

## Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 64:1–9

- <sup>1</sup> Oh that you would rend the heavens  
and come down,  
that the mountains might quake at  
your presence—  
<sup>2</sup> as when fire kindles brushwood  
and the fire causes water to boil—  
to make your name known to your  
adversaries,  
and that the nations might tremble  
at your presence!  
<sup>3</sup> When you did awesome things that we  
did not look for,  
you came down, the mountains  
quaked at your presence.  
<sup>4</sup> From of old no one has heard  
or perceived by the ear,  
no eye has seen a God besides you,  
who acts for those who wait for him.  
<sup>5</sup> You meet him who joyfully works right-  
eousness,  
those who remember you in your  
ways.  
Behold, you were angry, and we sinned;  
in our sins we have been a long time,  
and shall we be saved?  
<sup>6</sup> We have all become like one who is  
unclean,  
and all our righteous deeds are like a  
polluted garment.  
We all fade like a leaf,  
and our iniquities, like the wind,  
take us away.  
<sup>7</sup> There is no one who calls upon your  
name,  
who rouses himself to take hold of  
you;  
for you have hidden your face from us,  
and have made us melt in the hand  
of our iniquities.  
<sup>8</sup> But now, O LORD, you are our Father;  
we are the clay, and you are our  
potter;  
we are all the work of your hand.  
<sup>9</sup> Be not so terribly angry, O LORD,  
and remember not iniquity forever.  
Behold, please look, we are all your  
people.

## Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:3–9

<sup>3</sup>Grace to you and peace from God our  
Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup>I give thanks to my God always for you  
because of the grace of God that was given  
you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup>that in every way you  
were enriched in him in all speech and all  
knowledge—<sup>6</sup>even as the testimony about  
Christ was confirmed among you—<sup>7</sup>so that  
you are not lacking in any spiritual gift,  
as you wait for the revealing of our Lord  
Jesus Christ, <sup>8</sup>who will sustain you to the  
end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus  
Christ. <sup>9</sup>God is faithful, by whom you were  
called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus  
Christ our Lord.

## Holy Gospel: Mark 11:1–10

<sup>1</sup>When they drew near to Jerusalem, to  
Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of  
Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples <sup>2</sup>and  
said to them, “Go into the village in front  
of you, and immediately as you enter it  
you will find a colt tied, on which no one  
has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. <sup>3</sup>If any-  
one says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’  
say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send  
it back here immediately.’” <sup>4</sup>And they went  
away and found a colt tied at a door out-  
side in the street, and they untied it. <sup>5</sup>And  
some of those standing there said to them,  
“What are you doing, untying the colt?”  
<sup>6</sup>And they told them what Jesus had said,  
and they let them go. <sup>7</sup>And they brought  
the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on  
it, and he sat on it. <sup>8</sup>And many spread their  
cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy  
branches that they had cut from the fields.  
<sup>9</sup>And those who went before and those  
who followed were shouting, “Hosanna!  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the  
Lord! <sup>10</sup>Blessed is the coming kingdom of  
our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

*Rend the heavens and come down*

Isaiah 64:1



**About the Cover:** Isaiah saw the dark clouds of judgment rolling in to hang over Judah in exile. But he also saw the promises of the Lord's coming mercy and victory. Indeed, the Lord has come. Though His first coming was humble, by faith we see that heaven has been opened to all who trust in the crucified and risen Lord. He continues to come by Word and Sacrament. He will come again at the glorious completion of the Lord's plan for the world on the Last Day.



**St. John's Lutheran Church (LCMS)**

**8948 N 1900 Ave Geneseo, IL 61254**

**309-949-2516**

**December 3, 2023**

**First Sunday in Advent**

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*Divine Service Three (Lutheran Service Book, p. 184)*

**Hymn of Invocation 350 Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come**

**Invocation and Versicles (p. 184)**

**Introit**

*Psalm 25:1–3; antiphon: Zechariah 9:9b, alt.*

Behold, your king is coming to you;  
righteous and having salvation.

**To you, O Lord,  
I lift up my soul.**

O my God, in you I trust; let me not be put to shame;  
let not my enemies exult over me.

**Indeed, none who wait for you shall be put to shame;  
they shall be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.**

Behold, your king is coming to you;  
righteous and having salvation.

**Gloria Patri and Kyrie (p. 186)**

*The Gloria in Excelsis is omitted during Advent*

**Collect of the Day**

**P** Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C Amen. (sung)**

**Readings (on back of bulletin)**

**Gradual**

*Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26, alt.*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.  
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem.

**Behold, your king is coming to you;  
righteous and having salvation.**

**Blessèd is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
From the house of the Lord we bless you.**

**The Nicene Creed (p. 191)**

**Hymn of the Day 355 O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide**

**Sermon**

**Offertory (p. 192)**

**Presentation of the Offering**

**Prayer of the Church**

*After each petition:*

**P** Lord, in Your mercy,

**C** hear our prayer.

*The prayer concludes:*

**P** ...one God, now and forever.

**C Amen.**

**Service of the Sacrament (p. 194)**

*(Please see the Communion statement in the pew pads for receiving the Sacrament at St. John's.)*

**Distribution Hymns:**

**334 O Lord, How Shall I Meet You**

**353 Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring**

**335 O Bride of Christ, Rejoice**

**Nunc Dimittis (p. 199)**

**Hymn to Depart 332 Savior of the Nations, Come**

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## ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH-LCMS

churchoffice@stjohnsgeneseo.org  
Website: www.stjohnsgeneseo.org  
<https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo>

### **HEARING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBLE**

**Rev. Timothy Nerud** **Pastor**  
309-949-2516 (Office), 612-940-8138 (Cell), 309-949-2517 (Home)

Elder: Carl Freeman

Greeter: Janet Bertsos

Videographers: Joel Werling, Nicole Nerud, or Heidi Nerud

**WE PRAY:** Son of Man, before whom all people of all the nations will stand at the Judgment, increase our love for You that our love for all humanity may be deepened and our ministry to every person be accomplished, and grant that we be counted with the faithful when You come to judge the world; who with the Father and the Holy Spirit are one God with dominion over us forever. Amen

### **WELCOME TO ALL!**

We are anxious to share with you the Christ-centered ministry at St. John's. Our Liturgy follows closely the pattern of Word and Lord's Supper handed down from the ancient Church. It is our hope that you will make the Church's life of prayer your own. If you have difficulty following our order of service, please ask someone sitting near you for assistance. We pray that you will receive rich spiritual blessings from your presence here. May the peace and power of our risen Christ be yours always.

**IF YOU DESIRE**, a visit or call from Pastor Nerud, please contact the church office (309-949-2516).

### **OFFICE HOURS**

Terri's hours (Monday—Friday) 8 am—12 pm  
Pastor's hours (Monday, Pastor's day off)  
(Tuesday— Friday) please call ahead

**STREAM SERVICES** <https://www.facebook.com/St.Johns.Geneseo/> and on the website: [www.stjohnsgeneseo.org](http://www.stjohnsgeneseo.org).

**DAILY DEVOTIONS FROM LUTHERAN HOUR MINISTRIES** - use this website ([www.lhm.org](http://www.lhm.org)) to have daily devotions sent to your email or phone. You never have to be without God's word.

*All bulletin announcements need to be in the Office by Wednesday mornings.*

## ATTENDANCE LAST SUNDAY

Sunday school—2 Adult Bible Class—10 Worship—33

### **OFFERING**

Offering last Sunday	\$1,600.00
Weekly income needed per 2023 Budget	\$4,212.60
Dollar for Missions for November	\$ 60.00

### **WEEKLY ACTIVITIES AT ST JOHN'S**

Today	8:30 am	SS Christmas Program Practice
	8:45 am	SS, Adult/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship/Holy Communion
	11:30 am	Elders' meeting
Monday	10:30 am	Funeral of Wanda Rahn
Wednesday	5:00 pm	Confirmation class
	7:00 pm	Advent 1 worship
Thursday	6:30 pm	Men's Bible Study
Next Sunday	8:30 am	SS Christmas Program Practice
	8:45 am	SS, Adult/Youth Bible Study
	10:00 am	Divine Worship

*I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."  
Psalms 122:1*

**1 CORINTHIANS 1:9** – "God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord." The faithfulness of God is our great comfort. He has made promises to us, and He will keep them. He is kind and loving toward us and will not break faith with us. This gives us the confidence to step out in faith, to leave fear behind. So, when it comes to following the Lord's commandments for our daily lives, we know His will is best for us because He is faithful.

**ATTENDANCE BOOK**—We ask everyone attending this morning to sign the red attendance book found at the end of each pew, then pass it back.

**THANK YOU** to all who came yesterday and helped decorate the church for the Christmas season. We truly appreciate your willing and faithful service.

**CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS** will adorn our Altar during the Christmas season. Cost is \$10 if you would like to donate one. Please sign the sheet on the table next to the coat room and pay Terri Hock. We only have several weeks to get our order in (Dec. 1).

**THE GIVING TREE**—Take an ornament (or several) and follow the directions on the back of the ornament which gives you directions for giving to that particular organization.

**CHRISTIAN LIVING**—Mark 13:24-37: Watch! Wait! Pray! These are all

wonderful words of Advent. The watchman's prayer is also the call to witness to stand faithfully and fervently, watching and waiting for the hands of God the Potter to work at the clay of His people. Isaiah understood the simple truth that in the hands of the Potter, nothing is impossible for the clay. Boldly share the watchman's prayer: Potter God, mold me and shape me according to Your will, for in You there is life and purpose and a future for eternity.

**2024 Wall Calendars**—Hillcrest Home would be very happy to receive your extra 2024 wall calendars to hang in their patients' rooms. Please place them in the tray on the table by the coat room. Thank you!

**DOLLAR FOR MISSIONS:** A Dollar for Missions gathers many small gifts – one dollar at a time! – to add up to a big impact for the spread of the saving Gospel of Christ. The current Dollars for Missions Project is to raise \$20k for stipends to pastors to begin visiting four new prisons or jails in 2024.

**ALTAR FLOWERS**—The **2023 Flower Chart is now on the bulletin board next to the restrooms.** Cost for weekly flowers are \$30 for two arrangements. We greatly appreciate those who help with providing flowers for Sunday worship services. **Please sign up for a Sunday.**

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED**—Looking for a way to serve your neighbor? Camp CILCA is holding a ***Joyful Hearts Retreat*** (one day retreat for adults with disabilities) on December 8-9. Volunteers are needed to help campers participate in activities, get ready for bed, eat meals, and learn about the birth of our Savior. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Lauren at [program@cilca.org](mailto:program@cilca.org) or call 217-487-7497.

#### **PRAYER MINISTRY**

***The Church waits for the Second Coming in repentance, hope and faith. For the following, we pray “Lord, have mercy.”:***

**MISSION**—*Pray that the people of God would be faithful in their attendance of the Divine Service, where God strengthens our faith toward Him and our steadfast love for one another.*

**ST JOHN'S—Mr. & Mrs. Lucas Thompson**—We offer before You our common request for the well-being of Your church throughout the world that it may be so guided and governed by Your good Spirit that all who profess themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth and hold the faith in unity of spirit in the bond of peace, and the righteousness of life. Specifically, we pray for Lucas, Nicole, Aaron, Adam, and Andrew asking Your blessings upon them.

**ST. JOHN'S FAMILY**—O Lord, You are the great Physician of soul and body. We pray that You would show mercy to Your servants:

Elizabeth Bjork	Arlyn Helke	Drew Schillinger
Paula Chapa	Lynne Johnson	Marilyn Woods
Jim Dahl	Jessica Johnson	Carolyn Werner
Betty Firch	Aaron Raschke	

**Anthony/Sami Sedotto** (2022/2023 Adopted seminary student)  
**Don Eggers** (son of friend of Marilyn Woods)  
**Jodi Martins** (daughter of Gary & Darla Johns)  
**Jon/Anita Clausing** (missionaries in Kenya)  
**Marilyn Potts** (wife of Cal Potts, former St. John Laborer for Christ)  
**Bruce & Debbie Bley** (sister & brother-in-law of Cathy Schillinger)  
**Laurie Sanford** (sister of Jan Dahl)  
**Mike Erdman** (nephew of Bob Erdman)  
**Shandel Loenser** (wife of Gabe Loenser)  
**Paul Werner** (brother of Dan Werner)  
**Jim DeFauw** (son of Joyce DeFauw)  
**Scott Wilson** (Great nephew of Darla Johns)  
**Family of Wanda Rahn**

**MILITARY**—We pray for those serving in our military and their families:

**Mandy/Richard Davila** (daughter/son-in-law of Linda Aper)  
**Luke/Nicole Thompson** (son/daughter-in-law of John/Kindra Thompson)  
**Karl Flynn** (son of Mr/Mrs Paul Flynn)  
**Casey Powers Jr.** (step son of Lisa Powers)  
**Brittany Loenser** (daughter of Gabe Loenser)  
**Rylie Hallendorff** (grand-daughter of Carolyn & Dan Werner)

#### **LUTHERANS FOR LIFE**

“In view of God's display of love in Advent and Christmas, we gladly unite to praise Him. Christmas brings out that unity as we join with Mary and Joseph and shepherds and angels to glorify our Savior as one united family. For this reason, we pray as Paul did, ‘May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him.’” *Rev. Peter Sulzle, St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Redwood Falls, Minnesota – A Life Quote from Lutherans For Life • [lutheransforlife.org](http://lutheransforlife.org)*

**JOY TO THE WORLD NATIVITY DISPLAY**—St. Malachy invites the community to this event December 26—January 1 from 2-8pm in the Parish Hall. This event is Handicap accessible. Free will donations will be accepted.

First Sunday in Advent

December 3, 2023

Text: Isaiah 64:1-9 (Old Testament Reading)

Other Texts: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9 (Epistle); Mark 11:1-10 (Gospel Reading)

### **“O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide”**

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen!

Just before our Old Testament Reading, Isaiah asked God to look down from heaven and see the suffering of His people.<sup>i</sup> He calls God, *Father*, one of the few times that name is used for God in the Old Testament, asking their Father in heaven to no longer withhold His compassion from them.<sup>ii</sup> Then, building upon that, Isaiah’s prayer becomes even stronger, pleading with God that His compassion over what He sees would then *move Him to action*. So he cries out,

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence—as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence! When you did awesome things that we did not look for, you came down, the mountains quaked at your presence. From of old no one has heard or perceived by the ear, no eye has seen a God besides you, who acts for those who wait for him.<sup>iii</sup>

Isaiah’s language is that of theophany, of God *visibly manifesting Himself* for the very reason of rescuing His people from their enemies. God’s coming down at Mount Sinai is certainly in view here as it greatly trembled when He descended upon it in thunder, smoke, and fire.<sup>iv</sup> And how God’s name, Yahweh, *did become known to His adversaries*, causing nations to tremble when He did awesome things that no one looked for. For who would have expected the ten plagues which brought mighty Egypt to its knees, allowing God’s people, who were slaves, to leave the land of oppression and, more, to actually plunder them by simply asking for silver and gold which they quickly handed over in terror of Yahweh’s wrath.<sup>v</sup>

And who would have expected that, when Pharaoh changed his mind once again and sent his mighty chariot force in pursuit, that the angel of God in the cloud pillar would come between them and the Israelites, keeping them apart until God’s people crossed the Red Sea, only to then drown Pharaoh’s army as God pushed the waters back together over them. Who would have expected God to part the Jordan River allowing Joshua and the Israelites to easily cross over into the Promised Land, or for Him to bring Jericho’s mighty walls down without human effort so that His people easily defeated their enemies? Isaiah knows these and many other acts of the Lord for His people and he knows that no one has heard or seen any “god” except Yahweh who acts for those who wait for Him for there are *no* other gods but Yahweh.<sup>vi</sup>

“Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down.” And the Lord did. And once again He did so in an unexpected way. For the heavens were rent by the appearance of an army of angels, already unexpected, but who came not for war, but to praise God for the *Peace of Peace who was*

*just born of the Virgin Mary.* Yes, heaven was truly rent as the ultimate theophany occurred as the eternal Son of God stepped forth. But who would have expected Him to conceal His glory under human flesh and blood, especially that of a newborn infant.

But even more unforeseen, who would have looked for this Child, after growing into a man, after preaching the Gospel of God's grace and the forgiveness of sins, after working miracles to help people in body and soul, after being quite rightly hailed by the crowds as the Coming One, the Messiah King with, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!"<sup>vii</sup> *who would have expected that five days later He would be betrayed unto terrible suffering and crucifixion?* Yet, most unforeseen of all, the most unexpected, was His rising from the dead three days later, making His horrific bloody death the very action of God that delivered His people from their enemies. For even as Isaiah called for God to rend the heavens, he recognized a terrible reality.

In our sins we have been a long time, and shall we be saved? We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. There is no one who calls upon your name, who rouses himself to take hold of you.<sup>viii</sup>

Could God really save those who are in their sins, who are unclean due to their iniquities? If nothing more was done, then the answer must be "No." For death is sin's due wage as the soul that sins shall die.<sup>ix</sup> So sin is revealed to be mankind's greatest enemy. For *sin* makes us slaves to the devil; *sin* puts us in fear of death now and forever. This is because *sin* makes *God* our enemy! As no one can deliver us from God, there can be no hope at all. That is, *unless God acts*, taking our place under the Law by living the sinless life that we do not, and bearing our sins, enduring in Himself His own full holy wrath upon them, upon us, treating His sinless Son as the enemy that we might be delivered and saved as His people. Thus Jesus proves His name true, for it means "The Lord saves." And as the angel told Joseph, Jesus, the incarnate Lord, would save His people from their sins.<sup>x</sup> And He did so when He suffered and died on the cross as our substitute.

"Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down." We live in a strange time. Our redemption has been won by the cross and empty tomb. We have been baptized into Jesus' death and resurrection, receiving the blessed fruit of His saving work by faith. So our sins are forgiven, meaning God is not our enemy, but our friend, yes, our true heavenly Father. We have received the Holy Spirit as pledge, a down payment of the fullness of our salvation yet to come. Yet, until then, we wait for the consummation of the age to enter that fullness. We wait for the Last Day.

On that Day the Lord Jesus will rend the heavens one final time in a way that no one expects, surely not unbelievers, but even Christians as we know only so much. He will come down in His full heavenly glory and then mountains will quake. He will make His name known to His adversaries and the nations will tremble at His presence when every knee in heaven, on earth, and under the earth will bow to Him in either worship or dread.<sup>xi</sup> Then the arrogance of unbelievers and sinners will change to terror as they call "to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who is seated on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?'"<sup>xii</sup> But their cry will be futile, for

no mountains to hide them will be found anymore as even the oceans boil away to nothingness as the very elements of this heaven and earth dissolve in the fiery destruction of God's wrath.<sup>xiii</sup>

On that Day the Lord Jesus will fully deliver His people from all their enemies. The devil, the demons, the Beast, the Antichrist, and all unbelievers will be put in the fiery prison; their eternal separation from the saints being both God's vindication of His people and a part of their salvation since the removal of all evil is a great and necessary part of eternal blessedness. And then, as God opens the treasure stores of glory for us, even more great acts will come that we did not look for. Truly, we *cannot* look for them yet for "It is written, 'What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him'"<sup>xiv</sup>

Like Isaiah, we know God's actions in the past, His many acts of judgment and salvation in history, especially the greatest act of salvation, the death and resurrection of His Son to redeem us from sin, death, the devil, and hell itself. Yet Isaiah reminds us, that God "acts for those who wait for him."<sup>xv</sup> But waiting means waiting *in faith*. And waiting in faith means persistently crying out to God in prayer for help for our body and soul every day, but chiefly for His second coming. Waiting in faith means that, as we cry out for His help, we endure affliction, trial, suffering, and bearing the cross *with patience*, trusting in both His help and His timing.

Waiting in faith also means heeding a powerful warning which Isaiah records, "Behold, you were angry, and we sinned."<sup>xvi</sup> This sounds backwards at first since we think it should say, "We sinned and so You were angry?" Of course that is true, but Isaiah here warns of a terrible result of God's anger against sin. That those who harden their hearts, refusing to repent, but instead persist in their sins, God will seal them in their hardness, punishing sin with sin as He lets it rule over them unto damnation. It is as if He says, "If that is really what you want, then I'll help you on the way." God's grace is indeed great, but there is a limit; He will not be mocked.<sup>xvii</sup>

After Pharaoh hardened his heart time and time again, God finally hardened Pharaoh's heart and confirmed him in his sin, sealing the fate *that Pharaoh had chosen* by his refusal to repent and obey the Lord's Word. So Isaiah writes, "We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away."<sup>xviii</sup> We are leaves readily driven by the wind of temptation, easily lifted up by the gusts of our wicked and selfish desires, our sins quickly taking us away from God's mercy. For continuing in sin dullens us, reducing our ability to respond to God's Word. And at last God decides that we have had enough chances and He's had enough of our refusals. So let us not reject this warning as "unloving legalism," for that too hardens our hearts. Let us hear it as God's truth revealed in both Testaments, as His loving warning to us, and so heed it by stopping sins against our conscience, whether open breaking of a commandment or a stony heart that refuses to forgive by holding a grudge. And let us warn others before it is too late for them.

Thanks be to God that He continues to rend the heavens even now. For Christ Jesus, risen, ascended and seated at the right hand of the Father, continues to come down to us. Though perceived only by faith, it is this ongoing coming to us through His Spirit in the Word and Sacraments by which He keeps our faith alive, patiently waiting in repentance, in love, and in hope for His Second Coming, when we shall see and fully enjoy the salvation He has won for us.

Until then, let us, in faith, continue to sing and pray, *O Savior, Rend the Heavens Wide*.<sup>xix</sup> Amen!

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- <sup>i</sup> Isaiah 63:15.  
<sup>ii</sup> Isaiah 63:15-16. .  
<sup>iii</sup> Isaiah 64:1-4. All quotes are from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV) unless otherwise noted.  
<sup>iv</sup> Exodus 19:16-20.  
<sup>v</sup> Exodus 11:2; 12:35-36.  
<sup>vi</sup> Isaiah 64:4.  
<sup>vii</sup> Mark 11:9-10.  
<sup>viii</sup> Isaiah 64:5b-7a.  
<sup>ix</sup> Romans 6:23; Ezekiel 18:20.  
<sup>x</sup> Matthew 1:21.  
<sup>xi</sup> Philippians 2:10.  
<sup>xii</sup> Revelation 6:16-17.  
<sup>xiii</sup> Revelation 16:20; 2 Peter 3:7, 10, 12.  
<sup>xiv</sup> 1 Corinthians 2:9.  
<sup>xv</sup> Isaiah 64:4.  
<sup>xvi</sup> Isaiah 64:5.  
<sup>xvii</sup> Exodus 34:6-7; Galatians 6:7.  
<sup>xviii</sup> Isaiah 64:6.  
<sup>xix</sup> *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB) 355.



**First Sunday in Advent (B)**  
**3 December 2023**

**Collect of the Day**

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Presentation of the Offering**

O Jesus, Savior of priceless worth, Hear the prayer our faith sends forth. With love that for us gave Your life To save us from eternal strife, Make us on fire to love You more: With heart and soul, and treasure store. Amen.

**Prayer of the Church—Responsive Form**

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Gracious Lord, sustain Your saints to the end as we enter another Church Year. Encourage the preachers of Your Word and all who hear, that the testimony about Christ may be confirmed among us as we wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give boldness and faithfulness to Matthew, our Synod president; Michael, our district president; Timothy, our circuit visitor; and all pastors in Christ. Through the Word they preach and teach renew the faith, quicken the love, and kindle the hope of all Christians, that we may be enriched in all speech and knowledge. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly Father, grant Your blessing to all marriages and keep all husbands and wives faithful to each other and fill them with repentance and forgiveness. Guide them as they care for the children entrusted to them. Bestow Your loving care upon all children who have suffered abuse or neglect, as well as upon all who open their homes to children in foster care. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, behold our nation and its leaders and protect our armed forces, taking them under Your care and blessing. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Visit us in Your compassion, O Lord. We thank You for the healing You bring in this life, especially to Steve, and we ask that You continue to restore him to full health. Deliver the sick from their infirmity, the troubled from their afflictions, the grieving from their sorrow and the dying from their fear especially Elizabeth, Bruce, Debbie, Paula, Jim, Jim, Don, Michael, Betty, Arlyn, Jessica, Lynne, Shandel, Jodi, Marilyn, Aaron, Laurie, Drew, Carolyn, Paul, Carolyn, Scott, and Marilyn. May all who cry to You receive grace according to Your will. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Heavenly King, remember Lucas, Nicole, Aaron, Adam, and Andrew Thompson. Bless them in body and soul with all things needful for this life and eternity. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, be with those who mourn the death of loved ones, especially the family and friends of Wanda Rahn. Assure them that their loved ones who have died in the faith are safely in the risen Christ's nearer presence and that their separation, while painful, is only temporary, for their loved ones will rise again when Christ returns in glory. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Lord, Your Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, entered Jerusalem to shouts and cheers of joy. Grant that we may be stirred by the Word and Sacraments to rejoice anew, now and at His second advent. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Gracious Father, You have made us glad to enter into Your presence to hear the good news of our Savior and receive Your gifts. Preserve Your Church against all her enemies, and lead us to walk in Your ways and to follow Your paths, that when Jesus returns in His glory we may welcome Him with glad hosannas; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**