us, — O God;* let Your face shine, that we may be saved! Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock!* You who are enthroned upon the cherubim, — shine forth. You brought a vine out of Egypt;* it took deep root and filled the land.	Restore us, — O God;* let your face shine, that we may be saved! Glory be to the Father and to the Son* and to the Holy — Spirit; as it was in the be — ginning,* is now, and will be forever. — Amen. Restore us, — O God;* let your face shine, that we may be saved! <i>(Antiphon, Psalm 80:3; Psalm 80:1, 8a, 9b, 7)</i>
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Collect of the Day

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your Only-Begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever.

Gradual

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of — Zion!*
Shout aloud, O daughter of Je | rusalem!
Behold, your King is com | ing to you,*
righteous and having salva | tion is He.
Blessèd is He who comes in the name | of the Lord.*
We bless you from the house | of the Lord.

(Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alternative)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: O Lord, our heavenly Father, as Your unworthy servants we come before You. We give You hearty thanks for the comfort we receive from Your Word. We are grateful for Your words of prophecy regarding the advent of Your Son Jesus Christ. For the special messengers announcing His coming, we give You thanks. Help us, O Lord, to heed the cry of Your special messengers Isaiah and John the Baptist. Allow Your Holy Spirit to move us to genuine repentance that we may experience the comfort foretold by Your prophets. Since You are not willing that anyone should perish, bless our world with Your the saving message of Jesus Christ. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THE SEASON OF ADVENT BRINGS WITH IT MANY TRADITIONS AND CELEBRATIONS. It is a special time of preparation, not Christmas or even preChristmas, Advent is a festival all in its own way. When we bring in the tree, and put up the lights, we are preparing for the celebration of the birth of Christ our king. Advent reminds us of a different preparation. It is a time to prepare others, for we know the event of Christ's birth is history, the event of His second coming is why we believe and need to tell others. So, then, tell someone of the reason for this season. Tell someone of the wonder and peace we gained in the birth of Christ, and the wonder and the delight of the anticipation of His second coming. We extend the hand of friendship to all who worship with us today.

THEME OF THE DAY:

The Announcement from John

INTROIT—(Antiphon, Psalm 80:3;) Psalm 80:1, 8a, 9b, 7
Psalm 80 was written to lament the fall of the 10 Northern Tribes. The author cried out because God made a promise to David. There is a firm confidence in this Psalm that a promise from God will always be fulfilled. God fulfilled the promise in the First Advent and Jesus promised to return.

COLLECT

We are well aware that we possess the ability to walk away from the truth of God. We ask therefore, that we be kept pure (in the sight of God) as we count down the days to the Second Coming of Christ.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—Isaiah 40:1-11

Chapter 40 of Isaiah begins the end. In this section, Isaiah presented a message of comfort to the people as they watched everything around them crumble. Chapters 40-66 show God as the only assurance for sinners. So many things in life seem to be a cause for pain, gloom, doubt and uncertainty. But the God of Heaven and Earth, the only true God, does not abandon us. Rather, He carries out His plan of salvation for us, bringing good tidings to us with power and glory and might.

GRADUAL—Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alternative

We expect our king, the Lord, will return. We anticipate His Second Advent. The Old Testament people set their faith in the prophecy of Zechariah, God counted up the time and it was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. We are given that same sort of guarantee, because Christ said He would return. We are able to count the days to His Second Advent.

EPISTLE LESSON—2 Peter 3:8-14

The scoffers point out that not only has the visible return of Christ failed to materialize, but everything continues to go on just as it has since the beginning of creation. They raise the question, "Where is God?" He is not hidden according to Peter, He is simply waiting for the time to be fulfilled again. Jesus came at the right time for our salvation, and now God is counting the days, waiting for the right time to end the world. Much has been made of the words "...a day is like a thousand years and a thousand years are like a day." In context these words are talking about the patience of God toward our salvation. God is willing to wait patiently for us to come to Him in repentance, and to that end He is holding off the end of the world until everyone is born to fulfill the salvation of the elect.

GOSPEL LESSON—Mark 1:1-8

Traditionally the Third Sunday in Advent was John the Baptist's day. In the "B" series we gave him two Sundays. In fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah,