

² When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples
³ to ask him, “Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect
someone else?” ⁴ Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear
and see: ⁵ 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. ⁶ Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.”
⁷ As John’s disciples were leaving, 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? ⁸ If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes?
No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. ⁹ Then what did you
go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This
is the one about whom it is written: ‘I will send my messenger ahead of
you, who will prepare your way before you.’ ¹¹ I tell you the truth: Among
those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the
Baptist; yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

Sermon Hymn: 14 Arise, O Christian People

Sermon: Sight to the Blind

Offering: *(Please remember to sign the Friendship Register.)*

Hymn: 24 The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

Benediction

Closing Hymn: 702 Prepare the Royal Highway

Ushers: This Week – Jesse Horta & John Hinz
Next Week – Richard Engelhart & Mark Genz

Greeters: This Week – Richard & Elaine Engelhart
Next Week – Sharon Waldmann & Katie Zuehlke

The new greeter and usher schedules are being worked on. Please let Kelly Vogel or Pastor Swanson know if you would like to be added or removed.

Cleaning: This Coming Week – Please Volunteer to Help
The Following Week – Please Volunteer to Help
(There is a sign-up sheet in the back of church.)

The 3rd Week of Advent – Dec. 14 & 15

P.O. Box 86, Helenville, Wisconsin

Pastor: Mark Swanson Church Tel: 920-674-3307
Principal: Craig Winkler School Tel: 262-582-3010
Organist: Wendy Winkler

We Welcome You!

Order of Worship: New Service Setting

Opening Hymn: 703 My Soul in Stillness Waits

Prayer of the Day:

M: Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever

C: Amen.

First Lesson - Isaiah 35:1-10

The coming of the Messiah would change everything. A world destroyed by sin is filled with sorrow and sighing. But things are not always what they seem: A desert is a latent pool; thirsty ground is a future streambed; the blind are future seers, and the lame future leapers. Our certain knowledge that the earth is the Lord's and that he controls everything in it gives us patience and courage to wait for God to make what we see match what we know. Be strong, do not fear; your God will come. His promise to come strengthens feeble hands and fearful hearts. He will come with vengeance and retribution to redress the wrong and with redemption and rejoicing for God's people. Jesus fulfilled these words of prophecy in his acts of ministry so that God's people could see how near God's kingdom had come!

The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus,² it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.³ Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way;⁴ say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you."⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.⁷ The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.⁸ And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness. The unclean will not journey on it; it will be for those who walk in that Way; wicked fools will not go about on it.⁹ No lion will be there, nor will any ferocious beast get up on it; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there,¹⁰ and the ransomed of

the LORD will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Psalm of the Day - Psalm 146, p. 120

Second Lesson - James 5:7-11

Knowing what we do about Christ's coming kingdom, we want it now. God's encouragement, however, is for us to be patient. A farmer's fields may look fallow or dead, but things are not always what they seem. The seed waits inside the earth for the rains and then bursts forth to life. When Christians face persecution or suffering, life can seem like a fallow field. While we wait for the rain, we struggle with questions and doubts. James reminds us that the fallow parts of our lives are simply waiting for God's timing to bring forth fruit in our lives. The Christian patiently waits for the Lord's coming, when what we see will finally match what we know.

⁷ Be patient, then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸ You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹ Don't grumble against each other, brothers, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door! ¹⁰ Brothers, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ As you know, we consider blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Verse of the Day: *Alleluia. I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia. (Matthew 11:10 cf. NIV)*

Gospel - Matthew 11:2-11

Things were not what they seemed. John languished in prison for preaching righteousness. When he saw the works of Jesus questions rose in his mind and doubt filled the hearts of his followers. John knew that Jesus was the Christ, but where were the acts of judgment promised? Why did John look like a failure and the wicked look like they were winning? John sends his disciples to the right place, to Jesus. When we take our doubts and questions to Jesus, he drives the darkness from our hearts and fills us with light. Jesus pointed to his works as signs from God fulfilling the words of the prophet and marking him as the Coming One. Jesus was far more than he appeared to be: he was the Messiah who makes the blind see, the dead live and the poor evangelized. Jesus then points to John and shows greatness hiding behind the cross and persecution. Though John did not seem it, he was the second Elijah and a prophet without peer.