

Welcome to Christ Lutheran Church & Preschool

December 3, 2023

First Sunday of Advent

Rev. Matt Holmes

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Member of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
(ELCA – www.elca.org)



All Are Welcome – All the Time!

You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to participate in any part of worship. If you wish to take communion, we ask that you desire a relationship with Jesus. His body and blood were given and shed for you.



Christ Lutheran Church & PreSchool is a community committed to the work of equity and inclusion, bringing justice and support for all of God's beloveds. We welcome those who are seeking God's love and grace for the first time or as a life-long believer. We welcome because Jesus shows us how to welcome, regardless of race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, economic resources, relationship status, health challenges or anything else that too often divides us. It is in our welcome which we commit ourselves to being an anti-racist space, a space where we seek daily to deepen our work of inclusion in the life of our church. Our unity is in Christ. All are welcome here.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & SHARING OF PRAYER CONCERNS

By Kathy Davis, who will provide updated Prayers of Intercession

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who comes to wake us from sleep, who leads us into the light of grace. **Amen.**

Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

– Silence for reflection and self-examination –

God of all time,

**we confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us.
We ignore our neighbors in need and fail in the labor of justice and peace.
In your mercy forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your light
and to seek the things that will endure until Christ comes again in glory.
Amen.**

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

In + Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven

and all things are made new. Rejoice in this good news!

Amen.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you. **And also with you!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

SONG: Light One Candle, ELW #240 (vs 1)

**Light one candle to watch for Messiah; Let the light banish darkness.
He shall bring salvation to Israel; God fulfills the promise.**

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

Matthew 24:42 says: *Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming.*

We do not know the hour when we may meet the living Christ in our daily lives. But we do know that staying in constant vigilance, awake 24/7, is not realistic. As we enter into this Advent season, preparing to meet the living Christ anew, perhaps the call to *stay awake*, is a call to stay *open* and *watchful*. To take a moment to notice where God is already meeting us, or where we long to be met. To notice who God may be working through. To be pushed to see God working through those we least expect.

On this first Sunday of Advent, we take a moment to light the first Advent candle. This is the perfect time for us to reflect on where we have seen hope this week; where we need to see hope; and notice how God is preparing hope in each of us.

– *Silence for Reflection as we light the first candle* –

Please join in reading together:

**We light this candle, the first candle of Advent,
in hope and with hope.
May we keep awake to the living Christ
who is already among us.**

Let us pray:

God of the watching and waiting,
awaken us to see your hope in the world,
and inspire us to be part of that hope. **Amen.**

READING – Isaiah 64:1-9

Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains would tremble before you!

As when fire sets twigs ablaze and causes water to boil, come down to make your name known to your enemies and cause the nations to quake before you!

For when you did awesome things that we did not expect, you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.

Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.

You come to the help of those who gladly do right, who remember your ways. But when we continued to sin against them, you were angry. How then can we be saved?

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

No one calls on your name or strives to lay hold of you; for you have hidden your face from us and have given us over to our sins.

Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Do not be angry beyond measure, Lord; do not remember our sins forever. Oh, look on us, we pray, for we are all your people.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE READING – Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Hear us, Shepherd of Israel, you who lead Joseph like a flock.

You who sit enthroned between the cherubim,

shine forth before Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasseh.

Awaken your might; come and save us.

Restore us, O God;

make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

How long, Lord God Almighty, will your anger smolder
against the prayers of your people?

**You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have made them drink tears by the bowlful.**

You have made us an object of derision to our neighbors,

and our enemies mock us.

Restore us, God Almighty;

make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand,

the son of man you have raised up for yourself.

Then we will not turn away from you;

revive us, and we will call on your name.

Restore us, Lord God Almighty;

make your face shine on us, that we may be saved.

READING – 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

(Paul writes to the church in Corinth:) Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I always thank my God for you because of his grace given you in Christ Jesus. For in him you have been enriched in every way – with all kinds of speech and with all knowledge – God thus confirming our testimony about Christ among you. Therefore you do not lack any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. He will also keep you firm to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

– Please stand as you are able –

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (SUNG) – ELW 172

Halle, halle, halle – lujah. Halle, halle, halle – lujah.
Halle, halle, halle – lujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah!

THE GOSPEL – Mark 13:24-37

The Holy Gospel according to Mark. Glory to You, O Lord.

(Jesus said about the end of times:) ““But in those days, following that distress, “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’

“At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. And he will send his angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

“Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

“Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back – whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

The Gospel of our Lord. Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON – Rev. Matt Holmes

SONG: Amazing Grace, ELW #779

(Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal)

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found; was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved;
how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed!

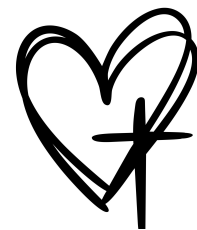
Through many dangers, toils and snares I have already come.
'Tis grace has brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me; His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be as long as life endures.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun,
we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we'd first begun.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION *(on separate sheet)*

Merciful God... Receive our prayer.

PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. And also with you.
– *Please share a socially distanced sign of peace or greeting* –

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks & praise.**



WORDS OF INSTITUTION *(not printed/Presider's book on altar)*

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION AT THE FRONT

All are welcome to receive the Real Presence of Christ in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to receive the sacrament. We ask that you desire a relationship with Jesus Christ. Those who are interested will be invited by an usher to come up the center aisle to the front to select a single-serving Communion kit from the tray, or to receive a blessing. Then return to your seat via the side aisle to open the kit and partake in Communion. An usher will offer a basket to collect the container. *For those worshipping at home, please consider joining in Holy Communion by taking a bit of bread or cracker and a sip of wine or juice.* **All are welcome.**

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

BENEDICTION

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you His peace.
In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

SONG: Great Is Thy Faithfulness, ELW 733

(Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal)

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father.
There is no shadow of turning with thee.
Thou changes not, thy compassions, they fail not.
As thou has been thou forever wilt be.

Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
All I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter and springtime and harvest;
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love. ***Great is thy faithfulness...***

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide,
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow;
blessings all mine with ten thousand beside! ***Great is thy faithfulness...***

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. Thanks be to God!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Joy Bags for Sue's Pantry Kids** – This year's list includes many more children (more than 50). Can we do it? We hate to leave anyone out. The PreSchool families are planning to handle the youngest 25 children, so we are hoping to give to the teenagers. Gift bags are simple with values of approximately \$25 or \$30 with a few things for each child. For younger teens, suggestions include hats, mittens/gloves, sweater/sweatshirt, toy/game, candy and/or a small gift card to Walmart or Target. For our older teens ideas include gloves, fun socks, small gift card, candy, lotion, chapstick, ear buds/charging cord, card game, journal or pens. But do what you feel and what you find! Please pray on how we might make this happen. Holly will have specifics so you can shop for a specific child (age/gender/personality), or donate cash and Holly and her elves will put things together. Email HollySJ@earthlink.net for details. Please prayerfully consider so we can brighten the holidays just a bit. Please provide money or Joy Bags prior to December 13. Thank you!
- **Thank you for Saturday with St. Nick** – Thank you to all who helped or who enjoyed yesterday's Saturday with St. Nick program. We sang songs, made crafts, and visited with St. Nick. This is our tradition – a free gift to the community.
- **Thank you, Decorators!** – Thank you to all who decorated for Christmas.
- **Encampment Collection** – Thank you to all who contributed to our first delivery to Chicago. We continue to collect blankets/sleeping bags (new or gently used/clean), socks, hand warmers, feminine products, Mariano's gift cards (store closest to camp).
- **Sanctuary Support** – Our first batch of sleeping mats, small suitcases and OTC medicines were delivered to asylum seekers living in Police Stations and community centers in Chicago, a Sanctuary City. This collection continues as need does not end.
- **Sue's Pantry** – Looking for small sizes of flour, cooking oil, sugar. Also anything needed to keep a home and family clean – dish soap, laundry detergent, body wash, shampoo.
- **Love INC** – Always looking for housewares, nonperishables and volunteers. Want to learn more about this amazing organization? Have a child or family in need of a bundle of clothes or housewares? Give the details to Natalie and on behalf of the church, we will request support – and Natalie will get us covered! (Thanks, Natalie.)
- **COOL Ministries** – We support the COOL pantry in Waukegan as well as Vernon Township Pantry with non-perishables. Collection bins in hallway or give online.
- **BSA Troop 273** – Thank you to all who support our partner Scouts as they have supported us.
- **Looking to restart Cub Scout Pack 273!** Children/families ages Kindergarten through 4th grade are encouraged to reach out to Theresa (tcabrese98@gmail.com).

CALENDAR:

- Christmas Service will be held on Sunday, December 24 at 9:30 a.m., only, this year.
- Advent begins TODAY