

(Historic) Scripture Lessons for  the Third Sunday in Advent

Old Testament

Malachi 3:1-6 NIV "See, I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly the LORD you are seeking will come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, 4 and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. 5 "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear Me," says the LORD Almighty. 6 "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

Epistle

I Corinthians 4:1-5 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the LORD Who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the LORD comes. He will bring to light

what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

3-Year-C Gospel (Sermon Text)

Luke 7:18-28 John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, 19 he sent them to the LORD to ask, "Are you the One Who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" 20 When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to You to ask, 'Are You the One Who was to come, or should we expect someone else?'" 21 At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. 22 So He replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the Good News is preached to the poor. 23 Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of Me." 24 After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? 25 If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. 26 But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 27 This is the one about whom it is written: "'I will send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way before You.' 28 I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet the one who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he."

Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL  ELS
3rd Sunday in Advent/C  *Forerunner/s of Jesus*



OSL OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH OSL

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BIBLE CLASS 8:30 AM WORSHIP 9:30 AM FELLOWSHIP 10:45 AM

✧ Rev. Andrew R. Burmeister 863-430-5859 ✧ Organ: A.R. Burmeister

December 16th, 2018 Advent-3 🕯️🕯️🕯️ *Gaudeté* 😊 Joy!

TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER: If you are new to the area or our worship and have never communed with us before, please speak with the pastor before the service. If you are not currently a member of an ELS or WELS congregation, we ask that you please **wait to take Communion until you can speak with our pastor.** Out of Christian love and consideration to you the guest, we want you to have the opportunity to learn what our church teaches about the Bible and Sacraments before you unite with us in taking Holy Communion. Thank you for your understanding. LORD's blessings to you.

OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP On silver liturgy sheets or in red TLH Hymnal p.15

Suggested Hymn	TLH# (vv)	...First Line
Opening Hymn	75 (4v)	Ye Sons of Men, Oh, Harken
<i>Psalm 25</i>	<i>Ps.25 '3v'</i>	<i>To You, O Lord, I Lift My Soul ... ↗</i>
Hymn of the Day	72 (4v)	Rejoice, Rejoice Believers
<i>Offertory Verses</i>	68 (6v)	<i>Sing vv.5,6 (The Advent of Our King...) →</i>
Third Hymn	315 (15)	I Come, O Savior to Thy Table
Closing Hymn	66 (5v)	Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

Suggested Bible readings for the weekdays of the 3rd Sunday in Advent & Church Year

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday
 Isaiah 2:1-5 Is.24:21-25:5 Isaiah 25:6-10 Isa. 26:1-21 Isa. 51:1-16 Isa.52:1-12
 Heb.10:35-39 Luke 21:5-24 Luke 12:35-59 James5:7-11 Luke 1:1-25 Lk.1:26-38

PROPERs for ADVENT-3 🕯️🕯️🕯️ (3rd Sunday of the New Church Year) DEC 16TH

INTROIT Rejoice in the LORD always; and again I say, Rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The LORD is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. LORD, You have been favorable to Your land; You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. ... **New Testament**

COLLECT LORD, we beseech You, give ear to our prayers, and lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. **C: ♪ A---men.**

GRADUAL C: Alleluia! You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth. Stir up Your strength and come. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock. Alleluia! Alleluia! Stir up Your strength, and come and save us. Alleluia!
 ...from Psalm 80

SCRIPTURE LESSONS (printed on outside back page of bulletin)

O.T. **Malachi 3:1-6** (Malachi/)God prophecies re: His messenger, JohnB.
 Epi. **I Corinthians 4:1-5** God judges His servants, His ministers & stewards.
 Gos. **Matthew 11:2-10** Jesus testifies of Himself, the Christ, and of John.

SERMON (Gospel-C) Luke 7:18-28 **THEME:** (KINGDOM) "GREATNESS TO JESUS"

Psalm 25 REFRAIN: To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

Refrain C: ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

Verse 1. ♪ Lord, _ Make me know Your ways, Teach me Your paths,
 And keep me in the way of Your truth, _ For You are God, my Saviour.

Refrain C: ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

Verse 2. ♪ For- the-Lord is good and righteous, _ Revealing His way,
 To those who seek Him, _ Gently leading the poor, and the humble.

Refrain C: ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

Verse 3. ♪ To-the-ones who seek the Lord, _ Who look to His Word,
 Who live in His Love, _ He-will-always be near; He will show them His mercy.

Refrain C: ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

TLH #68. **5. Before the dawning- day - Let- sin's dark- deeds be gone,
 The old man all be put away, - The new man- all put on.**

**6. All glory to the- Son, - Who- comes to- set us free,
 With Father, Spirit, ever One, - Through all e-ternity.**

PRAYER REQUESTS: (Member or Relation) Pray for...

Dee Kurczewski (David) Dee - rehabbing. David back working
Carolyn Miner (Don) Happy they're here (FL). Carolyn recovering from stroke
Jon & Andrea Sawyer Jon's heart, changing work. Andrea started new work
James Vanesky & Delores Platt Both rehabbing. We enjoy seeing them

Volunteers	Today	Next Sunday
Greeters	Mary Lou Knigge	Bev Foster & Joe Thacker
Treaters	Bev Foster	

Statistics	Last week	Year To Date / Avg.
Sunday, Attendance (Communion)	34 / (- -)	24 / 19
Bible Class Attendance: Sunday	12	11
Sunday Offering (Needed) & YTD	\$. (\$1,350)	YTD \$, (\$67.3K)

Calendar of Events		
Today December 16	8:30 am	Bible Study Christ Figures: <i>Son of Man</i>
Third Sunday of	9:30 am	Divine Worship (WITH Communion)
Advent (Forerunners)	10:45 ff...	"FFF" = Food, Fun & Fellowship ... Stay!
Wednesday, 12/19	4:30 pm	Midweek Advent-3W Vespers Worship
Next Sunday 12/23	8:30 am	Bible Study Christ Figures: <i>Tree/Vine</i>
Fourth Sunday of	9:30 am	Divine Worship (NO Communion)
Advent SalvationNear	10:45 ff...	"FFF" = Food, Fun & Fellowship ... Stay!
Monday, 12/24th	7:00 pm	Special Family Christmas EVE at church
Tuesday, 12/25th	9:30 pm	Special Christmas DAY Worship-church

Elders: Tom Temple 213-4622; John Weber 853-5458; Don Wienke 815-8892

✧ Wednesday 19th 4:30 PM third (& last) Midweek Advent Vespers "God's Family Tree"
 ✧ Note then Special Worship opportunities on **Monday Christmas EVE & Tues.DAY.**

Wednesday: 12/19 Advent-3 Midweek (ELH p.120) ELH #s 111 301 123.11-15

Next Sunday: 12/23 Advent-4 (No L.S. p.5) TLH #s 82 Ps.25 62 441.1,2 95 47

ADVENT-3/C Luke 7.18-28 "GREATNESS (...TO JESUS CHRIST)" 12.16.18 OS

(WORLDLY) GREATNESS The **world's measure** of greatness and God's measure of greatness are two completely different things. The world measures greatness in terms of **power, prestige, influence, celebrity, fame, fortune**. As we come to the end of the calendar year, we will get the inevitable greatest lists: the sexiest men, the sexiest women, the most influential people, the richest people, the most powerful people. The movers, the shakers. That's who the world labels with the word "greatness."

(CHURCHLY) GREATNESS Even in **the religious world**, who are the great ones? **The ones with a following, of course!** The ones with the multi-million dollar books deals who appear on Oprah. The **celebrity - preachers** who draw thousands to hear them on a Sunday morning, who have built not simply a congregation but an empire. Pastors who are invited to the White House and the state house, who advise politicians and are asked to pray for major state functions. That's greatness. (...or, Is it?)

GREAT TO JESUS Jesus applies to the word to a different sort – **John the Baptizer**. And (here in **Luke 7**) **it's Not** John at the "peak of his game," but **John down in the dumps**, the depths of Herod's prison, on death row facing a certain death, and doubting. Questioning the mission. Doubting his own preaching. Wondering aloud through his disciples, "*Do we have the Right One in Jesus? Was I wrong when I pointed to Him and said, 'Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world?' Did I misread the signs from Heaven?*" **"Are you the One Who is to come, or shall we look for another?"**

SAME JOHN.B? Wow! Is this the same John we heard last week? The John who called the religious leaders of Israel a **"Brood of Vipers?"** The John who called an entire nation to repentance? The John who demanded that repentance should be not only in word but also in deed, bearing the fruits of repentance? The John who stood resolutely in the water of the Jordan and pointed confidently to Jesus saying, "*Behold the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world?*"

JOHN.B. & WE DOUBT Yes. **This is the same man**, now under much different circumstances. John is in prison. He got thrown in prison for publicly criticizing Herod for taking his brother Philip's estranged wife as his own. And now the forerunner to the Messiah sits in a dungeon awaiting his death. And the doubts begin to settle in. **Have you ever harbored doubts** in your mind, when circumstances took an ugly turn, when your expectations, hopes, dreams were dashed to pieces? **Have you doubted God's wisdom, His plan, His goodness, His Promise?** Have you ever grown impatient with God, wanting Him to act now rather than later, wanting Him to do something instead of just talk, wanting to break through the silence that seems to hide God from our sight as the **world mocks us for praying** to our "*Invisible, silent Friend in Heaven.*"

DOUBT & FAITH "Doubt and faith go together." (<-sound strange?) We believe what we cannot see or prove, what we cannot know by our reason and our senses. **And so there will always be doubts**, from whether God actually **exists or not** to whether we are actually **justified by God's grace through faith for Christ's sake** alone. It is all taken on faith, on God's Word, and so it is always open to doubt as our eye contradicts the Word.

DOUBT QUESTION "*Are you the One Who is to come or shall we look for another?*" John sends his disciples to Jesus with the "doubting" question. But notice, **John sends them to Jesus**. He would have gone himself, if he could have. **He brings his doubts to Jesus and lays them at His feet**. Luke says that **at the very instant** that doubting question was put on the lips of John's disciples, Jesus healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and made the blind see. These were the **Messianic signs**, the signals that the Kingdom of God had come, that the Day of the Lord had dawned. The **prophet Isaiah** spoke most clearly of it: "*Say to those who have an anxious heart, 'Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.'* Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped, then shall the lame leap like a deer and the tongue of the mute sing for joy." (**Isaiah 35**)

SIGNS 4 J.B. Those were the visible signs of the coming Age of Messiah, and **Jesus sends the two back with this report**. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor hear the Good News preached to them. "*And blessed is the one who is not offended, who does not stumble, over Me.*"

SIGNS 4 US 2 Those signs are **signs for us too**. The signs point us to the **resurrection that comes with Jesus' Resurrection**, to the coming dawning Day when we will rise with new creation bodies, free of defect and disease, free of devil and demons, free of sin and all its effects. We can't really imagine such a world and a life now. But the signs give us a little taste. We call them "miracles," but that doesn't do justice. These aren't just temporary suspensions of "natural laws" or little divine parlor tricks to get our attention. They are **pieces of visible evidence that the Kingdom of God** was breaking through and into this world.

NO SCOLDING... (And notice,) Jesus does **not** chastise John for his doubts, **and He doesn't chastise you for yours**. Instead, He extols John. He calls him **"great,"** even "*the greatest to be born of woman.*" Not great in the way of the world though. Greatness in the way of the Kingdom of God. Not a reed bending in the winds of public opinion, like so many religious figures of John's day and our own, who are willing to bend and mold the Word of God like putty to suit the fashions of the day. Not a man dressed in expensive suits and silk who looked more at home in a king's palace than the wilderness. (No,) Greatness **the way Jesus sees it**.

J.B.'S GREATNESS John's greatness was a greatness that **comes with a cross**. "Prophetic greatness" you might say. The **greatness of anonymity**, of being **nothing more than** a Voice and a Messenger for Another. The greatness of laboring without ever seeing the tangible results of your work. The greatness of **living by faith and not by sight**. John's greatness is **unrecognized** by the world. There is no Nobel Peace Prize given out for this sort of greatness, no Medal of Honor. The headlines ignore him, the tabloids have nothing to say about him. John would not be welcome at state dinners and White House receptions.

DARK DOUBTS John's greatness fits perfectly in **Advent**, this almost dark and humble Season (Advent) that so many today pretty much **ignore**. Waiting in "the darkness" for the Kingdom of God **to dawn**. That's John in all his greatness. Waiting in **a cold, dark prison** for the Kingdom of God to come. Hoping, believing, and yes, even doubting. **Even the great ones doubt. Especially** the great ones.

GAUDETÉ-☺-JOY! Today is **Gaudeté Sunday**, the "Pink Candle Sunday" for Advent wreaths with a **pink third candle**. The Sunday of rejoicing in the midst of gloom and darkness. **John in prison is the perfect image**. Jesus would say to John and to each of us here today, "*Rejoice. Rejoice in the midst of your sorrow and pain. Rejoice for this reason alone: I AM near and coming soon.*" Perhaps **you** feel imprisoned. Maybe by the circumstances of **your life, your doubts, your sins, diseases**, or even the "failings" of your own expectations of how God should operate. This Sunday bids you rejoice **not in spite of those things, but in the midst of those things**. The Cross of Jesus brings a sublime joy to the darkest of dungeons.

JESUS-☺-JOY The Joy of Jesus is (also) the **joy of your Salvation**, for which He endured the darkness and death of the Cross. That joy is yours, my friends, a joy that helps us through the (many) sorrows of this life, a joy that surpasses every fleeting joy that this world has to offer, a joy that endures forever. **That joy is in Jesus**. Blessed are you when you are not offended by Jesus' **apparent weakness** as He appears **crucified to this world**, but when you, in faith, comprehend and take as your own (with John and **All** the Saints) what it *really means* to die and rise in Jesus.

YOU ARE GREAT/ER! Jesus called John great, yet He calls you, His Baptized believer, **even greater than John!** Imagine that. You probably didn't think of yourself as great. But even the least little one of faith in the Kingdom of God is greater than even John in all his prophetic greatness.

YES, YOU! **You are considered great in the Kingdom of God**. Not for what you have done or accomplished. Not for the awards you have collected, but simply **because you are Baptized** into the death and Resurrection of Jesus and bear His Name.

Now, that's (true) **greatness in the Kingdom of God**. And reason to rejoice. Come soon, Lord Jesus! **Rejoice! IJ'N, Amen SDG**

Possible Prayer of Church for ☺ 3rd Sunday of Advent ✕ December 16th
Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. (Possible brief silence)

God, our Father, Your Son bids us to pray with confidence. Give us Your Spirit to **see You in the Person of Your Son**, knowing that He and none other is the One Who came to bear our sins and be our Savior. Encourage us in true faith and fill us with joy, knowing He will come again to make all things new. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Father in Heaven, send laborers into the harvest - pastors, missionaries, teachers and other servants of the Word - to declare Your Law and proclaim Your saving Gospel in Christ Jesus, that Your name may be hallowed. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Father in Heaven, You graciously rule Your people even as Your strong arm keeps evil at bay through right governance in this world. Bless and guide all **who are in authority to rule justly**, and give Your Spirit to Your people, that we may believe Your Word and live holy and humble lives. Sustain the faith of all who suffer mockery, persecution and death for the Name of Christ, and keep us in true faith in Your Kingdom. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Wise Father, Your Will is done without our prayer. Turn our hearts to You, so that we trust Your wise counsel in all things and **trust Your good** and gracious **providence** in our daily lives even as You bring us to eternal life. Open our hearts to all Your promises, that we may know Your will and receive Your gifts in the Gospel and the Sacraments in true faith. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear...**

Kind Father, Your Son gave bread to the hungry, sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf; He made the lame to walk and cleansed lepers; He raised the dead and preached Good News to the poor. **Help again Your suffering people** - the hungry, the poor and unemployed, the sick, the dying, the grieving and all who are anxious of heart [*especially* **OSL Prayer List**]. Graciously give them all that they need for their well-being, give them ears to hear the Good News of Life and Salvation, and quiet their fears with Your love. Lead us to receive Your daily gifts - our daily bread - with thankful hearts. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer**.

Father, **forgive us our sins** and cleanse us from unrighteousness. Soften the hearts of those who reject Your Word, and renew those whose faith is faltering. Open our ears to Your call of repentance and to Your promise of mercy. Grant us to **come to Your table** in true faith, gladly receiving Christ's Body and Blood and the forgiveness He promises. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear...**

Father in Heaven, **keep far from us Satan** and all his wickedness and lies. Give us eyes to see evil and flee from it to Your Son, Who casts out demons and restores those who have fallen. In our last hour, bring us to Yourself in peace and safety. Grant that in this day and the coming week, Your Spirit would guide us in safety and godliness. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our...**

Father, into Your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**.