

## Confession and Forgiveness

*leader/response*

Most merciful God, **we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

## Advent Prayer

*leader/response*

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As three candles on this wreath have been lit, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with you grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.** (From Sundays & Seasons, © 2020 Augsburg Fortress.)

## Greeting

*leader/response*

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.**

## Psalms 126

*read in unison*

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,  
we were like those who dream.  
Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy;  
then it was said among the nations,  
'The LORD has done great things for them.'  
The LORD has done great things for us,  
and we rejoiced.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD,  
like the watercourses in the Negeb.  
May those who sow in tears  
reap with shouts of joy.  
Those who go out weeping,  
bearing the seed for sowing,  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
carrying their sheaves.

## Gospel Acclamation – Matthew 11:10

*read in unison*

Alleluia. I am sending my messenger before you, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia.

## Apostles' Creed

*read in unison*

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

## The Great Thanksgiving

*leader/response*

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## Holy, Holy, Holy

*read in unison*

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

## The Lord's Prayer

*read in unison*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING. Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me,  
 because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to  
 bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken-  
 hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
 and release to the prisoners;  
 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of  
 vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;  
 to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
 to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
 the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
 the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
 They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
 the planting of the Lord, to display his glory.  
 They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up  
 the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined  
 cities, the devastations of many generations.

For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and  
 wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
 and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
 and their offspring among the peoples;  
 all who see them shall acknowledge  
 that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed.

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall  
 exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments  
 of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of  
 righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a  
 garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
 and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
 so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise  
 to spring up before all the nations.

**SECOND READING. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

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

May 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. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

**GOSPEL. John 1:6-8, 19-28**

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, 'I am not the Messiah.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the prophet?' He answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?' He said,

'I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
 "Make straight the way of the Lord" ',  
 as the prophet Isaiah said.

Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. They asked him, 'Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?' John answered them, 'I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.' This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.