

Second Sunday of Advent Sunday, December 09, 2018

The Collect: Merciful God, who sent your messengers the prophets to preach repentance and prepare the way for our salvation: Give us grace to heed their warnings and forsake our sins, that we may greet with joy the coming of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Old Testament: Baruch 5:1-9 read from the New Revised Standard Version Bible

Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting; for God will show your splendor everywhere under heaven. For God will give you evermore the name, "Righteous Peace, Godly Glory."

Arise, O Jerusalem, stand upon the height; look toward the east, and see your children gathered from west and east at the word of the Holy One, rejoicing that God has remembered them. For they went out from you on foot, led away by their enemies; but God will bring them back to you, carried in glory, as on a royal throne. For God has ordered that every high mountain and the everlasting hills be made low and the valleys filled up, to make level ground, so that Israel may walk safely in the glory of God. The woods and every fragrant tree have shaded Israel at God's command. For God will lead Israel with joy, in the light of his glory, with the mercy and righteousness that come from him.

The Word of the Lord

Alternate Old Testament: Malachi 3:1-4 read from the New Century Version Bible

The Lord All-Powerful says, "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way for me. Suddenly, the Lord you are looking for will come to his Temple; the messenger of the agreement, whom you want, will come." No one can live through that time; no one can survive when he comes. He will be like a purifying fire and like laundry soap. Like someone who heats and purifies silver, he will purify the Levites and make them pure like gold and silver. Then they will bring offerings to the Lord in the right way. And the Lord will accept the

offerings from Judah and Jerusalem, as it was in the past.

The Word of the Lord

Psalm: Canticle 16 -- The Song of Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79) read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; * he has come to his people and set them free.

He has raised up for us a mighty savior, * born of the house of his servant David.

Through his holy prophets he promised of old, that he would save us from our enemies, *
from the hands of all who hate us.

He promised to show mercy to our fathers * and to remember his holy covenant.

This was the oath he swore to our father Abraham, * to set us free from the hands of our
enemies,

Free to worship him without fear, * holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, * for you will go before the Lord to
prepare his way,

To give his people knowledge of salvation * by the forgiveness of their sins.

In the tender compassion of our God * the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, * and to guide our feet into
the way of peace.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. **Amen.**

Epistle: Philippians 1:3-11 read from the New International Version Bible

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I

am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

The Word of the Lord

Gospel: Luke 3:1-6 read from the New Living Translation

It was now the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius, the Roman emperor. Pontius Pilate was governor over Judea; Herod Antipas was ruler over Galilee; his brother Philip was ruler over Iturea and Traconitis; Lysanias was ruler over Abilene. Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. At this time a message from God came to John son of Zechariah, who was living in the wilderness. Then John went from place to place on both sides of the Jordan River, preaching that people should be baptized to show that they had repented of their sins and turned to God to be forgiven. Isaiah had spoken of John when he said, "He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord's coming! Clear the road for him! The valleys will be filled, and the mountains and hills made level. The curves will be straightened, and the rough places made smooth. And then all people will see the salvation sent from God.'"

The Gospel of the Lord

Closing Prayer: On December 13th we remember Lucy or Lucia, Martyr at Syracuse

Read from *A Great Cloud of Witnesses*

Lucy, or Luchia, was martyred at Syracuse, in Sicily, during Diocletian's reign of Terror of 303-304, among the most dramatic of the persecutions of early Christians. Her tomb can still be found in the catacombs at Syracuse. She was venerated soon after her death and her cult spread quickly throughout the Church. She is among the saints and martyrs named in the Roman Canon of the Mass.

Most of the details of Lucy's life are obscure. In the tradition, she is remembered for the purity of her life and gentleness of her spirit. Because her name means "light," she is sometimes thought of as the patron saint of those who suffer from diseases of the eyes.

In popular piety, Lucy is perhaps most revered because her feast day, December 11th, was for many centuries the shortest day of the year. (The reform of the calendar by Pope Gregory VIII in 1582 would shift the shortest day to December 21/22, depending upon the year.) It was on Lucy's day that the light began gradually to return and the days to lengthen. This was particularly powerful in northern Europe, where the days of winter were quite short. In Scandinavian countries, particularly Sweden, Lucy's day has long been a festival of light that is kept as both an ecclesiastical commemoration and a domestic observance.

In the domestic celebration of Luchia-fest, a young girl in the family dresses in pure white (a symbol of Lucy's faith, purity, and martyrdom) and wears a crown of lighted candles upon her head (a sign that on Lucy's day the light is returning) and serves her family special foods prepared especially for the day. In praise of her service, the young girl is called Lucy for the day.

Let us pray: Loving God, for the salvation of all you gave Jesus Christ as light to a world in darkness: illumine us, with your daughter Lucy, with the light of Christ, that by the merits of his passion we may be led to eternal life; through the same Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**