

This downloadable resource from Concordia Publishing House includes fully customizable resources for the pastor and musician, designed to lead the Christian congregation through the season of Advent in preparation for the Christmas celebration. Concordia Publishing House also offers coordinated Daily Devotion booklets and standard size bulletin covers that may be used to enrich the worship of those congregations using this series. More information about coordinated products may be found at cph.org/advent. This preview document contains excerpted portions of the major components for Midweek of Advent 1.

Resources for Advent–Christmas Preaching and Worship

Sermon series by Daniel Gard

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PREACHING AND TEACHING RESOURCES

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1

Sermon: “Jesus, the Seed of Jesse’s Tree” Genesis 1:27; 3:8–15

Children’s Message: “Jesus, the Seed of Jesse’s Tree”

Bible Study: Genesis 1:27; 3:8–15; Romans 5:12–21

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 2

Sermon: “Jesus, the Root of Jesse’s Tree” Genesis 22:1–18

Children’s Message: “Jesus, the Root of Jesse’s Tree”

Bible Study: Genesis 22:1–18; Hebrews 11:17–22

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 3

Sermon: “Jesus, the Life of Jesse’s Tree” Matthew 3:13–17

Children’s Message: “Jesus, the Life of Jesse’s Tree”

Bible Study: Matthew 3:13–17; Romans 6:1–11

NATIVITY—CHRISTMAS EVE OR CHRISTMAS DAY

Sermon: “Jesus, the Firstfruit of Jesse’s Tree” John 1:1–14

Children’s Message: “Jesus, the Firstfruit of Jesse’s Tree”

Bible Study: John 1:1–14

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: CHILDREN’S SERMON

JESUS, THE SEED OF JESSE’S TREE

TEXT: GENESIS 1:27; 3:8–15

VISUALS: TREE AND PIECE OF FRUIT, FAMILY TREE

SUMMARY: ADAM AND EVE ATE THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT. GOD PROMISED JESUS, FRUIT OF THE FAMILY TREE, TO RECONCILE HIS CHILDREN TO HIMSELF.

Have you ever seen a family tree before? (*Show your example.*) This piece of paper shows a family—the grandparents, the parents, the children, the grandchildren . . . and it looks kind of like a tree.

Let’s talk about another tree. (*Show tree or Jesse Tree symbol.*) Adam and Eve were the first people. They could enjoy all of creation! They could eat any fruit of any tree in the Garden of Eden. Except one. And guess what they did? (*Allow answers.*)

Yes. Adam and Even thought they knew better than God. They listened to the devil, and they ate the fruit that they were not supposed to eat. (*Show fruit.*) We don’t know what kind of fruit it was for sure, but we do know that this sin of . . .

[Full children’s message available with purchase.]

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: SERMON AND NOTES

Jesse Tree

TEXT: GENESIS 1:27; 3:8–15 (TREE WITH FRUIT OR APPLE)

SECOND READING: ROMANS 5:12–21

SERMON HYMN: “WHAT HOPE! AN EDEN PROPHESED” (*LSB* 342)

SERMON BULLETIN INTRODUCTION

Every earthly tree has a beginning—a moment of planting and life. The tree of Jesse is no different. There was a beginning as God created Adam from the dust and formed Eve from Adam. But sin and death came to that tree—a destruction that could only be reversed when the Creator of the tree would Himself become the Seed of new life in the midst of death.

EXEGETICAL AND HOMILETICAL OBSERVATIONS

GENESIS 3:8–15

This is one of the most familiar texts of the Bible; it describes the immediate result of the fall of humanity (3:1–7) and the immediate first promise of a Savior (*protoevangelium*). It is the “first Gospel” that stands at the heart of the text and gives shape to the interpretation of all Old Testament prophecies of the Christ. The following note focuses on the central verse of the text.

3:15

“I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

Note that the Hebrew word for “offspring” or “seed” in other translations (זָרַע) is a singular noun—not many, but one. Lutheran commentaries and study Bibles have historically noted this and correctly identified the “seed” as being fulfilled solely in Jesus. It is not the man’s seed; it is the woman’s seed . . . [Full sermon notes available with purchase.]

THEME: JESUS, THE SEED OF JESSE’S TREE

- I. The beauty of the Creator’s work
 - A. All He made was called “good.”
 - B. All lived in harmony with the Creator.
- II. The ugliness of humanity’s sin
 - A. Eden was to become a memory of the past.
 - B. The love of the Creator could not change.
- III. The promise of a new creation
 - A. A Seed is promised.
 - B. A new tree will grow.

INTRODUCTION

There is one story that the Bible tells: it is the history of our salvation. But to understand the end of a story, one must go back. Way back. To when it all began.

The story of salvation does not begin with the incarnation—though everything in time before leads to the incarnation and everything afterward flows from that central point in history. We see that story in the Jesse Tree—a story that is Jesus’ story and is our story as well. Look around you and you might see a growing tree—an oak, a pine, a maple. Yet the mightiest tree in nature began as a small seed, so small that the world takes no notice.

And so our story begins. Back to the beginning. Back to the tree on the Jesse Tree. Way back when the story of our salvation began.

JESUS, THE SEED OF JESSE’S TREE

- I. The beauty of the Creator’s work
 - A. All He made was called “good.”

We all have heard the story of creation. With the words “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), the panorama of the history of the universe begins. We also know that the crown of creation came on the sixth day when “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27). Creation, including the human race, was not by accident or chance but by the intentional act of the eternal God. And again and again, God saw what He had made, and again and again, He called it “good.”
 - B. All lived in harmony with the Creator.

And good it was! For the man and the woman, God planted a garden we know as Eden. There, our first parents lived a life of harmony and peace with nature, with each other, and with the One who had created them. Sin and its ugly consequences were unknown in this world. So many have

dreamed of living again in an earthly Eden, a utopia of humanity's own making. But only God can create that which is truly good and a true Eden.

II. The ugliness of humanity's sin

A. Eden was to become a memory of the past.

How beautiful was that paradise known as Eden! Yet it was not to last. You and I can see its loss just by looking around us or by looking into a mirror. We see brokenness and sin. We see hate and war. We see despair and hopelessness. In other words, our eyes bear witness to what happened in the Garden of Eden. You know the story. The serpent tempted the woman. Her husband stood by and watched and then with her ate of the fruit of the one tree that was forbidden to them. Yet their initial sin was not in the physical eating but rather in their hearts choosing to listen to the serpent and rejecting the Creator's loving law. A seed of doubt caused an act that would close the gates of Eden to all humanity.

B. The love of the Creator could not change.

So what does the Creator do to those who sinned against Him? . . . [Full sermon notes available with purchase.]

PREVIEW OF THE JESSE TREE IS THE JESUS TREE: BIBLE STUDY

OVERVIEW OF THE BIBLE STUDIES

1. Advent 1—Jesus, the Seed of Jesse's Tree (Genesis 1:27; 3:8–15; Romans 5:12–21)
2. Advent 2—Jesus, the Root of Jesse's Tree (Genesis 22:1–18; Hebrews 11:17–22)
3. Advent 3—Jesus, the Life of Jesse's Tree (Matthew 3:13–17; Romans 6:1–11)
4. Christmas—Jesus, the Firstfruit of Jesse's Tree (John 1:1–14)

GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE THEME

It is Advent—a time to reflect, pray, and worship the Christ who came, who comes, and who will come again. Imagine the world some two thousand years ago in the weeks before the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. People were busy doing whatever it was that defined their lives at that moment. For some, it was struggling against hunger, fear, and desperation. For others, it was enjoying their wealth and ease. For yet others, it was simply dealing with the pressures of their lives. But for all, the weeks we call “Advent” were just days and nights lived in darkness.

And indeed, it is a dark world. God had created the world to live in union with Him. He had breathed life into the father of our race, Adam, a creature of dust. He had formed Eve from the side of Adam and had joined the two together and to Himself. How bright the world must have been as Eden lived in harmony with the Creator.

But darkness came. Those created and loved by God rebelled against Him, bringing a darkness that permeated all creation. Death had entered through sin, and as the children of Adam filled the world, they took with them the darkness of that dreadful day in Eden when sin and death entered the world.

It was a world of darkness cut off from the source of all light, the Creator. Yet a light was breaking into the world. A young girl carried in her virgin womb a Son. This daughter of Eve was about to give birth to the One who would be the light of the world. This infant would reverse forever the horror of humanity's fall into sin and death and darkness. This was the miracle of miracles: our human sister Mary became, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the mother of God, the bearer of the Savior of the world.

No human eye could perceive it that night. All that could be seen was a child. Yet this child would forever destroy the darkness for He brought life into death, and His light was to be the light of the world. . . . [Full introduction available with purchase.]

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: LEADER

Jesus, the Seed of Jesse's Tree

Genesis 1:27; 3:8–15; Romans 5:12–21

OPENING

Pray: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen. (Collect for Advent 1, *LSB Altar Book*, p. 840)

INTRODUCTION

Along with Christmas trees and Advent calendars, many Christians today follow some form of Jesse Tree tradition to mark the season of Advent. For each day in Advent, a Bible story is read and an ornament with a symbol connected to that story is hung upon a tree. Not surprisingly, the creation and fall (Genesis 1–3) are usually the first stories read. Likewise, this lesson takes us back to the beginning to see where the story of the Jesse Tree (which is the Jesus Tree!) has its seed.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1. Jesse, the father of David, appears in the genealogies of Jesus given in both Matthew 1:1–17 and Luke 3:23–38. While he is a crucial link in the chain, he certainly is not the main character. Compare Matthew 1:1–2, 17 with Luke 3:23, 38. What emphases does each evangelist make in structuring Jesus' genealogy in different ways?

A1. A close reading of the two genealogies of Jesus seems to reveal contradictions, but these can be explained. Most interesting is how Matthew and Luke structure the genealogies for theological emphases. As we shall see, the Holy Spirit inspired the evangelists to highlight different aspects of the person and work of Jesus Christ. . . . [Full answers available in the Leader's Guide with purchase.]

Transition: In order to appreciate what Christ has done for us, we need to understand our original state in the Garden of Eden and the consequences of the fall into sin.

[Full Leader's Guide available with purchase.]

CONCLUSION

“So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours . . . all are yours, and you are Christ’s, and Christ is God’s” (1 Corinthians 3:21–23). As sinners, we are constantly selling ourselves short. We want to have it all, but we fail to find the “all” by looking for it in the creation rather than in the Creator, by trying to save our lives in this world rather than looking to the Savior. If, by faith, we embrace the fact that we really do have it all in Christ—forgiveness of sins without measure, life and salvation now and forever—we will be able to drive out that seed of doubt that suggests God is holding out on us, and we can enjoy being grafted into the tree of the Seed of Jesse’s tree, Jesus.

Close with prayer.

CLOSING

Pray: Lord Jesus Christ, You were the blessed Seed promised to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and You preserved Your line through Jesse so that You could be both David’s Son and David’s Lord in Your incarnation. May we who lost the gift of righteousness through the fall of Adam rejoice that we have been more gloriously restored through Your saving work on our behalf; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: STUDENT

Jesus, the Seed of Jesse’s Tree

Genesis 1:27; 3:8–15; Romans 5:12–21

OPENING

Pray: Stir up . . .

INTRODUCTION

Along with Christmas . . .

[Full prayer and introduction included in Leader’s Guide and the Student’s section.]

QUESTIONS

1. Jesse, the father of David, appears in the genealogies of Jesus given in both Matthew 1:1–17 and Luke 3:23–38. While he is a crucial link in the chain, he certainly is not the main character. Compare Matthew 1:1–2, 17 with Luke 3:23, 38. What emphases does each evangelist make in structuring Jesus’ genealogy in different ways?
2. What does Genesis 1:27 teach about humanity? How is the situation altered after the fall, according to Genesis 5:1–5?

3. According to Genesis 3:7–15, what does the introduction of sin into the world do to Adam and Eve? How do they try to deal with their sin, and does this pattern continue still today? How does God deal with sin?

[Full student guide available with purchase.]

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE

[] Indicates material parenthetical to the worship planners, to be deleted from the worship folder.

VESPERS

JESUS, THE SEED OF JESSE’S TREE

Advent means “coming.” As the largest of trees begin with a seed, so it is with God’s promise to save the world from sin and death. Salvation is coming. After the fall, God promised that the fruit of Adam and Eve would one day be wounded, yet He would crush the head of sin and death. From that seed of a promise sprouted numerous signposts of the Coming One: the promise to Abraham and Sarah, the crossing of the Red Sea, the prophets declaring that out of the stump of Jesse would sprout a Savior. The seed of salvation, promised long ago, was born into the world in Jesus, His first advent. And now, during this Advent season, we await with joyful hope His second advent. Jesus, the Seed, has been planted in a tomb and sprouted forth to new life, filling us with hope as we wait, watch, and prepare for Jesus’ second advent.

HYMN

“What Hope! An Eden Prophesied” (LSB 342)

What hope! An Eden prophesied
Where tame live with the wild;
The lamb and lion side by side,
Led by a little child!

A shoot will sprout from Jesse’s stem,
A branch from David’s line,
A Prince of Peace in Bethlehem:
The fruit of God’s design.

As banner of God’s love unfurled,
Christ came to suffer loss,
That by His death a dying world
Would rally to the cross.

Come, Jesus, come, Messiah Lord,
Lost Paradise restore;
Lead past the angel’s flaming sword—
Come, open heaven’s door.

Stand

- L O Lord, open my lips,
C **and my mouth will declare Your praise.**
- L Make haste, O God, to deliver me;
C **make haste to help me, O Lord.**
- C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
Praise to You, O Christ, King who comes to save us.**

+ PSALMODY +

PSALM

Psalm 126; antiphon: v. 5

[Antiphon sung by congregation, then alternate between pastor and people. All sing Gloria Patri.]

- C **Those who | sow in tears***
shall reap with | shouts of joy!
- L When the LORD restored the fortunes of | Zion,*
we were like | those who dream.
- C **Then our mouth was filled with | laughter,***
and our tongue with | shouts of joy;
- L then they said among the nations,
“The LORD has done great | things for them.”*
The LORD has done great things for us; | we are glad.
- C **Restore our fortunes, | O LORD,***
like streams in the | Negeb!

[Full customizable traditional service available with purchase.]

Sit

OFFICE HYMN

“The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns” (*LSB* 348)

+ READINGS +

FIRST READING

Genesis 1:27; 3:8–15

- L A reading from Genesis, the first and third chapters.

^{1:27} So God created man in His own image,
in the image of God He created him;

male and female He created them.

^{3:8} And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking. . .

[Full customizable traditional service available with purchase.]

L O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING

Romans 5:12–21

L A reading from Romans, the fifth chapter.

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— ¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from . . .

[Full customizable traditional service available with purchase.]

L O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSORY FOR ADVENT

LSB, p. 230

L Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch.

C **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

L In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely.

C **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

L Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

C **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

CATECHESIS

C **What do the Scriptures teach about Christ's conception?**

L They teach that Christ, the Son of God, received a true human body and soul in the Virgin Mary through the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit, not through a human father.

C **Where is this in Scripture?**

L Luke 1:35, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."

+ CANTICLE +

[Note: The congregation has a choice: either the Canticle “My Soul Rejoices” (LSB 933) or the Antiphon and Magnificat as printed in Vespers (LSB, p. 231).]

Stand

ANTIPHON

LSB, p. 231

L Let my prayer rise before You as incense,
C **and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

[If Magnificat is used, congregation sings it together.]

MAGNIFICAT

C **My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior;**
! for He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.
@ For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.
! For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;
@ and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.
! He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
@ He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted the lowly.
! He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.
@ He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.
C **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Sit

OFFERING

+ PRAYER +

Kneel/Stand

KYRIE

LSB, p. 233

C **Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.**

LORD'S PRAYER

**C Our Father who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom come,**

[Full customizable traditional service available with purchase.]

COLLECTS

L O Lord, hear my prayer.

C And let my cry come to You.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P Stir up Your power, . . .

C Amen.

ADDITIONAL COLLECTS OF INTERCESSION AND THANKSGIVING

COLLECT

P Gracious Father, You promised long ago . . .

C Amen.

COLLECT FOR PEACE

LSB, p. 233

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, . . .

C Amen.

[Full collects and customizable traditional service available with purchase.]

Acknowledgments

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PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: CREATIVE WORSHIP SERVICE

[] Indicates material parenthetical to the worship planners, to be deleted from the worship folder.

JESUS, THE SEED OF JESSE'S TREE

AS WE GATHER

“Very good.” These are the words used in Genesis 1 to describe what God sees as He looks over everything that He has just made. All of creation, including humanity, is perfect and just as God intended it to be. Yet, that perfection does not last long. With Adam and Eve’s disobedience of God’s command to not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, sin enters the world. What was once “very good” is now fallen, imperfect, and not-so-good. Yet, already in Genesis 3:15, the Lord promises One who will save. Eve’s offspring, Jesus, will bring redemption

by another tree—the tree of the cross. Through His birth, life, death, resurrection, and return, all creation will be restored and will again be “very good”!

+ PREPARATION +

HYMN

“What Hope! An Eden Prophesied” (*LSB* 342)

What hope! An Eden prophesied
Where tame live with the wild;
The lamb and lion side by side,
Led by a little child!

A shoot will sprout from Jesse’s stem,
A branch from David’s line,
A Prince of Peace in Bethlehem:
The fruit of God’s design.

As banner of God’s love unfurled,
Christ came to suffer loss,
That by His death a dying world
Would rally to the cross.

Come, Jesus, come, Messiah Lord,
Lost Paradise restore;
Lead past the angel’s flaming sword—
Come, open heaven’s door.

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[OR]

“Once He Came in Blessing” (*LSB* 333)

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES

Isaiah 11:1; Genesis 3:15; Romans 5:19

P There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse,
C **and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit.**

P I will put enmity between you and the woman,
C **and between your offspring and her offspring;**
P He shall bruise your head,
C **and you shall bruise His heel.**

P For as by the one man’s disobedience

C **the many were made sinners,**
P so by the one man's obedience
C **the many will be made righteous.**

SERVICE OF LIGHT

P The Spirit and the Church cry out:
C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P All those who await His appearance pray:
C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P The whole creation pleads:
C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P Awaiting the shoot from the stump of Jesse, we implore:
C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

As the hymn is sung, the candles of the Advent wreath and/or on the altar are lighted.

HYMN OF LIGHT

“O Light Whose Splendor” (LSB 891)

[OR, if not an evening service]

“Light of Light, O Sole-Begotten” (LSB 914)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
C **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

P Blessed are You, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who had mercy on Adam and Eve after they disobeyed Your loving command in the Garden of Eden, promising a second greater Adam who is the light of the world. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ; may His Word be a lamp to our feet and light to our path; for You are merciful, and You love Your whole creation and we, Your creatures, glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

+ WORD +

PSALM

LSB, p. 245

C **Let my prayer rise before You as incense,
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

! O Lord, I call to You; come to me quickly;
hear my voice when I cry to You.

- C Let my prayer rise before You as incense,
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**
- @ Set a watch before my mouth, O Lord, and guard the door of my lips.
! Let not my heart incline to any evil thing;
let me not be occupied in wickedness with evildoers.
- @ But my eyes are turned to You, O God; in You I take refuge.
Strip me not of my life.
- C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**Let my prayer rise before You as incense,
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

FIRST READING

Romans 5:12–21

P A reading from Romans, the fifth chapter.

¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— ¹³ for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. . . .

[Full reading included with purchase.]

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Genesis 1:27; 3:8–15

P A reading from Genesis, the first and third chapters.

^{1:27} So God created man in His own image,
in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them.

^{3:8} And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God . . .

[Full reading included with purchase.]

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

[OR]

P A reading from Genesis, the first and third chapters.

So God created man in His own image,

in the image of God He created him;
male and female He created them.

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" And he said,

C "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself."

P He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" The man said,

C "The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."

P Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said,

C "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

P The LORD God said to the serpent, . . .

[Full reading included with purchase.]

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

P In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.

C But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.

MAGNIFICAT

"My Soul Rejoices" (*LSB* 933)

THE LITANY

P In peace let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For [names of synodical and district presidents], for all pastors in Christ, for all servants of the Church, and for all the people, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For [name of president or monarch], for all public servants, for the government and those who protect us, that they may be upheld and strengthened in every good deed, let us pray to the Lord:

C Lord, have mercy.

P For those who work to bring peace, justice, health, and protection in this and every place, let us pray to the Lord: . . .

[Full litany included with purchase.]

The prayers then continue:

P For the faithful who have gone before us and are with Christ, let us give thanks to the Lord:

C **Alleluia.**

P Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Silence for individual prayer may follow.

P Rejoicing in the fellowship of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, one another, and our whole life to Christ, our Lord:

C **To You, O Lord.**

P O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

C **Our Father who art in heaven, . . .**

[Full Lord's Prayer included with purchase.]

SERMON HYMN

“The Tree of Life” (*LSB* 561)

[OR]

“God Loves Me Dearly” (*LSB* 392)

SERMON . . .

[Full customizable creative worship service available with purchase.]