



***This Sunday at St. Luke's Blue Ridge
November 28, 2021***

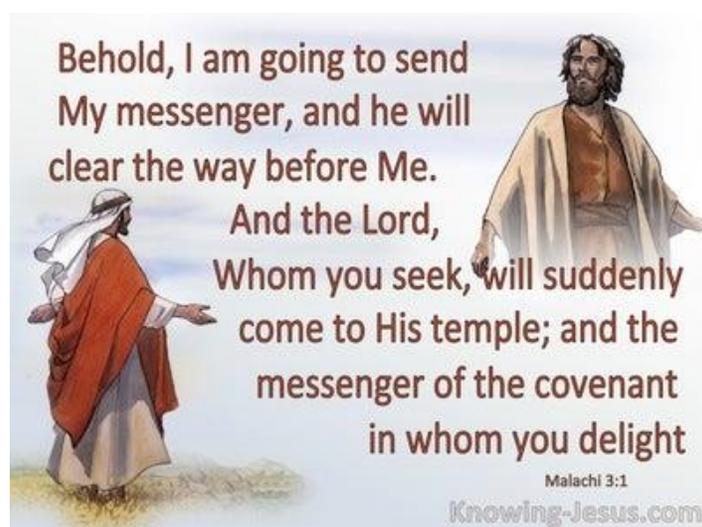
8:15 a.m. – Holy Communion (said – no music)

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**10 a.m. – Morning Prayer and Sermon
together with Shortened Holy Communion**

In-church, in-pavilion and online

The First Sunday in Advent



ADVENT 1

John the Baptist is a principal figure in Advent because he answers the Old Testament prophecy that Elijah would come in advance of the Messiah. John denounces sin and calls people to repentance in much the same way as did the prophet of old. This new 'Elijah' is the advance man for Jesus the Messiah.

The Three Comings

(Advent is from a Latin word which means ‘a coming’)

The season of Advent is often thought of as a preparation for Christmas – when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, just as Lent is a preparation for Easter – when we celebrate his resurrection. But the season also starts off a new Christian Year. No year stands alone; it is linked with the past and the future. Advent speaks of a coming of Jesus Christ to match each of these three – past, future and present. The Collect for this Sunday tells us about these comings.

The first was when Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth and humbled himself by taking upon him our human nature. He lived as a man among men, teaching them about God and showing them what God is like, and in his amazing death upon the cross he revealed the depths of divine love. This the Collect describes in the words, “He came *to visit us in great humility.*”

But in the future there will be another coming. Then Jesus will come as King (“in his glorious Majesty”) to judge all men – the living and those who have died. (“Quick” = living.) This coming is referenced in both the Creeds and in the prayer of consecration at Holy Communion.

The Gospel for Advent 1 recalls the day when Jesus was hailed as King, as the Deliverer or Messiah whom God had promised to send to his people. But there we see him as Judge also, as witnessed in his action in the Temple.

So much for the past and the future, but what of the present? Here we turn to the Epistle. – so up-to-date when translated into our everyday language. St. Paul sets out in unmistakable terms what is demanded of the Christian who owns Christ as his King and his Judge. “Let us be Christ’s men from head to foot.” “It is time to wake up to reality,” But while victory will not be won without the most resolute effort, neither will it come without the help (or “grace”) of Christ himself. His “coming” in the present is an answer to our prayers. “Give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness” and “arm ourselves for the fight of the day” – *now*. (H.W. Dobson)

THE COLLECT FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY IN ADVENT

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 13:8-14 (J.B. Phillips)

To love others is the highest conduct

13⁸⁻¹⁰ Keep out of debt altogether, except the perpetual debt of love which we owe to one another. The man who loves his neighbour has obeyed the whole Law in regard to his neighbour. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, You shall not covet’ and all other commandments are summed up in this one saying: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’. Love hurts nobody: therefore love is the answer to the Law’s commands.

Wake up and live!

11-14 Why all this stress on behaviour? Because, as I think you have realised, the present time is of the highest importance—it is time to wake up to reality. Every day brings God’s salvation nearer. The night is nearly over, the day has almost dawned. Let us therefore fling away the things that men do in the dark, let us arm ourselves for the fight of the day! Let us live cleanly, as in the daylight, not in the “delights” of getting drunk or playing with sex, nor yet in quarrelling or jealousies. Let us be Christ’s men from head to foot, and give no chances to the flesh to have its fling.

[NOTE: This is one of the passages on which the Advent Sunday collect is based. The urgency of these verses make them appropriate at the beginning of Advent. \(William Sydnor\)](#)

THE GOSPEL – St. Matthew 21:1-13 (J.B. Phillips)

Jesus reveals himself as Messiah and comes to the Temple

21¹⁻³ As they approached Jerusalem and came to Bethphage and the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples ahead telling them, “Go into the village in front of you and you will at once find there an ass tethered, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. Should anyone say anything to you, you are to say, ‘The Lord needs them’, and he will send them immediately.”

⁴⁻⁵ All this happened to fulfil the prophet's saying—'Tell the daughter of Zion, Behold your king is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey'.

⁶⁻⁹ So the disciples went off and followed Jesus' instructions. They brought the ass and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and Jesus took his seat. Then most of the crowd spread their own cloaks on the road, while others cut down branches from the trees and spread them in his path. The crowds who went in front of him and the crowds who followed him all shouted, "God save the Son of David! 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' God save him from on high!"

¹⁰⁻¹¹ And as he entered Jerusalem a shock ran through the whole city. "Who is this?" men cried. "This is Jesus the prophet," replied the crowd, "the man from Nazareth in Galilee!"

¹²⁻¹³ Then Jesus went into the Temple and drove out all the buyers and sellers there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those who sold doves, crying—"It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer'. But you have turned it into a 'den of thieves!'"

NOTE: Christ cleansed the Temple at the time of his first coming. This is a foretaste of his final judgment of evil. (William Sydnor)

LECTIONARY READING

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON – Malachi 3:1-6 and 4:4-6

The Coming Messenger

3 "Behold, I send my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?"

"For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, till they present right offerings to the Lord. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵“Then I will draw near to you for judgment; I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the orphan, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the Lord of hosts.

⁶“For I the Lord do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.

The Great Day of the Lord

⁴“Remember the law of my servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances that I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel.

⁵“Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the land with a curse.”

NOTE: This Old Testament prophecy is familiar because parts of it are quoted in well-known New Testament passages. (See Mark 1:2, Luke 1:76, and 7:27.) The two readings that comprise the lesson say that God will send a messenger (Elijah returned to earth; cf. Mark 9:11-13) who will prepare men for the coming of the Lord. In the New Testament, John the Baptist is seen as the fulfilment of this promise. He is the ‘Elijah’ for his day. He prepares the way for the coming King – the Messiah. (William Sydnor)

The First Sunday in Advent

Preacher: The Rector

Sunday Worship Options

1. In-church.
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 prepackaged containers.

3. Online. Services will continue to be livestreamed on Facebook and available for viewing following the service on You Tube.

To access both put “Parish Church of St. Luke, Blue Ridge, Ga.” In the search bar.

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Tip of the Canterbury Cap to Jennifer Higdon for steaming and ironing St. Luke’s new choir robes purchased just before Covid and used last Sunday for the first time.



THE MEANING OF ADVENT

By the late Rev. Dr. Peter Toon (written in 2007)

Matthew 21:5 "Tell ye the daughter of Zion, Behold thy King cometh unto thee."

In the Christian Year, the season of Advent (Latin, *adventus*, "Coming") runs from the fourth Sunday before Christmas until the eve of Christmas Day. It is also the beginning of the Christian Year.

But consider this. For us, in the secularized West, it is as though for all practical purposes Advent has disappeared. For Christmas has devoured Advent, gobbled it up with the turkey giblets and the goblets of seasonal ale. In fact, the practical disappearance of Advent has opened a major hole from Thanksgiving to Christmas Day and this hole has been filled up with many different attempts to anticipate Christmas! More Christmas trees, more Christmas lights, more tinsel, more tassels, more glitter, more glee-so that the glut of candles and carols, ornaments and trimmings, parties, programs and performances, has left nothing for Christmas Day. In fact, Christmas Day arrives for most people not as the fulfillment of Advent but rather as the end of the long Yule season, that has burned without ceasing since the Thanksgiving sales began in late November in the malls. In fact, Christmas Day is like the peace after the storm.

To avoid this profanation of Advent is a massive task and is probably impossible if we live in the West. However, we can put up some kind of fight against this heavy secularization and this I shall attempt to do now.

One way of thinking about the purpose and meaning of ADVENT is to take each letter of the word, **a-d-v-e-n-t**, and let it represent a theme or aspect of this season. So let us try this method.

A - Arrival

During the season of Advent, the Church of Christ using the faculty of memory joins, as it were, the remnant of Israel (represented by such as Simeon & Anna) in preparing for the Arrival of the Messiah, the Son of David and the Son of God, even Jesus, Son of Mary. Further, the Church joins Israel out in the wilderness of Judea in listening to John the Baptist, who prepares the way of the Messiah.

By and in Liturgy, and caught up in the Spirit of the Lord, it is as though the contemporary people of God in this present year are joined to the people of God two thousand years ago-and we join with them in faith, hope and charity.

Also, during the season of Advent the Church of Christ as the Bride of Christ looks for his Return to earth, his Arrival as the Lord of lords and King of kings to raise the dead, judge the nations and inaugurate the kingdom of God. In fact, the expectance of the Second Coming adds greatly to the true piety and spirituality of Advent season. So, the Church prays on Advent III:

“O Lord Jesu Christ, who at thy first coming didst send thy messenger to prepare thy way before thee: Grant that the ministers and stewards of thy mysteries may likewise turn so prepare and make ready thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at thy second coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight, who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.”

D -- Devotion

The four weeks of Advent provide the possibility of a period of intense and deep Devotion both in the public liturgy of the Church and in personal times of prayer and

meditation. This consecration to walking with God in humility and obedience is summed up in the Collect for the last of the four Sundays:

O LORD, raise up (we pray thee) thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us; through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord, to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

The Collect is addressed to God, the heavenly Father, and it is an earnest request that he will gather up his power and descend to his people (by the Holy Ghost) in order to help, succour and sustain them in the race they are running in their earthly pilgrimage towards the goal and fullness of the kingdom of heaven (see Hebrews 12:1).

In making this petition, God's people recognize that due to their sins of omission and commission they have failed to run in God's grace as gracefully and swiftly as they are called to do and ought to have done. Thus they look to the Father to provide them through his Son and by his Spirit, and in grace and mercy, the help they need.

If God's people are to live as those who expect the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, then they need not only to watch and pray but also to live as the obedient and faithful servants of God, engaged daily in his service and running the race that is set before them. This is true Devotion!

V. Volition (the act of willing or resolving)

God is merciful and gives us grace, but we have to be willing to receive that grace and to commit ourselves to his will and purpose. The Devotion of Advent requires definite Volition! But this we prayed for in the week before Advent: "Stir up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people..."

The season of Advent may be viewed as a short Lent as a time when strict discipline over the body through Fasting is one means of deepening awareness of God and devotion to him. The colour for this season, like Lent, is purple pointing to asceticism. Then the words of the Advent Collect, "Give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness" also suggest the need for discipline and fasting. Further, it is possible for four weeks to omit "Gloria in Excelsis" from the Eucharist as a sign of liturgical asceticism - but to make this omission without developing the interior Devotion of asceticism is to miss out!

Yet Volition, the commitment of the will resolved to do what God requires and to please him, is the real thing here! That is, the will as it is graciously turned towards the Lord to obey him and to do his bidding.

E - Expectancy

As the righteous remnant in Israel waited for the Messiah in hopeful expectancy, and greeted him with great joy -- Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen -- so Christian worshippers in the Liturgy throughout Advent grow in expectancy week by week for the arrival of the Son of God Incarnate. And their expectancy is joyfully fulfilled at the first service of Christmas as either they hear (a) the words of the angel first spoken to the shepherds: "To you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour,

who is Christ the Lord," or (b) the majestic words of John 1, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth..."

Further, liturgically Expectancy is communicated by the great "O's" used during the last week of Advent.

- WISDOM, that camest out of the mouth of the Most High, reaching from one end to another, firmly and gently ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of understanding.
- ADONAI, Captain of the house of Israel, who didst appear to Moses in the flame of the burning bush, and gavest him the law on Sinai: Come and deliver us with thine outstretched arm.
- ROOT OF JESSE, who standest for an ensign of the people, before whom kings shall shut their mouths, to whom the nations shall seek: Come and deliver us and tarry not.
- KEY OF DAVID, Sceptre of the house of Israel, who openest and no man shutteth, and shuttest and not man openeth; Come and bring forth out of the prison-house him that is bound.
- DAY-SPRING FROM ON HIGH, Brightness of Eternal Light, and Sun of righteousness: Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death.
- KING OF NATIONS, thou for whom they long, the Cornerstone that makest them both one: Come and save thy creatures whom thou didst fashion from the dust of the earth.
- EMMANUEL, our King and Lawgiver, the Desire of all nations and their Saviour: Come and save us, O Lord our God.

N - Narrative

The Scripture passages, the Bible narrative, read, heard and pondered during Advent are of critical importance. In the Daily Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer, the Book of Isaiah the Prophet is prominent and is read extensively throughout the four weeks as the Old Testament Lesson. In this book, not only are there many passages addressed to ancient Israel but there are also prophecies that look into the future to proclaim the arrival of the Messiah, the nature of his kingdom, his exaltation through suffering, and the triumph of his cause. Please be sure to read this Book with the elect of God in this season. The Collect for Advent II refers to the unique importance of Holy Scripture for our doctrine and devotion:

"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."

T - Thanksgiving

Though there is a strong element of penitence accompanying the fasting and asceticism in Advent, there is a stronger element of Thanksgiving! For God is praised and thanked for his saving deeds and his inspired words recorded in the Old Testament, all of which point to their climax in the arrival of the Messiah, the Saviour, who came to "fulfil the Law and the Prophets." There is celebration of God's mighty salvation experienced by the Israelites and there is anticipation of the even mightier salvation wrought in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And of course the meaning of the word, "Eucharist", is "Thanksgiving" and thus in the Sacrament each week there is profound thanksgiving offered to the Father through the Son and with the Holy Spirit.

Arrival Devotion Volition Expectancy Narrative Thanksgiving

I close with the Advent Collect to be said throughout all Advent:

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.

A Faith of My Own: Preparing for Confirmation

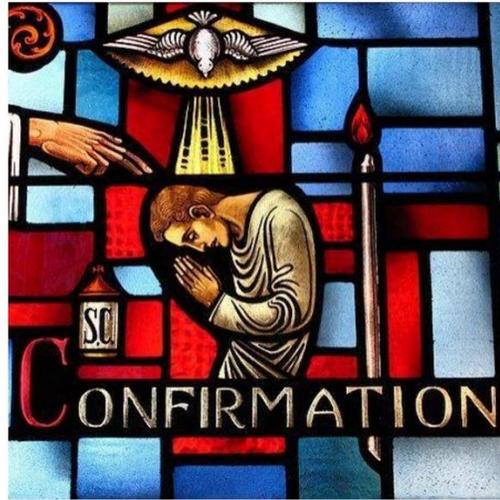


Photo courtesy of The Living Church

*A workbook for young people aged 10 and up preparing to
receive the rite of Confirmation as set forth in
The Book of Common Prayer*

Victor H. Morgan

RECTOR'S BOOK AVAILABLE

\$10 for

St. Luke's members

(picked up, not mailed)

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 2022

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 2022.

Name

Address

—
Amount

_____ Weekly _____ Monthly _____ Yearly

(Please tick the appropriate blank)



SIGN-UP FOR FLOWERS

A sign-up sheet for Altar flowers is available in Thomason Hall for 2022.

Please sign up for days you wish to commemorate.

Flowers are needed throughout the end of the year.
Please email or call Kathryn Noblett at the church office to
sign up.

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