

now Advent Four is a part of the birth narrative. Names are interesting. In the Bible the name of a child was from a relative or through the line. (John's name did not appear in his family line which caused problems, Luke 1:59-66.) Jesus on the other hand was named after the Joshua in His line. The specificity of the name of Jesus was explained to Mary in that Jesus was named, not because "God is Savior," as the name Joshua means, but because Jesus, is the Savior. It is a subtle difference that is more noticeable in the Greek because in English Joshua and Jesus don't look much alike. Mary believed the Angel. Mary was wise, her wisdom, her faith was a gift from God. She was ready to put herself into the hands of God for what He would do to her, without argument or doubt.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

© O heavenly Father, we give You our humble and joyful thanks for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for the salvation You have provided for all the people of the world in Him.

In the assurance that You are here to listen to all who call on You in truth, we pray for all people everywhere. Let Your Spirit prevail in every home and school, in every shop and store, and in every kind of labor or industry. Show Your honor and glory to the nations of the Earth; overthrow all who would hinder the progress of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Protect and defend all who are persecuted for His name's sake, and prosper all who love Your truth. Be with the homeless, the fatherless, the comfortless, and help them in their affliction to trust in You, sending them the deliverance that will turn their hearts and bring them to a confession of that name that is above every name, even Jesus Christ our Lord.

For the wounded in spirit, the sick in mind, the distressed in heart, we pray that You would make Your face shine on them. For all strangers, all travelers, and all who are away from home in any service or calling, we pray and ask You to accompany them with Your light and love. For captives and prisoners, for the desolate and forsaken, and for all in peril of life or soul, we implore Your aid and comfort. For the sick and the aged, for those in labor and those in anguish, for the dying and those who mourn their passing, be a most gracious Host.

Grant that our incarnate Savior will rule in the hearts of all people everywhere. Extend the dominion of the Prince of Peace to all the nations of the Earth. Give growth in grace to Your church, that we will proclaim our Savior's birth.

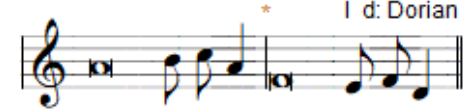
Hear us as we bring to You our private petitions. (Time of silent prayer.)

For the Gift which no words can describe, the Gift of Jesus, we pray, O heavenly Father, that this Gift may be ours in faith. Grant that we will know the joy of His presence, the blessing of following Him and have life in His name.

© Amen.

ADVENT FOUR

Chant Tone



<p>Introit Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;* Let the Earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit;</p> <p>The heavens declare the glo ry of God;* the sky above proclaims His handiwork.</p> <p>In them He has set a tent for the sun,* which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy</p>	<p>Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,* there is nothing hidden from its heat.</p> <p>Glory be to the Father and to the Son* and to the Holy — Spirit; as it was in the be — ginning,* is now, and will be forever. — Amen.</p> <p>Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;* Let the Earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit;</p> <p><i>(Antiphon, Isaiah 45:8a, b; Psalm 19:1, 4c, 5-6)</i></p>
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Collect of the Day

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever

Gradual

Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of — Zion!*
Shout aloud, O daughter of Je | rusalem!
Behold, your King is com | ing to you,*
righteous and having salva | tion is He.
Blessèd is He who comes in the name | of the Lord.*
We bless you from the house | of the Lord.

(Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alternative)

ENTRANCE PRAYER: We will sing of Your steadfast Love, O Lord, heavenly Father. With our mouths we will proclaim Your faithfulness to all generations. As we near the celebration of the birth of Your Son Jesus Christ, we stand in awesome wonder of Your mysterious power and unapproachable wisdom. For revealing to us Your plans for our salvation, conceived in the womb of eternity, announced by Your prophets, and brought forth in the fullness of time, we praise and glorify Your most Holy name. Fill our hearts with such joy that others may recognize these gifts as coming from You through our faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen (So be it, Lord.)

THE SEASON OF ADVENT NOW DRAWS TO A CLOSE, ALL OF THE CANDLES IN THE WREATH ARE LIT, THE CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH OF JESUS IS UPON US. In the excitement of the final days we begin to hurry ever more on our goal to get all of our shopping done, all of our cards to those remembered people, and our special goal of getting some time to relax with our self. God has invited all of us to prepare in this Advent Season. Prepare our voices to sing His praises, prepare our bodies to go and worship, prepare our hearts to receive Jesus for our life and salvation. There is nothing more important we can do than to worship and praise Him for all of the times we have been allowed to come to this most wonderful of all celebrations, the event of the birth of our Savior.

THEME OF THE DAY:

Jesus Is The Savior

INTROIT—(Antiphon, Isaiah 45:8a and b;) Psalm 19:1, 4c, 5-6
Isaiah 45 tells us about Cyrus the king of Persia. Cyrus is the one who gave the Jews permission to go back to Jerusalem under Ezra. He is noted as being a type of redeemer (savior) to the people. Psalm 19, written by David, is a song about the wonder and Love of God.

COLLECT

Our sin can overwhelm us. Even something as wonderful as Christmas We ask that Jesus would come quickly to lift us from our sin. This has the two fold Advent reference. We are happy to celebrate the First Advent while always looking toward His Second Advent.

OLD TESTAMENT LESSON—2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

It is interesting that we don't always get to do what we want. Sometimes God's plan is bigger and more involved than we can imagine. David wanted to build the House for the Lord. God stopped him. God would bless David and the line to the Messiah would go through David, but to build the House would belong to another. The line to the Messiah then starts (more or less) with Ruth and ends with Mary.

GRADUAL—Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alternative

The Old Testament people put their faith and trust in the prophecy of Zechariah, and it was fulfilled. Our faith and trust is in the return of our king, the Lord, (His Second Advent.)

EPISTLE LESSON—Romans 16:25-27

It would probably be easier to simply repeat the three verses as our commentary, but when have we ever been at a loss for words? Wisdom only comes from God. God gives us the knowledge necessary to believe in Jesus as a free gift, therefore wisdom is not something we gain, but a gift. Jesus was revealed to us, through the Words of the prophets, He is revealed to us through the Words of the Evangelists and Apostles. We don't understand and recognize Jesus in the Words because of our great intellect. Rather, God reveals Him to us in His Word. We are given the gift of wisdom and made to understand.

GOSPEL LESSON—Luke 1:26-38

The historic lessons for Advent are: 1. Matthew 21:1-9, 2. Luke 21:25-36, 3. Matthew 11:2-10, 4. John 1:19-28. The intent was to ponder the Second Coming apart from the celebration of the Birth. About 1800 we began a change toward PreChristmas. In 1808 the churches in the Grand-Duchy of Hesse used Luke 1:39-80 on the First Sunday of Advent. We all caved in, (during the first revision of the lectionary in 1968,) and