

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.

Symbols of Salvation: *Foretelling Christ's Birth*

Resources for Advent–Christmas Preaching and Worship

Sermon series by Aaron A. Koch

Contributors: Thomas Handrick, Sr., David Rogner,
and Jacob B. Weber.

Ordinarily, when we think of Old Testament prophecies of the birth of Christ, we have in mind specific verses such as, “The virgin shall conceive and bear a son” (Isaiah 7:14); “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given” (Isaiah 9:6); and “From you [O Bethlehem] shall come forth for Me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days” (Micah 5:2). These direct prophecies point clearly to the coming of Jesus as the Savior Messiah.

But in addition to these wonderful verses, Jesus teaches us that, in fact, the entire Old Testament prophesies about Him—“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, [Jesus] interpreted to them *in all the Scriptures* the things concerning *Himself*” (Luke 24:27, emphasis added). “For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, *because only through Christ is it taken away*” (2 Corinthians 3:14, emphasis added). “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; *and it is they that bear witness about Me*” (John 5:39, emphasis added). All of the Bible is about Jesus. From the very beginning of creation, the ways God interacts with His people give us living symbols that foreshadow and foretell Jesus’ advent among us in the flesh. As the hymn puts it,

For deep in prophets’ sacred page,
And grand in poets’ winged word,
Slowly in type, from age to age
The nations saw their coming Lord. (*LSB* 810:2)

The various “types” in the Old Testament point to a complete fulfillment in Jesus. He is the perfect Israel and the culmination of its divinely given institutions. He is the embodiment of the Scriptures, for “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). The Old Testament is not just a historical record; it was and continues to be the active, Spirit-filled Word of God that proclaims Christ to us.

The Advent sermons in this series focus on three particular Old Testament narratives that serve as symbols of Jesus’ coming to share in our humanity: the burning bush, the cloud in the tabernacle, and the call of Gideon. The Christmas sermon then focuses on how the narrative of Jesus’ birth is no fairy tale but a true story that also foretells the purpose of Jesus’ incarnation. Jesus takes on our flesh so that He might die in the flesh for our sins and be raised bodily for our justification (Romans 4:25). All of Scripture finds its culmination and fulfillment in Him. May God the Father, by the power of the Holy Spirit, bless our meditation this season on Him who is the Word made flesh!

FEATURES

Symbols of Salvation: Foretelling Christ’s Birth—Resources for Advent–Christmas Preaching and Worship from Concordia Publishing House includes fully customizable resources for the pastor and musician. It is designed to lead the Christian congregation through the season of Advent in preparation for the Christmas celebration, and it consists of the following components:

PREACHING AND TEACHING RESOURCES

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1

The burning bush foretells the time when the Son of God would descend to this world again and take on our human nature in order to deliver us from our enemies..

Sermon: “Old Testament Christmas” Exodus 3:1-14

Children’s Message: “Old Testament Christmas” Exodus 3:1–14 (Matthew 1:18–23)

Bible Study: “Old Testament Christmas” Exodus 3:1-14

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 2

The Son of God, who once dwelt among His people in a tent made of animal skins, has made His eternal dwelling place among us in our human skin in order to bring us back to life with God.

Sermon: “The Lord Sets Up His Tent Among Us” Exodus 40:17–21, 34–38

Children’s Message: “The Lord Sets Up His Tent Among Us” Genesis 22:1–18; Exodus 40:17–21, 34–38 (John 1:14–18)

Bible Study: “The Lord Sets Up His Tent Among Us” Exodus 40:17-21, 34-38

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 3

By means of the weakest and least, the Lord, as one man, conquers our enemies and rescues us.

Sermon: “You Shall Defeat Them as One Man” Judges 6:11–24; (7:2–9)

Children’s Message: “You Shall Defeat Them as One Man” Matthew 3:13–17; Judges 6:11–24 (7:2–9) (Luke 1:68–79)

Bible Study: “You Shall Defeat Them as One Man” Judges 6:11-24; (7:2-9); Micah 5:2-5a

NATIVITY—CHRISTMAS EVE OR CHRISTMAS DAY

The true story of Jesus’ birth reveals and foretells the reconciliation of God and man and the fulfillment of history in His incarnation and death and resurrection.

Sermon: “The Living Nativity” Isaiah 9:2–7

Children’s Message: “The Living Nativity” Luke 2:1–20

Bible Study: “The Living Nativity” Isaiah 9:2–7; Luke 2:1–20

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTMAS

TEXT: EXODUS 3:1–14 (MATTHEW 1:18–23)

VISUALS: A PICTURE OF A CHRISTMAS TREE AND A PICTURE OF THE BURNING BUSH. (CONSIDER FRAMING EACH WEEK’S PICTURES.)

SUMMARY: GOD WAS PRESENT WHEN HE SPOKE TO MOSES AND DELIVERED HIS PEOPLE. GOD WAS PRESENT WHEN JESUS CAME AS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD ON CHRISTMAS.

Do you know what this is? (*Show the picture of the Christmas tree.*) I bet you have one of these in your home this month. We’ll have a Christmas tree here at church too. (*Talk about the location of your tree(s), the special decorations provided by the congregation, and so on.*)

One decoration that makes a Christmas tree special is the lights. Those lights sure make the tree beautiful, and they also teach us something. The lights on the tree remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Those lights can sure be bright!

(Show the picture of the burning bush.) This bush is different from a Christmas tree. It sure is bright! Why? Does it have lights on it? *(Allow answers.)* You're right. This bush doesn't have lights on it. It's burning! But this fire doesn't burn up the bush. This is a special fire. God used this fire to show Moses that He was God and that He was there, with Moses . . .

[Full children's message available with purchase.]

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: SERMON AND NOTES

TEXT: EXODUS 3:1–14

GOSPEL: JOHN 15:1–8

SERMON BULLETIN INTRODUCTION

As we prepare to celebrate the coming of our Lord in the flesh to save us from our sins, we are reminded that the first Christmas wasn't the first time He revealed Himself to His people on earth. The Son of God comes to His people in tangible ways throughout the Old Testament to speak to them and to bring them deliverance. One such occasion is at the burning bush. The *Malak Yahweh* appears to Moses. *Malak* means "messenger." So while this phrase is usually translated as "Angel of the Lord," it does not refer in this case to any created angel but to the Lord Himself, the messenger of the Father. The Son of God comes down into the burning bush to announce how Israel will be delivered from their slavery to the Egyptians. This foreshadows the greater salvation to come when the Lord will join Himself permanently to our human nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin Mary. As the bush did not burn up at His presence, so the Lord Jesus did not come to destroy us but to save us and make us His own, like living branches of Him who is the vine.

TEXTUAL NOTES

Exodus 3:1 רֹעֵה אֶת־צֹאן (Roe eth-tzan)—keeping/shepherding the flock. It should not be ignored that Moses was a shepherd at the time of his call by the Lord. Like Peter, who went from being a fisherman to a fisher of men (Luke 5:10), Moses is given the task of shepherding the people of Israel. The shepherd imagery, of course, is a regular theme of the Lord's own relationship with His chosen people (Micah 5:4; Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34; John 10:1–29).

And at Christmastime, we especially think of the shepherds to whom the Lord chose to reveal Himself. There are indeed several parallels between the call of Moses and the Lord's revelation to

the shepherds on Christmas Eve—from the glory of the Lord being revealed, to the angelic message, to the signs being given, to the Lord being present in an earthly, visible, and fleshly form.

3:2 מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה (Malak Yahweh)—messenger of the Lord, Angel of the Lord. It is very important that this phrase be properly understood and explained. It's worth taking a little time in the sermon to make clear that this is not a created angel like we would usually think of, but the Second Person of the Trinity. For “Angel of the Lord,” “God,” and “Lord” are all used interchangeably in this passage.

The word מַלְאָךְ (malak) itself, while usually translated here as “angel,” simply means “messenger.” The last book of the Old Testament, Malachi (“my messenger”), uses this Hebrew word. There, of course, it is a reference to the prophet, a human being. The Greek counterpart ἄγγελος (angelos) is sometimes used in the same way; in Revelation 1:20, the reference is to the seven messengers—that is, the seven pastors of the churches.

Understanding that the phrase *the Angel of the Lord* in this passage means “the messenger of the Lord,” it is much easier to see that this is the Son of God prior to His incarnation . . .

[Full sermon textual notes available with purchase.]

THEME AND OUTLINE

Sermon Theme: The burning bush foretells the time when the Son of God would descend to this world again and take on our human nature in order to deliver us from our enemies.

Goal: That the hearer would see Christ in the burning bush and recognize His pattern of coming down to save His people.

- I. The Angel of the Lord is the uncreated, eternal Word, the messenger of the Father, the Son of God.
- II. The Lord's fiery presence in the bush is a picture of the incarnation, the joining together of the heavenly and the earthly. “I am the light of the world.” “I am the vine . . .”
- III. The Son of God, the great I AM, comes not to destroy but to save.

OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTMAS

Did you ever notice how today's reading from Exodus sounds a little like the Christmas account from Luke 2? There was in the same country as Horeb a shepherd abiding in the field, keeping watch over the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, by night. The name of this shepherd was Moses. And behold, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.

When the shepherd Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight, and as he drew near to look, the voice of the Lord came, saying, “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob.” And the shepherd Moses trembled and hid his face, for the glory of the Lord made him greatly afraid. And the Angel of the Lord said to him, “Fear not, for I have surely seen the ill-treatment of My people that are in Egypt and have heard their groaning, and I have come down to deliver them. And now, come, I will send you to Egypt, and this will be a sign unto you: this bush that burns with fire and yet is not consumed.”

If this account and the account of Christmas seem a little bit similar to you, they should, because it is the same Lord Jesus who is present in both. Remember that this Angel of the Lord is no ordinary angel. In fact, according to the usual definition of the word, this was not really an angel at all. Ordinarily, when we use the word *angel*, we’re thinking of those created heavenly beings spoken of in the Scriptures, who serve God and do His will. But since the word *angel* also means “messenger” or “one who speaks the words of God,” it can also refer to men, as in the Book of Revelation, where the term *angel* is used to refer to the pastors of the seven churches. And here, the term *angel* is used to refer to the Son of God Himself, the one who is the ultimate messenger and spokesman of the Father. Moses consistently refers to this “Angel” as God. This is *the* Angel of the Lord, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. This is Jesus Christ before He was conceived and born into this world, sent by the Father to reveal His Word.

St. John expresses a very similar thought in the opening verses of his Gospel when he refers to Christ as the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us. As the uncreated, eternal, divine Angel of the Lord, Jesus is both the messenger and the message. He is God the Father’s final Word to us, a Word of love and of life . . .

[Full sermon available with purchase.]

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: BIBLE STUDY

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Apologetics refers to giving an explanatory defense of what one believes. The apostle Peter wrote, “But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a *defense* to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).

The divine-human (God-man) dual nature of Jesus is a mystery that is impossible for sin-weakened human minds to comprehend, but we know it to be true by Spirit-given faith, informed

by God’s Holy Word. And that invites *apologia*, an explanatory defense for which the Christmas celebration and the Advent weeks preceding it prepare us.

This Bible study series, which parallels the sermon series in text, weekly theme, and overarching theme, has the goal of further preparing the students to give a winsome *defense* of the truth that the Virgin Mary’s Son, whom she conceived by the Holy Spirit and birthed is truly the Messiah, to whom many Old Testament references refer. To achieve this goal, the first study, based on Exodus 3:1–14 will show that God’s appearance in the burning bush revealed that the Old Testament shepherd Moses was a foreshadowing of the New Testament Good Shepherd Messiah. This first lesson will also set the tone for the overarching theme of the series—namely, the Messiah’s birth prophesied and fulfilled.

The second study will focus on Exodus 40:17–21, 34–38 and will focus attention on the Messiah, who dwelt among His Old Testament people in a tent made of animal skins and among the New Testament people in our human skin to reunite us with God.

The third study will focus on Judges 6:11–24; (7:2–9) and Micah 5:2–5 and will draw the parallel between Gideon and the Messiah, both of whom, although seemingly weak, fulfilled God’s will to rescue His people from their enemies.

The fourth and final study will focus on the Luke 2:1–20 account of Messiah’s birth. This lesson will also reveal that in Him, God clothed Himself with human flesh and blood to redeem us and that Christ’s present-day manger is the bread and wine of Holy Communion, in, with, and under which His true body and blood are given for us to partake. This study will complete our overview of our Savior’s birth, prophesied and fulfilled, and will further equip the students “to make a *defense* to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you” (1 Peter 3:15).

With that preliminary information in mind, let’s examine the Old Testament text for the first Advent midweek worship service, Exodus 3:1–14.

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: LEADER

Old Testament Christmas

Exodus 3:1–14

OPENING

The God of Abr’ham praise, Who reigns enthroned above;

Ancient of everlasting days And God of love.
Jehovah, great I AM! By earth and heav'n confessed;
I bow and bless the sacred name Forever blest. (*LSB* 798:1)

Almighty God, You teach us in the Lord's Prayer that Your name is sacred. By Your Spirit's power, may we keep Your name holy by correctly confessing and teaching the truth that You have revealed about Yourself in Holy Scripture; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

INTRODUCTION

“Exodus describes how the Lord awakened the memory of Israel, caused them to call out to Him, and sent Moses to rescue Israel from the grip of the Nile and the dryness of the desert” (*TLSB*, p. 94). *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* teaches us that “in the Old Testament, God reveals His personal name: Yahweh (‘I am’). . . . In the incarnation, God reveals the fullness of His grace with a new personal name: Jesus, which means ‘Yahweh saves.’ Christians also confess, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ meaning Jesus is Yahweh in human flesh. . . . In confessing Jesus Christ as Lord, we confess that Jesus is Yahweh, namely, the one true God, the God of the Old and New Testaments, come in our human flesh” (Question 42). As we prepare to celebrate our Savior's incarnate birth, may we gain a deeper understanding about Him and, thereby, a greater ability to confess and *defend* our hope in Him to a world that is largely ignorant about Him.

“What begins as just another day tending sheep changes dramatically when God confronts Moses at the burning bush on the holy mountain. I AM makes His presence known in fire and word. I AM discloses His special name. . . . What was true for Moses is true for us as well. God is present for us and speaks to us in His Word. We have no hope for salvation except through God's Word and promise” (*TLSB*, p. 100).

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q1. What was Moses' spiritual condition leading up to this event? (Exodus 2:1–22; Acts 7:22)

A1. After Pharaoh's daughter rescued Moses, she unwittingly placed him with his birth mother to be cared for until he was weaned. “Moses, born of believing Hebrew parents (Heb 11:23), is raised in Pharaoh's household and ‘instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians’ (Ac 7:22), enjoying the best of two worlds” (*TLSB*, p. 98). It is quite likely that his spiritual condition was a mixture of orthodox and pagan teachings.

Q2. What is the significance of the name *Moses*? (Exodus 2:10)

A2. The peculiar circumstances that made Moses a part of Pharaoh's household arose out of His birth mother's plan for his survival, which was certainly divinely inspired and guided. Having been *rescued* by Pharaoh's daughter, who “drew him out of the water,” he then “became her son” by adoption. His name was a one-word account of these events.

[Full Leader's Guide available with purchase.]

CONCLUSION

In the Old Testament, the most basic name for God is simply *Elohim*, but the most highly revered name for God is *Yahweh*. This name of God was so revered that the Jews did not speak it for fear of misspeaking it. What made it the most highly revered name for God is that it identified *the covenant Lord, who would reveal Himself in the person and work of Jesus Christ*. The importance of this name is emphasized by its appearance over five thousand times, many of which were when the pre-incarnate Messiah Himself was present. May we honor the names of God by speaking them with sacred reverence.

CLOSING

Merciful and gracious God, forgive us for the times we have spoken Your name uselessly, carelessly, or with unholy intents. Help us to speak Your name with reverence and only in ways that honor and glorify You; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The God who reigns on high The great archangels sing,
And “Holy, holy, holy!” cry, “Almighty King!”
Who was and is the same And evermore shall be:
Jehovah, Father, great I AM! We worship Thee! (*LSB* 798:8)

PREVIEW OF MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1: STUDENT

Old Testament Christmas

Exodus 3:1–14

OPENING

The God of Abr’ham praise, Who reigns enthroned above . . .

INTRODUCTION

“Exodus describes how the Lord awakened the memory of Israel . . .

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

QUESTIONS

1. What was Moses’ spiritual condition leading up to this event? (Exodus 2:1–22; Acts 7:22)
2. What is the significance of the name *Moses*? (Exodus 2:10)
adoption. His name was a one-word account of these events.

3. What was Moses' vocation? Why was it significant? (Exodus 3:1)

[Full student guide questions available with purchase.]

[Full conclusion and closing in Leader's Guide and the Student's section.]

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1

VESPERS

OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTMAS

This is a time of year when we cherish moments with family and friends by taking photographs. We look back on these images to remember what took place, to fill us with joy when family and friends are absent, and to remind us of their love. Tonight, we begin an Advent series on images through which God addresses His people, calls them to joy in His promises, and reminds us of His unfailing love and presence. These are living pictures of God's gracious acts to redeem His people. Tonight, we look at the burning bush and the Lord's address to Moses. This picture is even more meaningful because it was the pre-incarnate Christ who stood before Moses and spoke through the burning bush, foreshadowing the incarnation itself, which is the focus of Christmas.

SERIES HYMN

"O Great I Am, Almighty Word" (*See insert*)*[OR]*

HYMN

"Prepare the Royal Highway" (*LSB 343*)*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 105:1–6, 23–26, 43–45; antiphon: v. 2**[Congregation sings antiphon, then pastor and congregation alternate. All sing Gloria Patri.]*

C Sing to Him, sing prais- | es to Him;*
 tell of all His | wondrous works!

- L** Oh give thanks to the LORD; call up- | on His name;*
make known His deeds among the | peoples!
- C** **Sing to Him, sing prais- | es to Him;***
tell of all His | wondrous works!
- L** Glory in His | holy name;*
let the hearts of those who seek the | LORD rejoice!
- C** **Seek the LORD | and His strength;***
seek His presence con- | tinually!
- L** Remember the wondrous works that | He has done,*
His miracles, and the judgments He | uttered,
- C** **O offspring of Abraham, His | servant,***
children of Jacob, His | chosen ones!
- L** Then Israel came to | Egypt;*
Jacob sojourned in the | land of Ham.
- C** **And the LORD made His people very | fruitful***
and made them stronger | than their foes.
- L** He turned their hearts to hate His | people,*
to deal craftily with His | servants.
- C** **He sent Moses, His | servant,***
and Aaron, whom He had | chosen.
- L** So He brought His people | out with joy,*
His chosen ones with | singing.
- C** **And He gave them the lands of the | nations,***
and they took possession of the fruit of the | peoples' toil,
- L** that they might keep His | statutes*
and observe His laws. | Praise the LORD!
- C** **Glory be to the Father and | to the Son***
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.
- Sing to Him, sing prais- | es to Him;***
tell of all His | wondrous works!

Sit

OFFICE HYMN

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" (*LSB* 338)

+ READINGS +

FIRST READING

Exodus 3:1–14

- L** A reading from Exodus, the third chapter.

¹Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ²And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." ⁴When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." ⁵Then He said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." ⁶And He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, ⁸and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." ¹¹But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" ¹²He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

¹³Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" ¹⁴God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

L O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

John 15:1–8

L A reading from John, the fifteenth chapter.

¹[Jesus said:] "I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

²Every branch of Mine that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples."

- 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

[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 for Midweek of Advent 1.]

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1

OLD TESTAMENT CHRISTMAS

AS WE GATHER

The weeks leading up to Christmas are filled with special memories as previous holiday seasons come to mind. The Church Year time of Advent helps us to prepare for the coming of our Lord once again. As we make those preparations, not only do we look back to the first Christmas as recorded by the Gospel writers, but we also look even further back in Scripture to when the Son of God came among His people in other times and places before His wondrous birth at Bethlehem. In the Old Testament, we find the details of earlier divine visits that are part of our sacred memory, and we recall them in these holy days.

+ PREPARATION +

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

SERIES HYMN

“O Great I Am, Almighty Word” (*See insert*)

[OR]

HYMN

“Prepare the Royal Highway” (*LSB 343*)

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Psalm 124:8

P Our help is in the name of the LORD,

C who made heaven and earth.

P In this season of penitence and reflection, let us think of our unworthiness and confess before God that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, asking for His merciful forgiveness.

C God Almighty, have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to life everlasting. Amen.

P Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son, our Emmanuel, to die for us, and for His sake, forgives us all our sins. May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C Amen.

SALUTATION

- P** The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.

OPENING COLLECT

- P** Let us pray.

Almighty Father, by the advent of Your Son into the world, the kingdom of heaven now is open to all who believe in Him. Give us grace to look for the signs of His coming and to receive the Lord Jesus as our Emmanuel, God with us. By the working of Your Holy Spirit, lead us evermore to serve Him in our lives until that day when He comes again to claim us as His own for eternity. This we ask in His most blessed name.

- C** Amen.

- P** The theme for our Advent services in this season is “Symbols of Salvation: Foretelling Christ’s Birth.” That birth is recorded “deep in prophets’ sacred page,” as our next hymn expresses.

HYMN

“O God of God, O Light of Light” (LSB 810:1–2)

+ WORD +

FIRST READING

Exodus 3:1–14

- P** A reading from Exodus, the third chapter.

¹Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ²And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” ⁴When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” ⁵Then He said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶And He said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

⁷Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, ⁸and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of

Egypt.” ¹¹But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” ¹²He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

¹³Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And He said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 24

P The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,

C for He has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.

P Who shall ascend the hill of the LORD? And who shall stand in His holy place?

C He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.

P He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

C Such is the generation of those who seek Him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

P Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

C Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!

P Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.

C Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory!

**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.**

SECOND READING

Isaiah 25:6–9

P A reading from Isaiah, the twenty-fifth chapter.

⁶On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples
a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine,
of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

⁷And He will swallow up on this mountain
the covering that is cast over all peoples,
the veil that is spread over all nations.

⁸He will swallow up death forever;
and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces,
and the reproach of His people He will take away from all the earth,
for the LORD has spoken.

⁹It will be said on that day,
“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, that He might save us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for Him;
let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation.”

- P** This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God.

VERSE

Philippians 4:5b–6, Psalm 50:2–6, 14

- P** The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.
C **Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.**
- P** Our God comes; He does not keep silence; before Him is a devouring fire, around Him a mighty tempest.
C **He calls to the heavens above and to the earth, that He may judge His people:
“Gather to Me My faithful ones, who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice!”**
- P** The heavens declare His righteousness, for God Himself is judge!
C **Offer to God a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and perform your vows to the Most High.**

HOLY GOSPEL

John 15:1–8

- P** The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the fifteenth chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹[Jesus said:] “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

²Every branch of Mine that does not bear fruit He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in Me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in Me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be My disciples.”

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