

Second Sunday of Advent, Dec. 7

The Collect and Psalm will be read from The Episcopal Church Book of Common Prayer

The Old Testament, Epistle and Gospel will be read from the North American Standard Bible

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: Isaiah 11:1-10

Then a shoot will spring from the stem of Jesse,

And a Branch from his roots will bear fruit.

2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,

The spirit of wisdom and understanding,

The spirit of counsel and strength,

The spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

3 And He will delight in the fear of the LORD,

And He will not judge by what His eyes see,

Nor make decisions by what His ears hear;

4 But with righteousness He will judge the poor,

And decide with fairness for the humble of the earth;

And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth,

And with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked.

5 Also righteousness will be the belt *around* His hips,

And faithfulness the belt *around* His waist.

6 And the wolf will dwell with the lamb,

And the leopard will lie down with the young goat,

And the calf and the young lion and the fattened steer *will be* together;

And a little boy will lead them.

7 Also the cow and the bear will graze,

Their young will lie down together,

And the lion will eat straw like the ox.

8 The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra,

And the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.

9 They will not hurt or destroy in all My holy mountain,

For the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD

As the waters cover the sea.

10 Then on that day

The nations will resort to the root of Jesse,

Who will stand as a signal flag for the peoples;

And His resting place will be glorious.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Psalm: Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19

¹ Give the King your justice, O God, *

and your righteousness to the King's Son;

² That he may rule your people righteously *

and the poor with justice;

³ That the mountains may bring prosperity to the people, *

and the little hills bring righteousness.

⁴ He shall defend the needy among the people; *

he shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor.

⁵ He shall live as long as the sun and moon endure, *

from one generation to another.

⁶ He shall come down like rain upon the mown field, *

like showers that water the earth.

⁷ In his time shall the righteous flourish; *

there shall be abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

¹⁸ Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, *

who alone does wondrous deeds!

¹⁹ And blessed be his glorious Name for ever! *

and may all the earth be filled with his glory.

Amen. Amen.

Epistle: Romans 15:4-13

4 For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one purpose *and* one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us, for the glory of God. 8 For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision in behalf of the truth of God, to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers, 9 and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written:

“THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,
AND I WILL SING PRAISES TO YOUR NAME.”

10 Again he says,

“REJOICE, YOU GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.”

11 And again,

“PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES,
AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.”

12 Again Isaiah says,

“THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE,
AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES,
IN HIM WILL THE GENTILES HOPE.”

13 Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

3 Now in those days John the Baptist *came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 2 “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.” 3 For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said,

“THE VOICE OF ONE CALLING OUT IN THE WILDERNESS,
‘PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD,
MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!’”

4 Now John himself had a garment of camel’s hair and a leather belt around his waist; and his food was locusts and wild honey. 5 At that time Jerusalem was going out to him, and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan; 6 and they were being baptized by him in the Jordan River, as they confessed their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, “You offspring of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Therefore produce fruit consistent with repentance; 9 and do not assume that you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham *as our* father’; for I tell you that God is able, from these stones, to raise up children for Abraham. 10 And the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; therefore, every tree that does not bear good fruit is being cut down and thrown into the fire.

11 “As for me, I baptize you with water for repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I, and I am not fit to remove His sandals; He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clear His threshing floor; and He will gather His wheat into the barn, but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.”

The Gospel of the Lord

On December 13 we celebrate the life of Lucy (Lucia), Martyr at Syracuse

Read from A Great Cloud of Witnesses.

Lucy, or Lucia, 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 the 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 11, was

for many centuries the shortest day of the year. (The reform of the calendar by Pope Gregory VIII 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 Lucia-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.**