

Advent Week 3: The Sunday of JOY



Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymns:

Hymn 1: "O Lord How Shall I Meet You" ELW 241 by Paul Gerhardt

Listen here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UcG9RQa_5YM&t=13s

Lyrics:

1 O Lord, how shall I meet you,
how welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you,
my hope, my heart's delight!
Oh, kindle, Lord most holy,

your lamp within my breast
to do in spirit lowly
all that may please you best.

2 I lay in fetters, groaning;
you came to set me free.
I stood, my shame bemoaning;
you came to honor me.
A glorious crown you give me,
a treasure safe on high
that will not fail or leave me
as earthly riches fly.

3 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.

4 Rejoice, then, you sad-hearted,
who sit in deepest gloom,
who mourn your joys departed
and tremble at your doom.
All hail the Lord's appearing!
O glorious Sun, now come,
send forth your beams so cheering
and guide us safely home.

Interesting note: Martin Luther was seen as the mind of German hymn writing and Gerhardt as the heart. Gerhardt lived during the Thirty Years War, his wife died after only 13 years of marriage, and four of his children died as infants. He lost his position as pastor for defying the edict of the elector. His life was not smooth, yet he seemed to do all that he could to please our Lord despite life's difficulties.

Author note: Paul Gerhardt (b. GraEenhainichen, Saxony, Germany, 1607; d. Lubben, Germany, 1676), famous author of Lutheran evangelical hymns, studied theology and hymnody at the University of Wittenberg and then was a tutor in Berlin, where he became friends with Johann Crüger. He served the Lutheran parish of Mittenwalde near Berlin (1651-1657) and the great St. Nicholas' Church in Berlin (1657-1666). Friederich William, the Calvinist elector, had issued an edict that forbade the various Protestant groups to fight each other. Although Gerhardt did not want strife between the churches, he refused to comply with the edict because he thought it opposed the Lutheran "Formula of Concord," which condemned some Calvinist doctrines.

Hymn 2: "Comfort, Comfort My People" by Johannes Olearius ELW 256

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmknW>

Lyrics

1 Comfort, comfort ye My people,
Speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
Comfort those who sit in darkness,
Mourning 'neath their sorrow's load;
Speak ye to Jerusalem
Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell her that her sins I cover,
And her warfare now is over.

2 For the herald's voice is crying
In the desert far and near,
Bidding all men to repentance,
Since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise to meet Him,
And the hills bow down to greet Him.

3 Yea, her sins our God will pardon,
Blotting out each dark misdeed;
All that well deserved His anger
He will no more see nor heed.
She has suffered many a day,
Now her griefs have passed away,
God will change her pining sadness
Into ever springing gladness.

4 Make ye straight what long was crooked,
Make the rougher places plain:
Let your hearts be true and humble,
As befits His holy reign,
For the glory of the Lord
Now o'er the earth is shed abroad,
And all flesh shall see the token
That His Word is never broken.

Author Note: Johannes Olearius (b. Halle, Germany, 1611; d. Weissenfels, Germany, 1684) was

born into a family of Lutheran theologians. Olearius received his education at the University of Wittenberg and later taught theology there. He was ordained a Lutheran pastor and appointed court preacher to Duke August of Sachsen-Weissenfels in Halle and later to Duke Johann Adolph in Weissenfels. Olearius wrote a commentary on the entire Bible, published various devotional books, and produced a translation of the *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas a Kempis. In the history of church music, Olearius is mainly remembered for his hymn collection, which was widely used in Lutheran churches.