

**3rd Sunday of Advent**  
**December 11, 2011**  
Peace Lutheran Church  
Belgrade, Montana

Advent means COMING, specifically the COMING OF JESUS CHRIST our Lord and Savior.

And during this Advent Season of the Church Year (these four weeks before Christmas) we are preparing things that have become traditions in our families, such as the baking of special candies, special cookies, special cakes, special breads, and special meals.

And we are preparing for the COMING OF JESUS CHRIST as the **BEST GIFT EVER** from God, the Father of us all, by making or by purchasing gifts for others as an expression of our thanks to God for the **GREATEST GIFT GIVEN TO US**, though ours can never match the specialness of the gift God gave us ---- **TRUE LIGHT** in our **DARKNESS!!!**

In the silent movies, of the beginning film industry, there were the cowboys in the White Hats and the cowboys in the Dark Hats to help the audience quickly tell the difference between those who were the Good Guys from those who were the Bad Guys.

From ancient times LIGHT has represented that which was GOODNESS and DARK has represented that which was EVIL.

This is expressed very clearly in the New Testament, and most specifically in John 1:5:

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

**1**

In all the world there is nothing more amazing than the invincibility of GOODNESS. Though there is a lot of opposition to GOODNESS, GOODNESS refuses to be killed off by EVIL.

Even though ruthless leaders have attempted to use brut force to put an end to GOODNESS, God blows over the **seemingly dead ashes** left behind and once more GOODNESS leaps to life and grows into a mighty fire that sheds its light far into the darkness of this world.

We are not in the fight alone, God is with us, **Emmanuel** fights for us against all that which would pull us away from **THE LIGHT**, all that which would pull us ever deeper and deeper into Outer Darkness.

Jesus came as a baby born in Bethlehem.

King Herod attempted to make sure that this **COMING LIGHT, in the flesh**, would end in failure in this world of darkness. He ordered the death of all babies and children up to two years of age in Bethlehem and the area surrounding Bethlehem. He thought he had succeeded in keeping **THE LIGHT** out of the darkness of this world, but **THE LIGHT** triumphed.

*He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not.*

What the people were looking for was a leader in Social Reform and a leader in Political Activism, but a leader in **God's Spiritual Mission** they were not looking for at all!

As it is written:

*Some did not receive him...*

Why did they not receive Him?

## 2

Probably for the same reason that people today do not, they reason:

Well, life is full of things that need our immediate attention before spiritual things, and life is full of more interesting pursuits than spiritual things, besides Jesus just does not meet our modern day expectations of a leader who will meet **our wants** for **our life** here on earth. He makes demands on what we say and what we do, and we do not find that that give us the freedom we want.

What Jesus effects in souls that trust in Him is nothing less than the creation of a New Being that replaces the Old Being, the Old Adam for the New Adam, the Old Eve for the New Eve, or to put another way, the caterpillar for the butterfly.

It is Christ Jesus who makes this change possible for us! We are able to be Children of God precisely by God's **GRACE** alone, through **FAITH** alone, on account of **CHRIST** alone.

Verses 16 and 17 state it very clearly:

*From his fullness we have all received, **grace upon grace**. The law indeed was given through Moses; **grace and truth** came through Jesus Christ.*

Life in God is rich and full beyond all our ability to describe it for we truly know that we are not the Central Figure in our life's story, **God is!!!**

**All we are** and **all we have** comes from God's Grace Alone!

We pray this truth in our Offertory Prayer:

## 4

*Merciful Father, we offer with joy and thanksgiving **what you have first given us – ourselves, our time, and our possessions**, signs of **your gracious love**. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

When asked, "Who are you?" John the Baptist confessed, "I am not the Messiah." "I am not the Christ." "I am not Elijah." "I am not a prophet."

To the question, "Who are you, then?" John replied:

*I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'*

As we continue our journey in this Advent Season of the Church Year towards the celebration of the birth of Jesus on Christmas Day, with our SPECIAL preparations for this COMING OF THE BEST GIFT EVER, let us also be a voice of one crying in the wilderness of

our day – **“make straight the way of the Lord”** for people are still looking for a leader in Social Reform, for a leader in Political Activism instead of a leader in **GOD’S SPIRITUAL MISSION WORK.**

And since we are called by God to be active in MISSION, may God’s Holy Spirit prepare His Royal Highway in our hearts, His Royal Highway that is level and straight.

Amen.