



Advent 3, Dec. 13, 2020
Brightly Shining

Gathering

Lucy of Syracuse has been one of our winter saints for over 1500 years. In an age when it was a young woman's duty to marry the man chosen by her family, Lucy had dedicated her life to God and refused to marry. All attempts to force her failed, and she was denounced as a Christian, threatened with horrific consequences if she did not renounce Jesus. She stood firm. Lucy's name, from the Latin Lux, means 'light'. Lucy is commemorated in winter's growing dark, a symbol of the light of faith driving back darkness, pointing to the Light coming at Christmas.

Lucy's witness is full of suffering that is hard to read. It is tempting to edit her story and make it less 'triggering', easier to bear. Our holiday season is already full of fluff and 'feel good' specials. Goodness knows we can use what lifts our spirits right now! Yet Lucy's story, with all the saints, real people past and present lift our hearts better than any human-made entertainment. They show us that faith can strengthen us, making us community, bringing joy and light in the most difficult times.

A time of prelude and prayer as we ready our hearts for worship

KYRIE

O Lord, have mercy and come to us. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Key of David and scepter of the house of Israel,

you open and no one can close, you close and no one can open:

Come and rescue the prisoners who are in darkness and the shadow of death.

O Dayspring, splendor of light everlasting:

Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.

O King of the nations, the ruler they long for, the cornerstone uniting all people:

Come and save us all, whom you formed out of clay.

O Emmanuel, our King and our Lawgiver, the anointed of the nations and their Savior:

Come and save us, O Lord our God.

The sign of the cross may be made in remembrance of our Baptism.

Blessed be God: Father, Son, + and Holy Spirit.

and blessed be His kingdom, now and forever!

As we look to the advent of Christ, let us draw near to God with willing hearts,
confessing our sin before God and one other.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

We confess we are distracted, anxious and weary.

Yet we have not made time to seek your peace and light.

We have failed to do justice; we have not been Christ to one another.

We confess our sin and need to you, Lord, and we pray:

Have mercy! Open our hearts to your advent in our lives,

Strengthen us to walk in hope,

seek justice and peace for our families, our community,

and the world. Come, Lord Jesus!

In the mercy of almighty God, and by his authority, I tell you your sins are forgiven. May you know joy in the Savior's coming, in the Name of the Father, Son + and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

HYMN

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Let us pray... We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that shines with hope and peace.
As light grows with each candle on this wreath may we be like Lucy, sister, saint and martyr,
and let our light shine with the love of Christ that Creation may shine with His coming.
We pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain, and whose day draws near. **Amen!**

The Word

The first reading is from Isaiah, the sixtieth chapter.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

²For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you.

³And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising.

⁴Lift up your eyes all around, and see; they all gather together, they come to you;
your sons shall come from afar, and your daughters shall be carried on the hip.

⁵Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult,
the sun shall be no more your light by day,

nor for brightness shall the moon give you light; but the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God** (Isaiah 60:1-6; 19)

Silence for Reflection

Psalms 30 is read responsively by verse:

I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up
and have not let my foes rejoice over me.

²**O LORD my God, I cried to you for help,
and you have healed me.**

³O LORD, you have brought up my soul from Sheol;
you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.

⁴**Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints,
and give thanks to his holy name.**

⁵For his anger is but for a moment,
and his favor is for a lifetime.

**Weeping may tarry for the night,
but joy comes with the morning. Amen.**

Silence for Reflection

The second reading is from 1st Thessalonians, the fifth chapter.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. The Word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God.** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-24)

Silence for Reflection

Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,
The glory of our God shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see the salvation of our God. Alleluia, Alleluia!

The Holy Gospel according to John, the first chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord!**

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. The Gospel of our Lord! **Praise to you, O Christ!** (John 1:1-4, 6-14)

Teaching the Word (Sermon)

Reflection

Hearing the Word is followed by a time for reflection and meditation.

HYMN

CREED & PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

In confidence and hope, let us confess our faith:

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The PRAYERS of the Church

Looking forward to Christ's coming with hope, we pray for church and community, and for all weary hearts awaiting justice, wholeness and peace.

Silence for Reflection

For the whole Church, that like Lucy we might carry the Light of Christ into the world and shine as witnesses to new life: O God, in your mercy: **hear our prayer.**

O God, be present for all whose souls are burdened, who are on our hearts today, especially those we name before you now:

- all in need of healing care, and those who cannot find the care they need;
- those who are struggling to meet the needs of home and work and family;
- all weary and stressed by trying to make ends meet, by financial fears,

Other petitions may be added...

May their needs and their fears be given over to you, that they may know wholeness and peace: God in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

With thanksgiving we remember St Lucy and all our friends and relatives who have died and rest securely in your arms. May the hope of Christ shine in our hearts, that we may come to the unfailing and eternal light of the Lamb of God in paradise. God of peace and mercy, **C hear our prayer.**

O God, hear the prayers we make that this weary world may be renewed in the light of Christ, our Emmanuel, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

The Peace of the Lord be with you always! **And also with you!**

Please offer peace to those with you, in your heart or across Social Media. Offerings can be made online by going to the website, using the QR code with your smartphone or mailed.

We are grateful for your continuing support of our mission and ministry! Then continue:



Let us pray: All we call our own are gifts of Your mercy and love.
**May these offerings be a symbol of our whole lives,
given with grateful hearts to become a blessing to others.
Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need
until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Emmanuel. Amen.**

Sending

GOSPEL CANTICLE: *The Benedictus, the Song of Zachariah.*

Blessed are you Lord, the God of Israel;
you have come to your people and set them free.

**You have raised up for us a mighty Savior,
born of the house of your servant David.**

Through your holy prophets, you promised of old
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all who hate us,
to show mercy to our forebears, and to remember your holy covenant.

**This was the oath you swore to our ancestors Sarah and Abraham:
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
free to worship you without fear,
holy and righteous in your sight, all the days of our lives.**

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.**

**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**

Announcements

Announcements were sent earlier in the week by USPS and email. Pastor may choose to call attention to one or more, or share announcements that were not included.

Dismissal

THE NUNC DIMITTIS

Lord, now let your servant go in peace
according to Your word.

**For mine eyes have seen Your salvation;
Which you have prepared before the face of all people;**

A light to reveal You to the nations,
And the glory of Your people Israel.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning,
is now, and ever shall be world without end. Amen.**

Blessing and Benediction

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
enlighten weary hearts, and guard your hearts and your minds through faith in Christ Jesus;
in the Name of God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

HYMN

Dwell in peace, serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

THE POSTLUDE



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