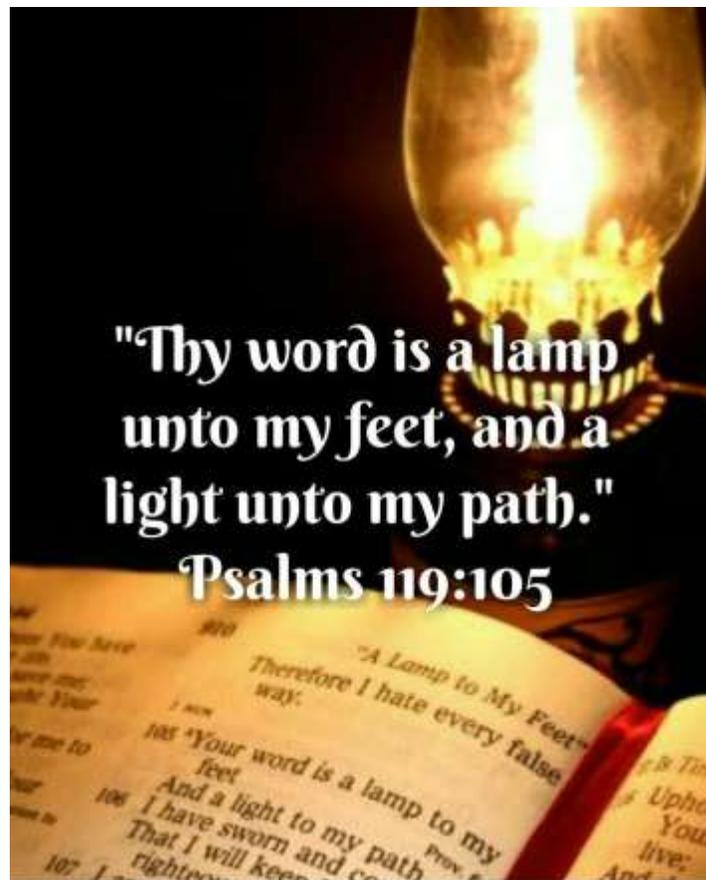


*This Sunday at St. Luke's Blue Ridge  
December 6, 2020*

**One service 9:30 a.m., MANY WORSHIP OPTIONS:  
In-church, in-pavilion, drive-in and online**

## **The Second Sunday in Advent**



### **BIBLE SUNDAY**

*The Second Sunday in Advent is Bible Sunday. As people of old time were prepared and made ready for our Lord's first Advent through the reading and study of the scriptures, so are we who await His second Advent. No Communion in Christendom is more a 'Bible Church' than the Anglican Church. Claim your heritage. Read the Bible.*

Sermon Series in Advent  
**The Gospel in Isaiah**

This Sunday's Focus  
**Our Pleading God**

The word 'salvation' gets brandished about quite a bit in Christian circles, but what does it mean? Is it solely a New Testament concept or does it go back to the Old Testament? Seek daily new insights on the meaning of "salvation" from the scriptures. Pray that parish churches throughout the nation will be "saving communities", including our own. Today's focus will be "Our Pleading God" who calls people to turn away from the path leading to destruction and onto the path leading to abundant life.

***The Collect for Advent 2***

BLESSED Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning; Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

***The Collect for Season***

ALMIGHTY God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which thy Son Jesus Christ came to visit us in great humility; that in the last day, when he shall come again in his glorious majesty to judge both the quick and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal, through him who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghost, now and ever. *Amen.*

**THE EPISTLE – Romans 15:4-13 (J.B. Phillips)**

*God was, and God is*

**15** <sup>4</sup>For all those words which were written long ago are meant to teach us today; that when we read in the scriptures of the endurance of men and of all the help that God gave them in those days, we may be encouraged to go on hoping in our own time.

<sup>5-7</sup>May the God who inspires men to endure, and gives them a Father's care, give you a mind united towards one another because of your common loyalty to Jesus Christ. And then, as one man, you will sing from the heart the praises of God the

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So open your hearts to one another as Christ has opened his heart to you, and God will be glorified.

*A reminder—Christ the universal saviour*

<sup>8-9</sup> Christ was made a servant of the Jews to prove God's trustworthiness, since he personally implemented the promises made long ago to the fathers, and also that the Gentiles might bring glory to God for his mercy to them. It is written: 'For this reason I will confess to you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name'.

<sup>10</sup> And again: 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people!'

<sup>11</sup> And yet again: 'Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud him, all you peoples!'

<sup>12</sup> And then Isaiah says: 'There shall be a root of Jesse; and he who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, in him the Gentiles shall hope'.

<sup>13</sup> May the God of hope fill you with joy and peace in your faith, that by the power of the Holy Spirit, your whole life and outlook may be radiant with hope.

NOTE: Here is wise advice from the great apostle. Christians are intended to persevere, and to that end the Scriptures offer the encouragement which will undergird their confidence. (William Sydnor)

## **THE GOSPEL (H.C.) – St. Luke 21:25-33 (J.B. Phillips)**

*Vigilance is essential*

<sup>25</sup> There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth there will be dismay among the nations and bewilderment at the roar of the surging sea. Men's courage will fail completely as they realise what is threatening the world, for the very powers of heaven will be shaken. Then men will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with great power and splendour! But when these things begin to happen, look up, hold your heads high, for you will soon be free."

<sup>29</sup> Then he gave them a parable.

<sup>30-33</sup> "Look at a fig-tree, or indeed any tree, when it begins to burst its buds, and you realise without anybody telling you that summer is nearly here. So, when you see these things happening, you can be equally sure that the kingdom of God has nearly come. Believe me, this generation will not disappear until all this has taken place. Earth and heaven will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

NOTE: The first layer of meaning of Jesus' words in this passage concerns His coming in judgment on the city of Jerusalem. This coming came in A.D. 70 when the city was laid waste by the Romans following a siege. This event should be seen as a vindication of Jesus' Messiahship. Those who rejected His Kingdom agenda and insisted on following their own discovered that Jesus was in the right.

There is a second layer of meaning as well. The Church has always heard Jesus' words in this passage as pointing forward to His Second Coming at the end of the age. The destruction of Jerusalem might be thought of as a dress rehearsal for the final Judgment.

## **OLD TESTAMENT LESSON (Lectionary) – Isaiah 5 (RSV)**

*The Song of the Unfruitful Vineyard: God pleads with His people*

5 Let me sing for my beloved  
a love song concerning his vineyard:  
My beloved had a vineyard  
on a very fertile hill.

2 He dugged it and cleared it of stones,  
and planted it with choice vines;  
he built a watchtower in the midst of it,  
and hewed out a wine vat in it;  
and he looked for it to yield grapes,  
but it yielded wild grapes.

3 And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem  
and men of Judah,  
judge, I pray you, between me  
and my vineyard.

4 What more was there to do for my vineyard,  
that I have not done in it?  
When I looked for it to yield grapes,  
why did it yield wild grapes?

5 And now I will tell you  
what I will do to my vineyard.  
I will remove its hedge,  
and it shall be devoured;  
I will break down its wall,  
and it shall be trampled down.

6 I will make it a waste;  
it shall not be pruned or hoed,  
and briers and thorns shall grow up;  
I will also command the clouds  
that they rain no rain upon it.

7 For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts  
is the house of Israel,  
and the men of Judah  
are his pleasant planting;  
and he looked for justice,

but behold, bloodshed;  
for righteousness,  
but behold, a cry!

*Social Injustice Denounced*

- 8 Woe to those who join house to house,  
who add field to field,  
until there is no more room,  
and you are made to dwell alone  
in the midst of the land.
- 9 The Lord of hosts has sworn in my hearing:  
“Surely many houses shall be desolate,  
large and beautiful houses, without inhabitant.
- 10 For ten acres of vineyard shall yield but one bath,  
and a homer of seed shall yield but an ephah.”
- 11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning,  
that they may run after strong drink,  
who tarry late into the evening  
till wine inflames them!
- 12 They have lyre and harp,  
timbrel and flute and wine at their feasts;  
but they do not regard the deeds of the Lord,  
or see the work of his hands.
- 13 Therefore my people go into exile  
for want of knowledge;  
their honored men are dying of hunger,  
and their multitude is parched with thirst.
- 14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged its appetite  
and opened its mouth beyond measure,  
and the nobility of Jerusalem[a] and her multitude go down,  
her throng and he who exults in her.
- 15 Man is bowed down, and men are brought low,  
and the eyes of the haughty are humbled.
- 16 But the Lord of hosts is exalted in justice,  
and the Holy God shows himself holy in righteousness.
- 17 Then shall the lambs graze as in their pasture,  
fatlings and kids[b] shall feed among the ruins.

18 Woe to those who draw iniquity with cords of falsehood,  
who draw sin as with cart ropes,  
19 who say: "Let him make haste,  
let him speed his work  
that we may see it;  
let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near,  
and let it come, that we may know it!"  
20 Woe to those who call evil good  
and good evil,  
who put darkness for light  
and light for darkness,  
who put bitter for sweet  
and sweet for bitter!  
21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes,  
and shrewd in their own sight!  
22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine,  
and valiant men in mixing strong drink,  
23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe,  
and deprive the innocent of his right!

*Foreign Invasion Predicted*

24 Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble,  
and as dry grass sinks down in the flame,  
so their root will be as rottenness,  
and their blossom go up like dust;  
for they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts,  
and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.  
25 Therefore the anger of the Lord was kindled against his people,  
and he stretched out his hand against them and smote them,  
and the mountains quaked;  
and their corpses were as refuse  
in the midst of the streets.  
For all this his anger is not turned away  
and his hand is stretched out still.

26 He will raise a signal for a nation afar off,  
and whistle for it from the ends of the earth;  
and lo, swiftly, speedily it comes!  
27 None is weary, none stumbles,  
none slumbers or sleeps,

not a waistcloth is loose,  
not a sandal-thong broken;  
28 their arrows are sharp,  
all their bows bent,  
their horses' hoofs seem like flint,  
and their wheels like the whirlwind.  
29 Their roaring is like a lion,  
like young lions they roar;  
they growl and seize their prey,  
they carry it off, and none can rescue.  
30 They will growl over it on that day,  
like the roaring of the sea.  
And if one look to the land,  
behold, darkness and distress;  
and the light is darkened by its clouds.

**NOTE: BACKGROUND.** Isaiah contains the prophecies of **Isaiah, the son of Amoz**, who prophesied from about 740 to 680 B.C. For about 20 years, he spoke to both the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. After Israel's fall to the Assyrians in 722 B.C., Isaiah continued to prophesy to Judah.

-- This period of Israel's history is told in [2 Kings 15](#) through 21 and [2 Chronicles 26](#) through 33. Isaiah was a contemporary of the prophets Hosea and Micah. By the time of Isaiah, the prophets Elijah, Elisha, Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, and Amos had already completed their ministry.

-- By this time, Israel had been in the Promised Land for almost 700 years. For their first 400 years in Canaan, *judges* ruled Israel. These were spiritual, military, and political leaders whom God raised up as the occasion demanded. Then, for about 120 years, three kings reigned over all Israel: Saul, David, and Solomon. But in 917 B.C. Israel had a civil war, and remained divided into two nations, Israel (to the north) and Judah (to the south) up until the time of Isaiah.

-- Up until the time of Isaiah, the northern nation of Israel had some 18 kings – all of them bad, and rebellious against the LORD. The southern nation of Judah had some 11 kings before Isaiah's ministry, some good and some bad.

-- In the time of Isaiah, Israel was a little nation often caught in the middle of the wars between three superpowers: Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon.

-- As Isaiah's ministry began, there was a national crisis in the northern nation of Israel. The superpower of Assyria was about to engulf the nation of Israel. During the span of his ministry as a prophet, the southern nation of Judah was faced with repeated threats from the larger surrounding nations. (copied)

# **The Second Sunday in Advent**

9:30 a.m.

This Sunday's Focus

*Our Pleading God*

**The Rector will be this  
week's preacher.**

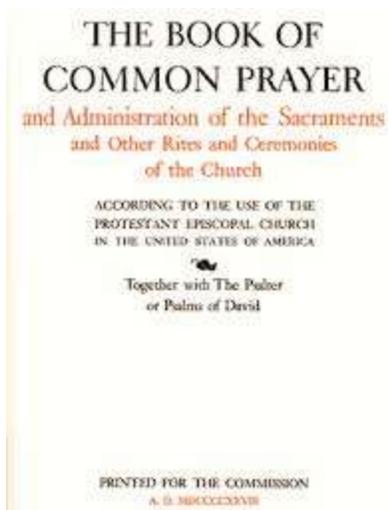
## **Worship Options**

1. In-church. Those who wish to worship in the church are asked to seat in designated areas to ensure social distancing.
2. Drive-in. Those choosing this option are asked to remain in their automobile and listen to the service via their car radio (FM 98.1). Holy Communion will be delivered to cars in plastic bags.
3. In-pavilion. As the weather becomes warmer, a speaker has been set up in the

church pavilion. Those choosing this option should space themselves out. Dogs are welcomed if kept quiet and under control.

4. Online. Services will continue to be live-streamed on Facebook and available for viewing following the service on YouTube. To access both put “Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga.” in the search bar.

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### **NEED A PRAYER BOOK?**

The Book of Common Prayer is a treasury of religious devotion. While in no way replacing the Bible, it turns the Bible into prayer, teaching God’s people to think and pray biblically and Christianly. If you don’t have one of your own or would like to share this treasure with a friend, call the church office [(706) 632-8245] to secure a copy of a new paperback edition.

These books are being mailed free to anyone in St. Luke’s online congregation who requests one. Voluntary donations to assist with our online ministry are appreciated.

## OUR MISSION

*St. Luke's mission is to grow spiritually in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ and in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and to share our faith, our hands and hearts for the sake of the Gospel, our community and the world.*

### Financial Pledge for the Year of our Lord 2021

*As stewards of God's gifts and in gratitude for all blessings, I pledge the following amount to the work of Christ through St. Luke's Church for 2021.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Weekly \_\_\_\_\_ Monthly \_\_\_\_\_ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)

*Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him to store, as God has prospered him. 1*

*Corinthians 16:2*

# REMEMBER THE NEEDY EVERY TIME YOU COME TO CHURCH



*Please bring one or more item for the needy -- paper, soap products, tinned and dried food, etc. Leave in Narthex. Items will be distributed through North Georgia Community Action Agency*



## NEW SIGN-UP SHEET FOR 2020 IS AVAILABLE

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2020. Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

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St. Luke's Church, "The Parish Church of the Mountains," 7 Ewing St., (POB 1821), Blue Ridge, Georgia 30513; [\(706\) 632-8245](tel:7066328245); [www.stlukesblueridge.org](http://www.stlukesblueridge.org); [stlukes@tds.net](mailto:stlukes@tds.net).