

Advent Week 4: The Sunday of LOVE



Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Hymns:

Hymn 1: "The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came" ELW 265 translated by S.BaringGould
Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UibY8twQTOQ>

Lyrics

1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
With wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame.
"All hail," said he, "O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

2 "How blest among all women you shall be,
Whom ev'ry age will praise continually.

Your Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
"Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head.
"To me be as it pleases God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."
Most highly favored lady. Gloria!

4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn.
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
"Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Note: This has its origins from a Basque carol. In our translated form, it begins with the angel Gabriel's announcement in Luke 1:26, it then summarizes the Magnificat or Mary's song from Luke 1:46-55 and by using Gloria at the end of each stanza gives us a peek at the *Gloria in excelsis Deo* when the angels announce the birth of Christ in Luke 2:14. The final stanza tells us we are heading to Christmas morning but remains focused on Mary.

Hymn 2: "Savior of the Nations Come" ELW 263 by St. Ambrose
Listen here:<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t0jO8e8pkw>

Lyrics:

1 Savior of the nations, come,
virgin's Son, make here thy home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
that the Lord chose such a birth.

2 Not of flesh and blood the Son,
offspring of the Holy One;
born of Mary ever blest,
God in flesh is manifest.

3 Wondrous birth! O wondrous Child
of the Virgin undefiled!
Though by all the world disowned,
still to be in heav'n enthroned.

4 From the Father forth he came
and returneth to the same,
captive leading death and hell,
high the song of triumph swell!

5 Thou, the Father's only Son,
hast o'er sin the vict'ry won.
Boundless shall thy kingdom be;
when shall we its glories see?
6 Praise to God the Father sing.
Praise to God the Son, our King.
Praise to God the Spirit be
ever and eternally.

Author note: Ambrose (b. Treves, Germany, 340; d. Milan, Italy, 397), one of the great Latin church fathers, is remembered best for his preaching, his struggle against the Arian heresy, and his introduction of metrical and antiphonal singing into the Western church. He is called the father of Latin church song. Ambrose was trained in legal studies and distinguished himself in a civic career, becoming a consul in Northern Italy. When the bishop of Milan, an Arian, died in 374, the people demanded that Ambrose, who was not ordained or even baptized, become the bishop. He was promptly baptized and ordained, and he remained bishop of Milan until his death. Ambrose successfully resisted the Arian heresy and the attempts of the Roman emperors to dominate the church. His most famous convert and disciple was Augustine. Come, send forth your beams so cheering and guide us safely home.

Interesting note: Martin Luther translated this for Advent in 1523. Martin Luther is known as the Father of German hymnody. The hymn scans the whole story by taking us to the manger, and it assumes the victory of the cross and the resurrection as well. The word 'come' is like our understanding of Advent where we are expecting the coming of Jesus as an infant and his second coming and as Christ comes to us now.

Hymn 2: "Joy to the World" ELW 267 by Isaac Watts

Listen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyciMYZq2-Y>

Lyrics:

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive its king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,

repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sins and sorrows grow,
nor thorns infest the ground.
He comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Author Note: Isaac Watts was the son of a schoolmaster, and was born in Southampton, England on July 17, 1674. He is said to have shown remarkable precocity in childhood, beginning the study of Latin, in his fourth year, and writing respectable verses at the age of seven. At the age of sixteen, he went to London to study in the Academy of the Rev. Thomas Rowe, an Independent minister. In 1698, he became assistant minister of the Independent Church, Berry St., London. In 1702, he became pastor. In 1712, he accepted an invitation to visit Sir Thomas Abney, at his residence of Abney Park, and at Sir Thomas' pressing request, made it his home for the remainder of his life. It was a residence most favourable for his health, and for the prosecution of his literary labours. He did not retire from ministerial duties, but preached as often as his delicate health would permit.

Interesting Note: The hymn was not written for Advent or even Christmas, but as a paraphrase of Psalm 98. The author, Isaac Watts, is known as the father of English hymnody.

Scripture References:

- Stanzas 1-3 = Ps. 98
- Stanza 2 = Ps. 96:11-12
- Stanza 3 = Gen. 3:17-18

Isaac Watts (PHH 155) wrote this text as a paraphrase of Psalm 98. He published it in his *Psalms of David Imitated* (1719) under the heading "The Messiah's Coming and Kingdom." The paraphrase is Watts' Christological interpretation. Consequently, he does not emphasize with equal weight the various themes of Psalm 98. In stanzas 1 and 2 Watts writes of heaven and earth rejoicing at the coming of the king. An interlude that depends more on Watts' interpretation than the psalm text, stanza 3 speaks of Christ's blessings extending victoriously over the realm of sin. The cheerful repetition of the non-psalm phrase "far as the curse is found" has caused this stanza to be omitted from some hymnals. But the line makes joyful sense when understood from the New Testament eyes through which Watts interprets the psalm. Stanza 4 celebrates Christ's rule over the nations.