



A Series of Special Services for Advent

The Amazing Birth of John the Baptist

• Darkness Becomes Light •

**On Jordan's banks the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for He brings
Glad tidings of the King of kings!**

P *In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

C **Amen.**

P *The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;*

C **Those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined.**

(The Advent Wreath is lit.)

P *Jesus said, "I am the light of the world."*

C **"Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

**Then cleansed be ev'ry heart from sin;
Make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.**

P *Blessed is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit.*

C **For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and I did not cover my iniquity; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and You forgave the iniquity of my sin.**

P *Therefore let everyone who is godly offer prayer to You at a time when You may be found. Let us confess our sins, confident that our gracious God forgives us.*

C **Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for Your name's sake!**

P *Peace be with you! Our crucified and risen Lord Jesus Christ tells His Church, "If you forgive the sins of anyone, they are forgiven." I, therefore, a called pastor of His Church, by His authority forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

C **Amen. Thanks be to God!**

**All praise to You, eternal Son,
Whose advent has our freedom won,
Whom with the Father we adore,
And Holy Spirit, evermore.**

• **Psalm 141** •

P *I call to You, Lord. Please listen when I pray, and hurry to help me.*

C **Set a guard over my mouth, O Lord; keep watch over the door of my lips. Keep me from wanting to do wrong, and from joining the evil in their wickedness.**

**Lord, let my pray'r arise, like incense pure, before You,
My "ev'ning sacrifice." Give ear, Lord, I implore you.
Let faithful saints be stirred, O God, I now implore,
To show where I have erred, and bring me back once more.**

P *Never let the oil of the wicked anoint my head, for my prayer is continually against their wicked deeds. When they are defeated, let it be known that my words were correct.*

C **Let the wicked fall into their own traps, while I alone escape.**

**The wicked lie in wait; oh, let me not surrender!
My eyes are toward the Lord; oh, be my strong Defender!
My eyes are toward the Lord; my hands I raise in prayer;
My voice proclaims the truth. On God I cast my care!**

• **The Prayer of the Day** •

Old Testament Lesson • Isaiah 40:1-8

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord."

Epistle Lesson • Acts 13:22-25

"After me one is coming."

The Holy Gospel • Luke 1:5-25

"Elizabeth will bear you a son and you shall call his name John."

• **Children's Sermon** •

• **Theme Hymn** •

**A Child is born; for Gabriel, God's good news to proclaim,
On stealthy wing, to Holy Place, with joyous message came.**

A child, to couple lowly, would come to point the way

To Christ the King!

Let all earth sing and praise the blessed day!

• **The Amazing Birth of John the Baptist** •

God's Gift to Zechariah and Elizabeth

**A Child is born in Bethlehem, the Savior promised long
In scrolls of prophets' promises; loud hailed in angels' song.**

Emmanuel, God with us, has come to heal the earth.

With sages, saints and angel tongues,

proclaim the wondrous birth.

Apostles' Creed

The Offering

The Prayers • Response

P *God of Zechariah, Elizabeth and John,*

C **hear our prayer.**

• The Lord's Prayer •

The Benediction • Psalm 141, Romans 15

P *O Lord, I call upon You; hasten to me! Give ear to my voice when I call to You!*

C **Let my prayer be counted as incense before You, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice!**

P *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

C **Amen.**

Hymn • Hark! The Glad Sound

**Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
And ev'ry voice a song.**

**He comes the pris'ner to release,
In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.**

**He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor.**

**Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Your welcome shall proclaim,
And heav'n's eternal arches ring
With Your beloved name.**

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