

**Fred Johnsen**  
**Old Testament Project**  
**Order of Worship**

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Order of Service for Wednesday, December 22, 2004  
The Final Wednesday in Advent

Prelude/moment for meditation:	<i>Giazotto's Adagio, for violin, strings &amp; organ in G minor</i>
Brief Order of Confession:	Page 77 Setting Two, LBW
Procession/Entrance Hymn	Hymn 34 LBW <i>Oh, Come, Oh, Come Emmanuel</i>
Kyrie	Page 78 LBW
Prayer of the Day	See Insert
Youth Bell Choir	<i>O Word of God Incarnate</i>
First Lesson:	Isaiah 11:1-5
Psalm	Psalm 8
Second Lesson	Romans 4: 21-26
Gospel	John 1: 23-34
Hymn of the Day	Hymn 514 <i>O Savior, Precious Savior</i>
Sermon	<i>God's Promise: Made, Fulfilled, Continues</i>
Apostles Creed	Page 85 LBW
Prayers of the Church	Page 85 LBW
Offering	Page 86 LBW
Great Thanksgiving/Distribution	Page 88 LBW
Blessing	Page 94 LBW
Sending Hymn	Hymn 32 <i>Fling Wide the Door</i>
Dismissal	

**Fred Johnsen**  
**Old Testament Project**  
**Homily on Isaiah**

*God's Promise: Made, Fulfilled, Continues.*

I remember a time when I was 15. I had anticipated becoming the owner of a brand new Model 70 Winchester that Christmas. My dad and I had checked one out at the local sporting goods store and that coming Fall I would be old enough for my first deer hunt.

Christmas morning turned out quite differently. Instead of the new Model 70 I received a used lever-action Winchester. Though grateful I felt a bit cheated as I looked over the spots where the bluing had been worn off the rifle over time.

It's amazing the things we anticipate. My hope of a shiny, new rifle ended as I looked over the old rifle's dull stock and worn finish. I knew it would take a deer but it just wasn't what I had hoped for.

Over the last four weeks the church has been in a time of heightened anticipation. Some see it as part of the Holiday Season – a time of good cheer – and it surely is. But, more than this it is a season of anticipation. It is a time when Christian hearts are filled with expectation, not only for the birth of Christ but for his eventual return.

In today's texts there is much anticipation to read about and while we surely anticipate the coming of Christ we are also awaiting the fulfillment of God's promise of salvation spoken of by the prophet Isaiah.

Isaiah came into a world marked by selfishness and greed, by callousness, apathy, promiscuity, and violence. In this world he spoke God's promise to send a savior. Isaiah's name "God is Salvation" points to God's promise. Through Isaiah God promises "a shoot will grow from Jesse's root stock" This shoot comes with the birth of Jesus, a decent of David – himself the son of Jesse.

In Isaiah 9: 1-7, the prophet foretells of the messiah's coming from Galilee.

*"For a child has been born for us; a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his kingdom."*

What makes Isaiah's words unique is they are lasting. That which was foretold came to pass and the words spoken remain relevant today. Isaiah still speaks to us pointing out our iniquities and reaffirming God's promise made and fulfilled – an example of his steadfast love and faith with his people.

Today, we face the same assaults upon decency that Isaiah saw. Sin still corrupts us. We continue to turn away from God to pursue selfish pleasure. And yet, the Messiah was promised and delivered and the promise continues. In this fulfilled promise we are assured that Christ will return because God keeps his promises. We've seen this in his promise to Abraham and Sarah and his promise to deliver the people of Israel from bondage.

Even after the birth of Jesus, anticipation continued as is evidence in the Gospel of John harking back to Isaiah "*I am the voice in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'*" In the text, John the Baptist anticipates the coming of the one who is greater than he.

So like John we continue to anticipate that of which we are sure. In two days the Messiah will be born, continually, just as at Easter he continually dies and is resurrected for our salvation.

In the end few things live up to the anticipation we have for them. I still don't have a Model 70 Winchester. Since the years have passed I've grown so fond of the old "lever-gun" I have little interest in its high-class brother.

God's promise is another matter altogether. His promise meets and exceeds all our expectations.

God's promise is made. God's promise is fulfilled. God's promise continues.

Amen.

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**Prayer of the Day  
Wednesday, December 22, 2004**

**M**ost merciful and gracious God, in Creation you brought forth light from darkness to shine upon the world. In our sin we have created darkness and again you have called upon the light that is your son Jesus Christ. Make us ready to receive this true light from true light. This we ask in the name of the one who comes, Jesus Christ, who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever, Amen.

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**Bulletin Announcement for Advent Services**

Members and guests are invited to celebrate the birth of our Lord with a series of Wednesday evening Advent services. The 7 p.m. services of word and song will begin December 1 and continue through December 22. The four-part series will focus on prophetic texts from Isaiah foretelling the coming of the Messiah. The December 22 service will feature a performance by the Trinity Youth Bell Choir. We will also be taking donations for flowers and wreaths to decorate the Sanctuary during Advent. Flowers may be donated in memory of a loved one who has died over the last year. Please contact the church secretary for more information.

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**Draft Orders of Worship for Advent Services**

**Wednesday, Dec. 1**

First Reading     Isaiah 1: 1-4; 10-14  
Second Reading   Romans 3: 9-18  
Gospel:           Matt. 23: 1-12  
Psalm 12: 1-5     *Plea for Help in Evil Times*  
Hymns             No. 24 *Come, O Precious Ransom*  
                      No. 378 *Amid the World's Bleak Wilderness*

Prayer of the Day:

*O Lord, the world is full of sin. We have turned our eyes away from you. Our hearts are set upon earthly things. For the sake of your son Jesus Christ who reigns supreme with you and the Holy Spirit, renew our faith so that we might better serve you and find favor in your sight.*

**Wednesday, Dec. 8**

First Reading     Isaiah 25: 6-10  
Second Reading   Romans 5: 1-11  
Gospel             John 5: 25-29  
Psalm 16          *Song of Trust and Security in God*  
Hymns             No. 426 *O Son of God in Galilee*  
                      No. 30 LBW *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

Prayer of the Day

*Almighty God, we are not fit to be called your children. Yet, in our unworthiness you reach out to us in love and mercy with the promise of redemption and eternal life. Help us to see these gifts and all that you have given us through your son Jesus Christ who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit eternally.*

**Wednesday, Dec. 15**

First Reading     Isaiah 40:1-5  
Second Reading   Colossians 1: 15-23  
Gospel             John 1: 23-34  
Psalm 54          *Prayer for Vindication*  
Hymns             No. 26 LBW *Prepare The Royal Highway*  
                      No. 37 LBW *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding*

Prayer of the Day

*We have heard a cry in the wilderness, O Lord, and we await the coming splendor of your son Jesus Christ. In our sin he washes the scarlet stain as white as new wool. Prepare us to receive this new garment of salvation in the name of the one who baptizes with fire and spirit – he who reigns with you and the Holy Spirit forever.*