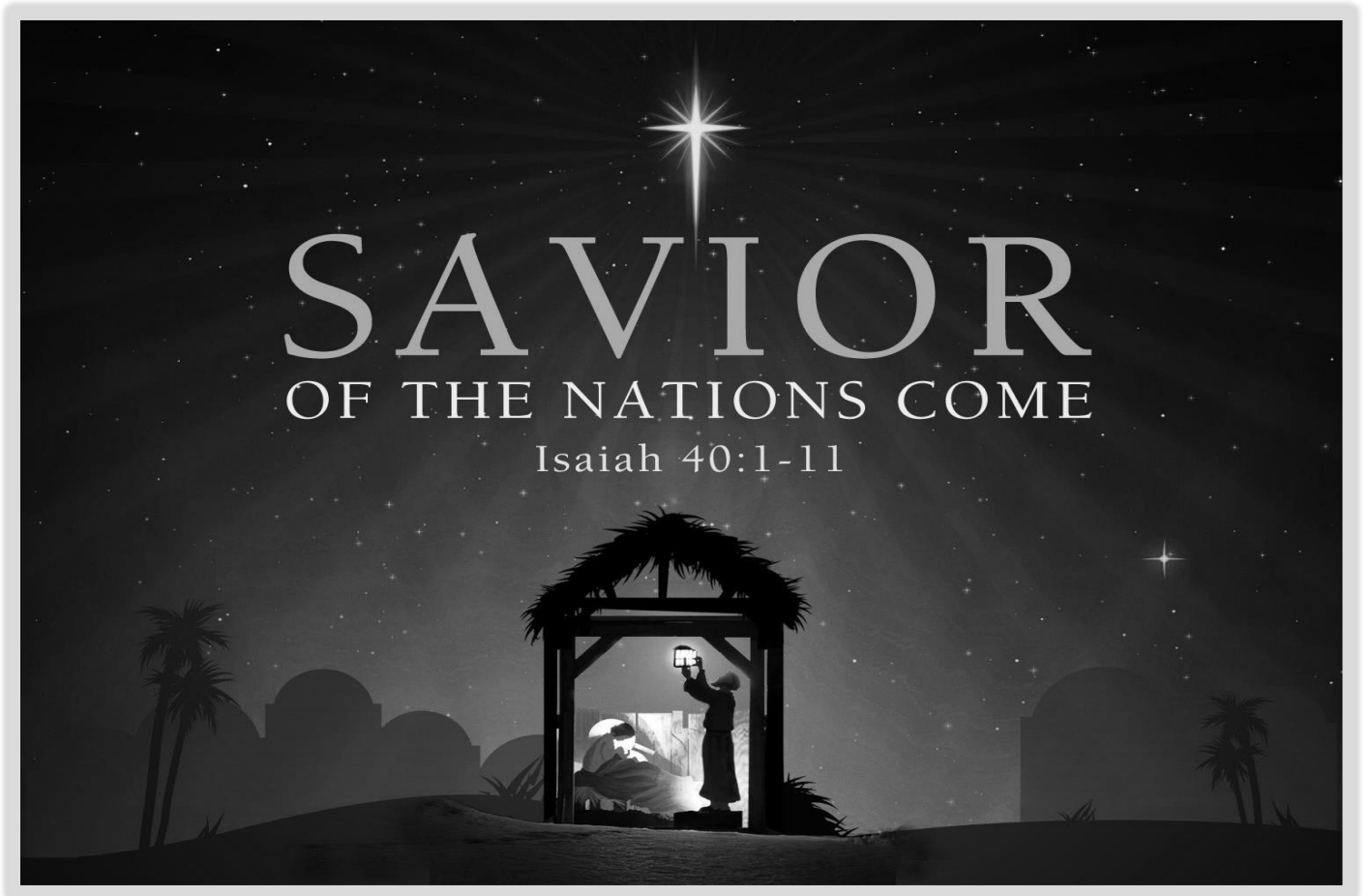


**Midweek Advent 2:  
Prepare the Royal Highway**  
December 11, 2024



LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS-LCMS  
*Welcoming all to walk together  
toward abundant life in Christ.*

## AS WE GATHER

We often cry, "Let me out!" Many know addictive behavior like high anxiety, unpredictable anger, or biting sarcasm. Others are chained to a grudge that won't leave until there's revenge. Still others are fighting an inner battle with a skeleton in their closet that is rattling louder and louder. Repentance is the doorway to freedom from these besetting sins, with the result that we see anew God's magnificent glory in Christ our Lord!

## The PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH & RINGING OF THE BELLS

## INVOCATION

P In the Name of our God, Who was, and is, and is to come:

C **Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, Amen.**

## CALL TO WORSHIP

*(From John 1:1-14)*

P In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

C **He was with God in the beginning.**

P Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the Light of men.

C **The Light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.**

P There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that Light, so that through Him all men might believe. He himself was not the Light; he came only as a witness to the Light.

C **The true Light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.**

P He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His Own, but His Own did not receive Him.

C **Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God—**

P Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.

C **We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, Who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**



*The  
Word  
became  
flesh and made  
his dwelling among us.  
John 1:14*

## HYMN

## On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

(LSB 344 sts. 1-4)

1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
Announces that the Lord is nigh;  
Awake and hearken, for he brings  
Glad tidings of the King of kings!
2. Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin;  
Make straight the way for God within,  
And let us all our hearts prepare  
For Christ to come and enter there.
3. We hail Thee as our Savior, Lord,  
Our refuge and our great reward;  
Without Thy grace we waste away  
Like flow'rs that wither and decay.
4. Lay on the sick Thy healing hand  
And make the fallen strong to stand;  
Show us the glory of Thy face  
Till beauty springs in ev'ry place.



Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite

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## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *(based upon Isaiah 40:3-5)*

**P** God of comfort, how grateful we are that You are patient, not wanting anyone to perish, but for everyone to come to repentance. Today we come before You repenting of our sin, confessing our transgressions and longing for Your forgiveness.

**C** **Almighty God, I confess to You my sin. It robs me of comfort, deprives me of peace, and fills me with shame.**

**P** I have lived in an unholy and ungodly way.

**C** **I have lived as if You were not present with me.**

**P** I have experienced the futility of my own sinfulness.

**C** **I need Your forgiving love.**

P I ask that You come down and take away my sin.

C **Because Jesus died for me, I ask in confidence that You will forgive me.**

*(Silence for a time of reflection)*

P A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God.” John the Baptist came preaching repentance and faith in Jesus.

C **“Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.”**

P And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.” And he has spoken definitively and eternally in Jesus. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. In the stead and by the command of Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**All: Amen.**

### **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P Let us pray. 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.

C **Amen.**

### **OLD TESTAMENT READING**

*Isaiah 40:3–5*

<sup>3</sup> A voice cries: “In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup> And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## EPISTLE READING

2 Corinthians 7:1–10

<sup>1</sup> Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God. <sup>2</sup> Make room in your hearts for us. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one. <sup>3</sup> I do not say this to condemn you, for I said before that you are in our hearts, to die together and to live together. <sup>4</sup> I am acting with great boldness toward you; I have great pride in you; I am filled with comfort. In all our affliction, I am overflowing with joy. <sup>5</sup> For even when we came into Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were afflicted at every turn—fighting without and fear within. <sup>6</sup> But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, <sup>7</sup> and not only by his coming but also by the comfort with which he was comforted by you, as he told us of your longing, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced still more. <sup>8</sup> For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. <sup>9</sup> As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. <sup>10</sup> For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## GOSPEL READING *Matthew 3:1–12*

<sup>1</sup> In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup> “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” <sup>3</sup> For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.’” <sup>4</sup> Now John wore a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup> and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> And do not presume to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. <sup>10</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. <sup>11</sup> “I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>12</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

Repent,  
for the  
kingdom  
of heaven  
is near.



Matthew 3:2

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

**HYMN**

Prepare the Royal Highway

LSB 343

1. Prepare the royal highway; The King of kings is near!  
Let ev'ry hill and valley A level road appear!  
Then greet the King of Glory Foretold in sacred story:

**Refrain**

**REFRAIN** Hosanna to the Lord,  
For He fulfills God's Word!

2. God's people, see Him coming: Your own eternal king!  
Palm branches strew before Him! Spread garments! Shout and sing!  
God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail you!

**Refrain**

3. Then fling the gates wide open To greet your promised king!  
Your king, yet ev'ry nation Its tribute too should bring.  
All lands, bow down before Him! All nations, now adore Him!

**Refrain**

4. His is no earthly kingdom; It comes from heav'n above.  
His rule is peace and freedom And justice, truth, and love.  
So let your praise be sounding For kindness so abounding:

**Refrain**

Tune: Swedish, 17th cent.

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**SERMON** "Prepare the Royal Highway" *Isaiah 40:3–5*

Rev. Jerry Menk

**OFFERING**

*For those worshipping online, please visit [www.lccross.org](http://www.lccross.org) to find links to our Give+ secured online giving portal and our online Pew Card which is called a Connect Card. Or to fill out the card directly go to <https://forms.gle/X46ym1HuZ9DCsq9s6>*



*For those worshipping in-person, please indicate your attendance and any requests on the Pew Card.*

## OFFERING HYMN

### Angels Singing In The Heavens

(Sung to Angels from the Realms of Glory - LSB 367)

1. Angels singing in the heavens,  
Of the Savior promised long;  
Ev'ry heart shall open to Him,  
Ev'ry voice lift high in song.  
He is coming! He is coming!  
Ev'ry voice life high in song.
2. Mighty God in flesh appearing,  
Prince of Peace, oh, enter in.  
With the message of salvation:  
We no more are slaves to sin.  
Everlasting, changeless Savior,  
We no more are slaves to sin.
3. Glory, laud, all honor, blessing  
To the Prince whose reign will come.  
Praise and thanks and adoration,  
Father, Son, and Spirit, One.  
He is coming! He is coming!  
Prince of Peace, Thy will be done.



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## PRAYERS

- P Heavenly Father, we need to repent of our repentance, for it is often shallow and superficial.
- C **“Lord, show us your glory.”** (*Exodus 33:18*)
- P We are always going to the far country and must return home as prodigal children.
- C **“Lord, show us your glory.”**
- P Every day, Father, let us claim Your forgiveness in Jesus and may we stand before Your great throne on the Last Day covered in Your mercy.
- C **“Lord, show us your glory.”**
- P Let Your glory shine around us and in us and through us, to the end that our lips and our lives reflect the glory of Christ.
- C **“Lord, show us your glory.”**
- P **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory.”**  
(*John 1:14*)
- All: Thanks be to God!**
- P In Christ's holy name we pray.
- C **Amen.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

**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.

## BENEDICTION

**P** The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and T give you peace.

**C** Amen.

## CLOSING HYMN                      Savior of the Nations, Come                      *LSB 332 sts. 1,5– 8*

1. Savior of the nations, come, Virgin's Son, make here Your home!  
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth.
5. God the Father was His source, Back to God He ran His course.  
Into hell His road went down, Back then to His throne and crown.
6. For You are the Father's Son Who in flesh the vict'ry won.  
By Your mighty pow'r make whole All our ills of flesh and soul.
7. From the manger newborn light Shines in glory through the night.  
Darkness there no more resides; In this light faith now abides.
8. Glory to the Father sing, Glory to the Son, our king,  
Glory to the Spirit be Now and through eternity.

Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340–397; German version, Martin Luther, 1483–1546; (st. 1): tr. William M. Reynolds, 1812–76; (sts. 5, 8): tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001; (st. 6): tr. Lutheran Service Book, 2006; (st. 7): tr. Gifford A. Grobien, 1973

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## SILENT PRAYER

Lord, I believe that when I repent You show me Your glory in the Babe in a manger; in His body and blood at the Table; and in the eastern sky on the last day. In Jesus' Name. Amen!

## POSTLUDE

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