

The Congregation at Prayer

✠ **Gaudete** ✠

The Third Sunday of Advent

“John the Baptizer Prepares the Way for the Lord”

Isaiah 40:1–11; 1 Corinthians 4:1–5; Matthew 11:2–11

The voice of John the Baptizer cried out in the wilderness: **“Prepare the way of the Lord . . .”** (Isaiah 40:1). John called the people to be made ready for the Messiah’s coming through repentance, for **“all flesh is grass”** (Isaiah 40:6). Now he asks from prison, **“Are You the one who is to come . . .?”** (Matthew 11:2) Jesus’ works bear witness that He is. The sick are made well; the dead are raised, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. Their iniquity is pardoned; they have received from the Lord’s hand double forgiveness for all their sins. The **“stewards of the mysteries of God”** (1 Corinthians 4:1) still deliver Christ’s overflowing forgiveness to the poor in spirit, comforting God’s people with the Word of the Gospel that stands forever. This Gospel produces rejoicing among all those who believe. Then, by God’s grace, we shall escape all these things that will come to pass and stand before the Son of Man.

INVOCATION (*make the sign of the holy cross and say*)

In the Name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

THE APOSTLES CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the † life everlasting.

PSALMODY (*sing or read out loud each day*)

Psalm 85

LEARN BY HEART LUTHER’S SMALL CATECHISM: The Ten Commandments

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

DAILY READINGS

Sunday:	Psalm 14	Genesis 15	1 Chronicles 15:1-16:3	Luke 9:1-50
Monday:	Psalm 15	Genesis 16	1 Chronicles 16:4-43	Luke 9:51-10:24
Tuesday:	Psalm 16	Genesis 17	1 Chronicles 17	Luke 10:25-42
Wednesday:	Psalm 17	Genesis 18:1-15	1 Chronicles 18-20	Luke 11:1-36
Thursday:	Psalm 18	Genesis 18:16-33	1 Chronicles 21:1-17	Luke 11:37-12:12
Friday:	Psalm 19	Genesis 19	1 Chronicles 21:18-22:19	Luke 12:13-48
Saturday:	Psalm 20	Genesis 20	1 Chronicles 23-24	Luke 12:49-13:9

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding

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PRAYERS

The following suggestions are offered as an aid in developing the habit of praying for ourselves and others each week:

Sunday: For the joy of the resurrection among us; for the fruit of faith nourished by Word and Sacrament.

Monday: For faith to live in the promise of Holy Baptism; for one's calling and daily work; for the unemployed; for the salvation and well-being of our neighbors; for schools, colleges, and seminaries; for good government and for peace.

Tuesday: For deliverance against temptation and evil; for the addicted and despairing, the tortured and oppressed; for those struggling with sin.

Wednesday: For marriage and family, that husbands and wives, parents and children live in ordered harmony according to God's Word; for parents who must raise children alone; for our communities and neighborhoods.

Thursday: For the Church and her pastors; for deacons, teachers, and other church workers; for missionaries and for all who serve the Church; for fruitful and salutary use of the blessed Sacrament of Christ's body and blood.

Friday: For faithful preaching of the holy cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; for the spread of His knowledge throughout the whole world; for the persecuted and oppressed; for the sick and dying.

Saturday: For faithfulness to the end; for the renewal of those who are withering in the faith or have fallen away; for receptive hearts and minds to God's Word on the Lord's Day; for pastors as they prepare to administer and for people as they prepare to receive Christ's holy gifts.

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

O Lord, look down from Heaven. Behold, visit, and relieve Your servants who stand in need of our prayers: **[insert the names of family members, friends, church members, government officials, those in need, etc.]** Look upon them with the eyes of Your mercy. Grant them comfort and sure confidence in You. Defend them from all danger, and keep them in perpetual peace and safety, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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.

Morning

I thank You, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your Dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.

Evening

I thank You, my Heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your Dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins, where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me.

BLESSING

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit † be with us all.

Amen.

LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT SUNDAY: *Rorate Coeli* (Advent 4)

Deuteronomy 18:15–19

Psalm 111

Philippians 4:4–7

John 1:19–28

Hymn of the Day

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

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