

ADVENT

A HOLY CHAPERONE TO CHRIST:
GOD'S LAW AS CURB, MIRROR, AND GUIDE

December 20th, 2023



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The most important Christmas preparation is the preparation of our hearts which happens by hearing and meditating on the Word of God. God's law is holy and perfect. It can't save us, but it does serve an important role in God's plan of salvation. As a pedagogue or chaperone, it guards, teaches, prepares, and leads us to Christ. It does this in its three uses as curb, mirror, and guide.

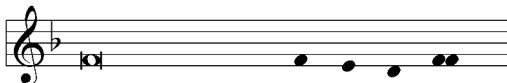
EVENING PRAYER

Hymn ----- Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

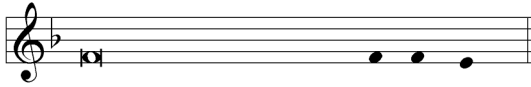
CW 7

1. Rejoice, rejoice, believers, And let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing, And darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising And soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; At midnight comes the cry.
2. The watchers on the mountain Proclaim the Bridegroom near;
Go forth, as he approaches, With alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting; The gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory; The Bridegroom is at hand.
3. You saints, who here in patience Your cross and suff'rings bore,
Shall live and reign forever When sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory The Lamb you shall behold;
In triumph lay before him Your shining crowns of gold.
4. Arise, Desire of nations; O Jesus, now appear,
The Hope and Expectation Of ev'ry Christian here.
With hearts and hands uplifted We plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption That sets your people free.

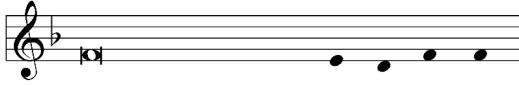
Stand.



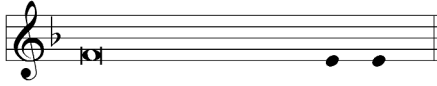
M: Jesus Christ is the light of the world,



C: the light no darkness can o - ver - come.



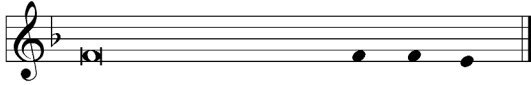
M: Stay with us, Lord, for it is eve - ning,



C: and the day is almost o - ver.



M: Be our light and scat - ter the dark - ness,



C: and hear our evening hymn of praise.



1 O gra - cious Light, Lord Je - sus Christ, In you the
2 Now sun - set comes, but light shines forth; The lamps are
3 Wor - thy are you of end - less praise, O Son of



Fa - ther's glo - ry shone. Im - mor - tal, ho - ly,
lit to pierce the night. Praise Fa - ther, Son, and
God, life - giv - ing Lord; Where - fore you are through



blest is he, And blest are you, his on - ly Son.
Spir - it: God Who dwells in the e - ter - nal light.
all the earth And in the high - est heav'n a - dored.

EXHORTATION AND PRAYER

M: Dear people of God, in the season of Advent, it is our responsibility and joy
to prepare ourselves to hear again the message of the angels,
to go to Bethlehem and see the Son of God lying in a manger.

Let us hear and heed in Holy Scripture the story of God's loving purpose
from the time of our rebellion against him
until the glorious redemption brought to us by his holy child, Jesus,
and let us look forward to the yearly remembrance of his birth with
hymns and songs of praise.

But first, let us pray for the needs of his whole world,
for peace and justice on earth,
for the unity and mission of the Church for which he died,
for the people in our country and in this place,
and especially for the brothers and sisters in our synod and in our own
congregation.

And because he loves them, let us remember in his name
the poor and helpless,
the cold, the hungry, and the oppressed,
the sick and those who mourn,
the lonely and unloved, and
the aged and little children
as well as those who do not know and love the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, let us praise God for the faith of Mary, mother of our Lord,
and that whole multitude which no one can number,
whose hope was in the Word made flesh,
and with whom, in Jesus, we are one forevermore.

To sum up these petitions, let us pray as Christ himself taught us.

C: Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your
name, your king - dom come, your will be done on
earth as in heav - en. Give us to - day our
dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins, as
we for - give those who sin a - gainst us. Lead us
not in - to temp - ta - tion, but de - liv - er us from
e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow - er, and the glo - ry are
yours now and for - ev - er. A - men.

M: The almighty God bless us with his grace, Christ give us the joys of everlasting life, and may the King of angels bring us all to the fellowship of the citizens above.

C: Amen.

Be seated.

Lesson ----- Matthew 5:17-20

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy them but to fulfill them. Amen I tell you: Until heaven and earth pass away, not even the smallest letter, or even part of a letter, will in any way pass away from the Law until everything is fulfilled. So whoever breaks one of the least of these command-

ments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever practices and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. Indeed I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and experts in the law, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

M: The Lord will come again in glory. The Spirit and the Church cry out: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Hymn ----- The Ten Commandments Are the Law

CW 285:1, 9-12

1. The Ten Commandments are the law Which Israel heard in holy awe.
In smoke and fire from Sinai The voice of God shook the sky.
Have mercy, Lord!
9. “Bear no false witness nor defame Your neighbor and destroy his name,
But view him in the kindest way; Speak truth in all that you say.”
Have mercy, Lord!
10. “You shall not crave your neighbor’s house
Nor covet money, goods, or spouse.
Pray God he would your neighbor bless As you yourself wish success.”
Have mercy, Lord!
11. God gave these laws to show therein, O child of man, your life of sin,
And help you rightly to perceive How unto God you should live.
Have mercy, Lord!

12. **Our works cannot salvation gain; They merit only endless pain.
Forgive us, Lord! To Christ we fly, Our mediator on high.
Have mercy, Lord!**

Sermon ----- Matthew 5:17–20

A Holy Chaperone to Christ: God's Law as Guide

Stand.

Confession of Faith – Dialogue from the Catechism

M: God has given his holy law as a curb to restrain our sinful nature, as a mirror to show us our sin and need for a Savior, and as a guide to instruct the believer in joyful, godly living. Let us recite from the Ten Commandments and their meanings.

M: The Seventh Commandment:

C: **You shall not steal.**

M: What does this mean?

C: **We should fear and love God that we do not take our neighbor's money or property or get it by dishonest dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and means of income.**

M: The Eighth Commandment:

C: **You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.**

M: What does this mean?

C: **We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him, and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.**

M: The Ninth Commandment:

C: **You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**

M: What does this mean?

C: We should fear and love God that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or obtain it by a show of right, but do all we can to help him keep it.

M: The Tenth Commandment:

C: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, workers, animals, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

M: What does this mean?

C: We should fear and love God that we do not force or entice away our neighbor's spouse, workers, or animals, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

Song of Mary

Magnificat



C: My soul pro-claims the great-ness of the Lord; my spir-it re-



joic-es in God my Sav-ior, for he has looked with fa-vor



on his low-ly ser-vant. From this day all gen-er-a-tions



will call me bless-ed. The Al-might-y has done great



things for me, and ho - ly is his name. He has mer - cy on



those who fear him in ev - 'ry gen - er - a - tion.



He has shown the strength of his arm; he has scat - tered the



proud in their con - ceit. He has cast down the might - y



from their thrones and has lift - ed up the low - ly.



He has filled the hun - gry with good things, and the rich



he has sent a - way emp - ty.

He has come to the



help of his ser-vant Is - ra - el, for he has re-mem - bered his



prom - ise of mer - cy, the prom - ise made to our fa - thers,



to A - bra-ham, and to his chil - dren for - ev - er. A - men.

Be seated.

Offering

Stand.

Online giving option:

mluther.org/give

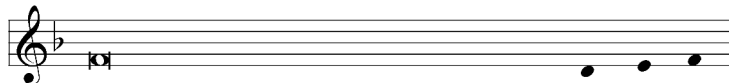
Offerings support the spread

of the Gospel here and around the world.



Lord, Have Mercy

Kyrie



M: In the closing hours of this day, hear us as we pray, O Lord:



C: Lord, have mer - cy.

M: For the well-being of people everywhere, for the growth of your church in all the world, and for the strengthening of all who serve and worship here, we pray, O Lord:



C: Christ, have mer - cy.

M: For one another, young and old, for your blessings that come with every stage of life, and for joy in doing your will, we pray, O Lord:



C: Lord, have mer - cy.

M: For our public servants who work day and night to bring protection, justice, learning, and health to this and every place, we pray to you, O Lord:



C: Lord, hear our prayer.

M: For favorable weather and bountiful harvests, for clothing and food, for health of body, mind, and spirit, and for deliverance from all sin and every form of evil, we pray to you, O Lord:



C: Lord, hear our prayer.

M: For the faithful who have gone before us, who have shared with us your good news, whose souls are now at rest in your heavenly kingdom, we give you thanks, O Lord:



C: Thanks be to God.

M: In thanksgiving for your many and varied gifts to us, we now commend ourselves to your care. Be our shield and strength, O Lord.



Be seated.

Hymn ----- O Lord, How Shall I Meet You

CW 19

1. O Lord, how shall I meet you, How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you, My Hope, my heart's Delight.
O Jesus, let your Word be A lamp to light my way,
To show me how to please you, To guide me ev'ry day.
2. Love caused your incarnation; Love brought you down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation Procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling That led you to embrace
In love, all love excelling, Our lost and fallen race!
3. Rejoice, then, you sad-hearted, Who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn o'er joys departed And tremble at your doom.
Despair not; he is near you, He's standing at the door
Who best can help and cheer you And bids you weep no more.
4. Sin's debt, that fearful burden, Let not your souls distress;
Your guilt the Lord will pardon And cover by his grace.
He comes, for you procuring The peace of sin forgiv'n,
His children thus securing A heritage in heav'n.
5. He comes to judge the nations, A terror to his foes,
A light of consolations, And blessed hope to those
Who love the Lord's appearing. O glorious Sun, now come,

Send forth your beams most cheering, And guide us safely home.

Stand.

Prayer

M: O God, you make us glad with the expectation of the coming of your one and only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that we, who with joy receive him as our Redeemer, may without fear behold him when he will come to be our judge, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Song of Simeon

Nunc Dimittis



C: In peace, Lord, you let your ser - vant now de - part



ac - cord - ing to your word. For my eyes have seen



your sal - va - tion, which you have pre - pared for ev - 'ry



peo - ple, a light to light - en the Gen - tiles



and the glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.

Blessing



M: The grace of our Lord + Je - sus Christ and the love of God



and the fellowship of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.



C: A - men.

Be seated.

Closing Hymn ----- Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding

CW 15

1. Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding; "Christ is near," we hear it say.
"Cast away the works of darkness; You are children of the day."
2. Lo, the Lamb, so long-expected, Comes with pardon down from heav'n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow, One and all, to be forgiv'n,
3. That, when next he comes with glory And the world is wrapped in fear,
He may shield us with his mercy And with words of love draw near.
4. Honor, glory, might, dominion To the Father and the Son
With the everlasting Spirit While eternal ages run!

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