**ADVENT MIDWEEK 1**

Angels: The Ultimate Divine Messengers of Hope

*The Angel Gabriel Brings a Message of Hope in the Midst of Unbelieving Doubt*

“And there appeared to him [Zechariah] an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.’” *Luke 1:11-13*

**AS WE GATHER**

“And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense” (Luke 1:11). The angel Gabriel appeared to an old priest named Zechariah. He and his wife, Elizabeth, had been childless into their old age. The angel told them that they would have a son named John and that he would prepare the people of God for someone even greater. Terrified, Zechariah doubted Gabriel and was struck dumb. But Elizabeth did conceive a son. And when the baby was born, Zechariah wrote on a tablet that his name should be John, and his speech was restored. The appearance of Gabriel was a clue that God was up to something never before seen in human history: He was sending His Son to redeem the world. Advent gives us time to ponder the mystery of God’s plan of redemption—quiet, contemplative time like dumbstruck Zechariah had as he awaited the birth of John. As we await the celebration of Jesus’ birth, we listen to the message of hope that God comes even now to save us.

**+ SERVICE OF LIGHT +**

**VERSICLES and HYMN OF LIGHT**

Pastor: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,

**People: the light no darkness can overcome.**

Pastor: By the Holy Spirit we cry out with the whole Church,

**People: “Prepare the way of the Lord.”**

Pastor: All who wait for Jesus to return pray,

**People: Come, Lord Jesus, come.**

**HYMN** *“O Light Whose Splendor”* (*LSB* 891)

**THANKSGIVING FOR LIGHT**

Pastor: God of all creation, You spoke and there was light and the universe began. For the sun, moon, and stars, we give You thanks. For electricity that provides lights in our homes, schools, places of work, and along our streets, we give thanks. Most of all we thank You for Christ, the light of the world, who overcomes all the shadowy places of our lives through His death and resurrection. Illumine our hearts and enlighten our paths according to Your will, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**+ PSALMODY +**

**PSALM 141**

Pastor: Let my prayer rise before You as incense,
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

**People: O Lord, I call to You; come to me quickly;
hear my voice when I cry to You.**

Pastor: Let my prayer rise before You as incense,
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

**People: Set a watch before my mouth, O Lord,
and guard the door of my lips.
Let not my heart incline to any evil thing;
let me not be occupied in wickedness with evildoers.
But my eyes are turned to You, O God;
in You I take refuge.
Strip me not of my life.**

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen. Let my prayer rise before You as incense,
the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.**

Pastor: Let the incense of our repentant prayer ascend before You, O Lord, and let Your loving-kindness descend on us that, with purified minds, we may sing Your praises with the Church on earth and the whole heavenly host and may glorify You forever.

**All: Amen.**

**+ READINGS +**

**READING**Isaiah 43:16-21

Pastor: O Lord, have mercy on us.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**READING** Luke 1:5–25

Lector: O Lord, have mercy on us.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

Lector: In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.

**People: But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.**

**HYMN** *“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”* (*LSB* 344)

**MESSAGE**

**OFFERING**

**+ PRAYER +**

**PRAYERS AND LORD’S PRAYER**

**BENEDICAMUS**

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

**BENEDICTION**

Pastor: The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the +Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

**People: Amen.**

**HYMN** *“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”* (*LSB* 357, vs. 1-3)

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 **All are welcome …**

 **… Christ is honored.**