

The Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills "Prepare the Way of the Lord"

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT: THE PERSON AND PLACE OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

December 10, 2023 8:00 a.m. Worship Service





201 So. Montgomery Highway Birmingham, Alabama 35216 Church office: 205-823-1883 PreSchool/MDO: 205-791-5200

> Web Site: www.vestavialutheran.org WORSHIP: 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m. Sundays SUNDAY SCHOOL: 9:15 a.m.

Church Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday



PASTOR: The Reverend Michael D. Ahlemeyer – pastor@vestavialutheran.org text: 205-201-8866

PASTOR EMERITUS: The Reverend Clifford Hellmers – vestluth@juno.com

VICAR: Matthew Vatthauer – vicar@vestavialutheran.org

DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY: Ruth Johnson – ruthinbham@gmail.com DIRECTOR OF MOTHER'S DAY OUT: Brooke Heisler – bheisler@vestavialutheran.org

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR: Leigh Walter – lwalter@vestavialutheran.org

CHURCH ADMINISTRATOR ASSISTANT: Amy Alvis - aalvis@vestavialutheran.org

BOOK KEEPER: Melanie Goodson - bookkeeper@vestavialutheran.org

ADOPTED MEDICAL MISSIONARIES - Arianna and David Shirk, Madeline & Annabelle - shirkdavid@gmail.com



TO OUR GUESTS: We offer you a warm welcome in the name of Jesus. Please sign the Friendship Register. If you do not have a church home, we would be delighted to have you become a part of our church family. Please feel free to speak with the Pastor about membership in our congregation. If you do have a church home, we pray that God will bless you as you continue your growth in faith and love.



<u>SUNDAY SCHOOL</u> Adult Bible Classes meets in the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall at 9:15 a.m. Children, Confirmation, and Youth classes also meet at 9:15 a.m. in the class rooms downstairs.



<u>CHILDREN'S CHURCH and NURSERY</u> Following the Children's Message, all children ages 3-7 are invited to Children's Church downstairs. They will return to the sanctuary after the sermon. A nursery attendant is provided for children ages birth to 3 years during our 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM services.



<u>COMMUNION</u> We invite all baptized Christians who acknowledge their sinfulness, trust in Christ as their Savior, and who recognize the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the bread and wine to join us at the Communion table. The practice of our congregation is to place the bread into the extended hand of the communicant. The wine is offered in individual cups; please take one from the tray as it is offered by the Elder. The common cup will be offered to those who do not take an individual cup. The cups in the center of the tray are filled with non-alcoholic wine, in consideration of persons who should not drink wine. Also, children who have not received Communion instruction are invited to come to the Communion rail, fold their hands and receive a blessing. Please notify an usher if you need a communion assistant to bring the Lord's Supper to you in the pew.

The Lutheran Church of Vestavia Hills

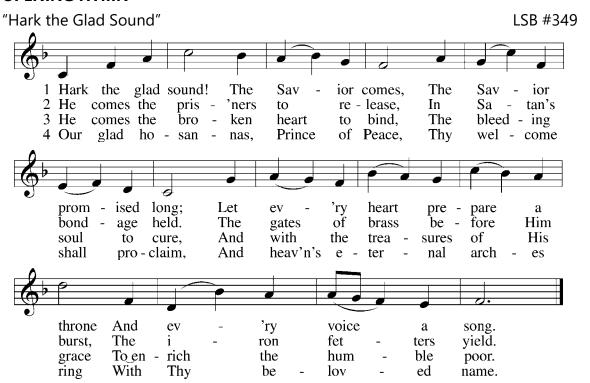
SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 10, 2023 8:00 a.m. Worship Service

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING HYMN



CALL TO WORSHIP

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Come, Lord Jesus. Come. Amen.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

"When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent,' He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."

(Luther: The Ninety-Five Thesis)

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. 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. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. 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 ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestow on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

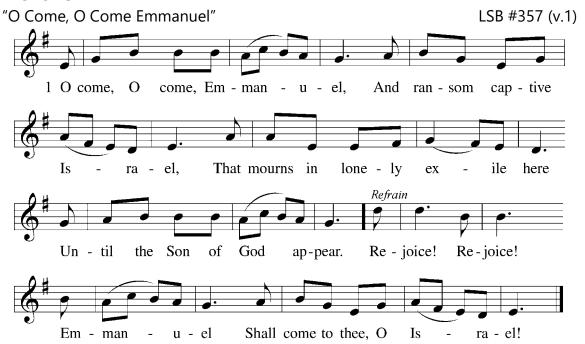
He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light so that all might believe.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, has come into the world.

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

~Advent Wreath Is Lit While Singing Hymn~

RESPONSE



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son. You sent John the Baptist into the wilderness to remind us of the bareness of our sin; and to remove from us the distractions of this passing world. Come, Lord Jesus, with Your grace to all the places of this world where people desperately need You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON

Malachi 3:1-3, 4:5-6

¹"Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. ³He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD.

⁵"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers, lest I come and strike the land with a decree of utter destruction."

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE LESSON Titus 2:11-14

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, ¹²training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, ¹⁴who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.





HOLY GOSPEL Mark 1:1-8

The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark the first chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

⁴John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And he preached, saying, "After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. ⁸I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

²As it is written in Isaiah the prophet,

[&]quot;Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way,

³the voice of one crying in the wilderness:

^{&#}x27;Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'"

CONFESSION OF FAITH

The Augsburg Confession: Article XII. Of Repentance

Now, repentance consists properly of these two parts:

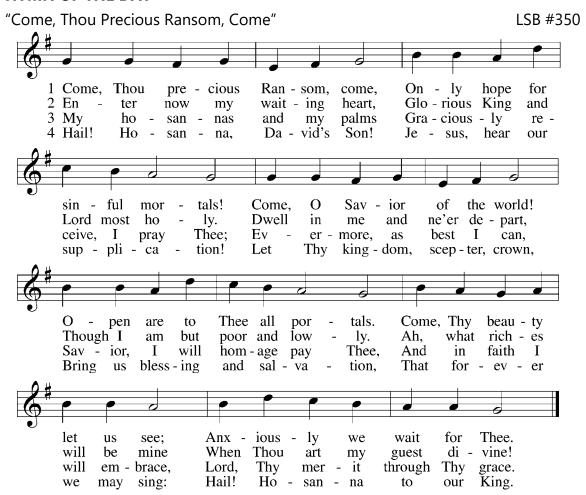
One is contrition, that is terror striking the conscience through the knowledge of sin;

The other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, and believes that for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven, comfort the conscience, and delivers it from terrors.

Then good works are bound to follow, which are the fruits of repentance.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY



SERMON Sermon Series: "Prepare the Way of the Lord"

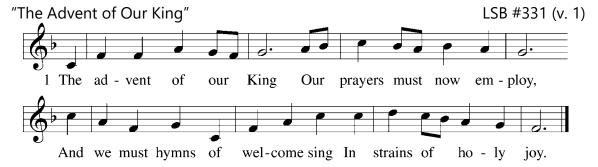
Part 2: The Person and Place of John the Baptist Rev. Michael Ahlemeyer

VOLUNTARY

OFFERING

~please sign the Record of Fellowship during the Offering

OFFERTORY



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

LORD'S PRAYER

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. Amen.

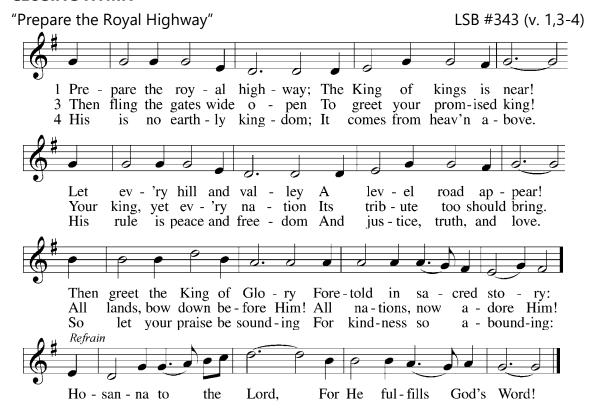
BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN



DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE