



His Name Shall be Called . . .

Advent Midweek Service 1

2024

St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)

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December 4, 2024

Midweek of Advent 1

The order of worship is based upon Evening Prayer, from Hymnal Supplement 98 (CPH, 1998)

Service of Light

- P The Spirit and the Church cry out:
C **Come Lord Jesus.**
P All those who await His appearance pray:
C **Come Lord Jesus.**
P The whole creation pleads:
C **Come Lord Jesus.**

Hymn of Light 891 O Light Whose Splendor

- P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**
P Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ; may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for You are merciful, and You love Your whole creation and we, Your creatures, glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

Psalm 119:1-8 Aleph

- ¹Blessèd are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD!
²Blessèd are those who keep his testimonies,
who seek him with their whole heart,
³who also do no wrong, but walk in his ways!
⁴**You have commanded your precepts
to be kept diligently.**
⁵Oh that my ways may be steadfast in keeping your statutes!
⁶**Then I shall not be put to shame,
having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.**
⁷I will praise you with an upright heart,
when I learn your just and righteous decrees.
⁸**I will keep your statutes; do not utterly forsake me!**

**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.**

Readings

Old Testament: Isaiah 9:1–2, 6–7

¹But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time He brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time He has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,
on them has light shined.

⁶**For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon His shoulder,
and His name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.**

⁷Of the increase of His government and of peace
there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over His kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and forevermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

P This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Epistle: Romans 11:32–36

³²For God has consigned all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all.

³³Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!

³⁴“For who has known the mind of the Lord,
or who has been His counselor?”

³⁵“Or who has given a gift to Him
that he might be repaid?”

³⁶For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.
To Him be glory forever. Amen.

P This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel: Matthew 7:24–29

²⁴“Everyone then who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
²⁵And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.
²⁶And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.
²⁷And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

²⁸And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at His teaching,
²⁹for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

P This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

P In many and various ways God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.
C **But now in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son.**

Magnificat 933 My Soul Rejoices

Litany

P In peace let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy.**
P For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy.**
P 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.
C **Lord, have mercy.**
P For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy.**
P For all pastors in Christ, for all servants of the Church, and for all the people, let us pray to the Lord.
C **Lord, have mercy.**
P For our public servants, for the government and those who protect us, that they may be upheld and strengthened in every

good deed, let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For those who bring offerings, those who do good works in this congregation, those who toil, those who sing, and all the people here present who await from the Lord great and abundant mercy let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ let us give thanks to the Lord.

C **Alleluia.**

P Help, save, comfort, and defend us gracious Lord.

Silence for meditation.

P Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ, our Lord.

C **To You, O Lord.**

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments; and also that we, being defended from our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through the merits of Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, God forever.

C **Amen.**

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.**

P Let us bless the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Presentation of the Offering

Office Hymn 349 Hark the Glad Sound

Sermon

Prayer

P Heavenly Father, we thank You for You Son Jesus Christ, whom You so graciously sent to earth as the Lamb of sacrifice for our sins. Holy Jesus, true Son of God, we thank You for demonstrating the depth of God for us by coming here as our Brother to die for our sins on the cross. As we return in spirit to Bethlehem's stable where You first appeared in human flesh to be our Savior, lend us Your grace to rededicate ourselves in thoughts, words, and deeds to You. Holy Spirit, we thank You for giving us the faith of John the Baptist, which believes and confesses that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Fill us with true joy and peace in believing that glorious truth.

O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in this season we are reminded so much of the precious gift of salvation which Your divine love has given us. Therefore, stir up in our hearts a deep sense of brotherly love that we would be rightly concerned about the welfare of others. Give each of us a spirit of generosity, especially to those in need.

Holy Trinity, bless us—the lambs and sheep under Your care—with everything needful. According to Your gracious will grant us good health this winter season, and keep every kind of disease and illness from us. Watch over our children and grandchildren, and protect them from all harm and danger. Keep under Your mercy and special care the aged and those who are feeble.

Our God, forgive our many sins, for it was because of them that Christ had to come down among us and die. Have Your Word dwell in us richly in all wisdom, and grant us continual growth in grace, holiness, and the knowledge of our Savior Jesus Christ. We ask all these things in His name.

C **Amen.**

P Almighty God, grant to Your Church Your Holy Spirit and the wisdom which comes down from heaven that Your Word may not be bound but have free course and be preached to the joy and edifying of Christ's holy people, that in steadfast faith we

may serve You and in the confession of Your name may
abide to the end; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

Blessing

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and
the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

C **Amen.**

Closing Hymn 351 Creator of the Stars of Night

Silent Prayer

Midweek of Advent 1

December 4, 2024

Text: Isaiah 9:1–2, 6–7

Other Texts: Romans 11:32–36 (Epistle); Matthew 7:24-29 (Gospel Reading)

“His Name Shall Be Called: Wonderful Counselor”

Grace, mercy and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, He who truly is the Wonderful Counselor.

There are some who are known by various names or titles. Many artists use a name that is different from their given one, or are just commonly known by something else, such as Elvis Presley being “the King.” The English monarch includes the titles “Head of the Commonwealth” and “Defender of the Faith.” And some sports have identified specific players as their G.O.A.T., the *Greatest of All Time*. Of course, they don’t actually call the person “Goat,” but it accurately describes their game performance. So it is that additional names and titles are given to individuals beyond their actual names since they say something about the person or their work.

So now let’s consider Jesus. When Joseph was about to quietly divorce Mary because she was pregnant and he most certainly was not the father, God intervened. He sent an angel, which means *messenger*, with a critical message, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” Certainly this was a critical for Joseph personally as it assured him that Mary had not cheated, but had remained faithful to him. But even more critical, for Joseph, Mary, and truly *all* people, is that this Child, conceived by the Holy Spirit in Mary, is the promised Messiah who would save His people.

The child is named Jesus, which means “Yahweh saves.” But why, how, could He be given such a name? St. Matthew tells us. For right after he recorded those words of the angel, he continues: “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name “Immanuel” (which means, God with us).’”

Isaiah lived over 700 years before Jesus was born, but by the same Holy Spirit who conceived Jesus in Mary’s womb, he prophesied that one day a virgin would give birth to a son who would be called “Immanuel”—a Hebrew word that means “God with us.” Even though this child’s actual, given name would be “Jesus,” people would also call Him Immanuel, *as we do today*. For that name describes His person, who He actually is, God in human flesh and blood. And it describes how He can be our Savior from our sins and their rightful condemnation: He, being God with us by taking on our human nature, could and did redeem humanity and save us by dying on the cross as our substitute under God’s Law and wrath.

However, in addition to Immanuel, Jesus has been given other names and titles as well. So this Advent season we will consider our Old Testament Reading from Isaiah chapter 9. Here, a little after giving the “Immanuel” prophecy, Isaiah is inspired to give us more details about this special Child who would be born of the virgin. More information about Him that is given, yes, by giving more titles. Tonight, we shall consider the first title in Isaiah’s prophecy by which He shall called, “Wonderful Counselor.”

It is interesting that before people understood that Jesus was God’s Son, Immanuel, He was already amazing them with His wonderful counsel. For example, St. Luke records that when Jesus was just twelve-years-old in the Jerusalem Temple, sitting with the teachers, everyone who heard Him was amazed at His understanding and His answers. Then years later, when Jesus began His public ministry, people were even more amazed at His counsel. For after Jesus spoke His famous Sermon on the Mount, Matthew records, “The crowds were astonished at His teaching, for He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.” Make no mistake, only Jesus could say without lying what we heard in tonight’s Gospel:

“Everyone then who hears these words of Mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.”

This is because Jesus is the *Wonderful Counselor*. He is “wonderful” in His nature as the God-Man. He is wonderful in his teaching, which “astonished” those who heard it, even silencing His highly educated foes. He is wonderful in His doings, the many miracles which He performed. He is wonderful in His sinless life and innocent suffering and death under the Law in our place, and in His resurrection and ascension which declared His triumph over sin, death, the devil, and hell itself and the inauguration of His cosmic rule over all things.

Jesus is the *Wonderful Counselor*. He does not merely give good advice. He is the Word made flesh. He is divine Wisdom itself who says, “I have counsel and sound wisdom; I have insight; I have strength.” He is the truth, so His counsel, His teaching, His Word, is pure, divine truth. The *Wonderful Counselor* speaks the truth and thereby shows us what is falsehood, deceptions, and lies. The *Wonderful Counselor* speaks words that are spirit and life, thereby enlightening us to know right from wrong, good from evil and, more, empowering us *to choose* what is right and good and *to live* in accord with it.

We need Jesus’ wonderful counsel. We need it especially because, as those conceived in the corruption of sin, we are naturally blind to what is truly wise and good. We are easily misled by the cunning counsel of the evil one who works through unbelievers who despise the counsel of God and so lead us to despise it as well. We are tempted to listen to the wisdom of the world, which is total foolishness in spiritual matters and often in worldly matters as well, and by such we ignore the wonderful counsel of Jesus.

That happened in the days of Isaiah. God's own people were listening to the counsel of unbelievers of whom God says, "The princes of Zoan are utterly foolish; the wisest counselors of Pharaoh give stupid counsel." Worse still, even many of the teachers of Israel were twisting God's Word and thereby giving evil counsel. Of them God says, "Those who guide this people have been leading them astray, and those who are guided by them are swallowed up." While God preserved a few faithful men, such as Isaiah, who preached and taught God's Word in its truth and purity, tragically many people in Isaiah's day despised God's wonderful counsel.

And so it is today. For what was true of people then remains true now, "The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned." Surely the world has gotten no wiser but, if anything, darker. For even as the Wonderful Counselor has come into the world, His light shining, yet for many this has made the deeper darkness all the more desirable in order to justify their sinful thoughts and ways.

Sadly, we are all guilty of turning away from God's wonderful counsel. We do this when we fail to hear His counsel spoken in His Word, remaining in self-imposed ignorance, which we often call "knowing everything we need." We fail to heed His counsel when refuse to hear it in faith by believing and then living what we believe, instead defying His counsel. Yes, too easily we despise the counsel of our Wonderful Counselor because we do not heed the wisdom of the Word, but instead the foolish counsel of this sin-darkened world.

But our Wonderful Counselor has some good news for all who recognize their sinful heeding of the world's foolishness and their ignorance and despising of His counsel. "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone."

God comes to us and speaks to us His wonderful counsel by which the Holy Spirit turns us away from the lies of the devil and the folly of the world, giving us faith in the Gospel of Jesus. The Gospel which is foolishness to those who are perishing, but is the power and wisdom of God for those who are being saved!

My friends, it is so important for us to hear, read, and study God's Word. The Spirit uses the Word to convict us of sin so that we might repent and put our faith in Jesus, who was born to save us from our sins. The Spirit uses God's Word to cleanse our minds from the foolish counsel of this world and replace it with the wonderful counsel of the Lord Jesus. He gives us new hearts of faith that rejoice in God's Word, the forgiveness of sins and the salvation that is ours in Jesus as well as the new life as His people that is ours as well.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, we call Jesus our "Wonderful Counselor" because His Words are the rock and solid foundation of our lives—now and for eternity. His wonderful counsel says that He loved you enough to be conceived in the womb of the virgin where His little hands and feet developed and grew so they could one day be nailed to the cross where He paid for your sins. His wonderful counsel says that He

conquered death for you by His resurrection so that you can face all trials, suffering, even death for you have the hope of the resurrection of the body and eternal life in heaven basking in God's love. His wonderful counsel warns you to not despise His counsel, to not turn back to the foolishness of sin, lest you lose faith and salvation, even as He promises to provide all you need to remain faithful unto death. His wonderful counsel assures you that though His ways are seldom our ways, He is working all things for your good.

Jesus is our "Wonderful Counselor." And we will certainly continue to be blessed by His wonderful counsel as we hear, read, study, and believe His Word, and in faith live according to its divine, holy wisdom. Amen!