

**Welcome to Christ Lutheran Church & Preschool
December 15, 2024**

Third Sunday of Advent

Rev. Paul Pfeffer

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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 the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

SONG: Light One Candle, ELW #240 (vs 3)

Light three candles to watch for Messiah; Let the light banish darkness.
Lift up your heads and lift high the gateway, for the King of glory.

– Silence for reflection as we light 3 Advent candles –

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT CANDLE

From Prepare: An Advent Devotional, Bethany Fellows/Chalice Press, (c)2019

Matthew 11:10 says: *See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.*

John the Baptist was called by God to prepare the way for the coming of Christ Jesus, to speak hard truths, to live a life shaped by the goodness of Christ's saving power and the challenge of his prophetic wisdom. On this third Sunday of Advent, let us see ourselves in the call of John the Baptist and celebrate with joy the challenge and call to proclaim the Christ who comes to us in flesh and blood in a manger to teach, preach and proclaim God's goodness.

We read together:

We light the third candle of Advent as a sure, steady promise of your joy *in us* and *for us* as we are called to serve and proclaim your Word.

Let us pray: God of everlasting promises, meet us in the complicated space where joy resides. Meet us in our grief for what has been lost and in our hope of what is to come in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

READING – Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more.

On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival.” I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

RESPONSIVE READING – Isaiah 12:2-6

"Surely God is my salvation;

I will trust and will not be afraid,

for the Lord is my strength and my might;

he has become my salvation.”

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. And you will say on that day

“Give thanks to the Lord; call on his name;

make known his deeds among the nations;

proclaim that his name is exalted.

Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;

let this be known in all the earth.

Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,

for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.”

READING – Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

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 – Luke 3:7-18

The Holy Gospel according to Luke. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our ancestor,’ for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

And the crowds asked him, “What, then, should we do?” In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what should we do?” He said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.”

As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, “I baptize you with water, but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.”

So with many other exhortations he proclaimed the good news to the people.

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

SERMON – Rev. Paul Pfeffer

SONG: Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers, ELW #244

Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal

Rejoice, rejoice, believers, and let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing, and darker night is near.
The bridegroom is arising and soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle; at midnight comes the cry.

The watchers on the mountain proclaim the bridegroom near;
Go forth as he approaches with alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting; The gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory; the bridegroom is at hand.

The saints, who here in patience, their cross and suff'rings bore,
shall live and reign forever, when sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory the Lamb they shall behold;
In triumph cast before him, their diadems of gold.

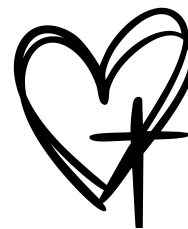
Our hope and expectation, O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted, we plead, o Lord, to see,
the day of earth's redemption that sets your people free!

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)*

Lord in your mercy... Receive our prayer.



PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. And also with you.

– Please share a greeting or sign of peace –

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's face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

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

SONG – Prepare the Royal Highway, ELW #264

Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal

Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!

Let every hill and valley a level road appear!

Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:

Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

God's people, see him coming: your own eternal king!

Palm branches strew before him! Spread garments! Shout and sing!

God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail you!

Hosanna to the lord, for he fulfills God's word!

Then fling the gates wide open to greet your promised king!

Your king, yet every nation, its tribute too may bring.

All lands will bow before him; their voices join your singing:

Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

His is no earthly kingdom; it comes from heaven above.

His rule is peace and freedom, and justice, truth and love.

So let your praise be sounding, for kindness so abounding:

Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

DISMISSAL

*We prepare our hearts with joy. **Come, Lord Jesus!***

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Joy Bags for Sue's Pantry Kids – collecting today for delivery** – This year's list includes even more children (more than 50). PreSchool families will shop for youngest 25 children, while we give to the older kids. Gift bags are simple with values of about \$25 with a few things for each child. For younger teens, ideas include hats, mittens/gloves, sweater/sweatshirt, toy/game, candy and/or a small gift card to Walmart or Target. For older teens, gloves, fun socks, small gift card, candy, lotion, chapstick, ear buds/charging cord, card game, journal or pens. Please pray on how we might make this happen. Holly (HollySJ@earthlink.net) has details so you can shop for a specific child (age/gender/personality), or donate cash and the CLC elves will put things together. Please provide filled bags by December 15. Thank you!
- **Christmas Eve Worship** – Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 4 p.m. – Please take time to worship.
- **Supporting the Homeless** – Thank you to all who sent items for the camp near Pastor Pdraig's home in Chicago. There was so much we must send a second load. Thank you!
- **Caring Hands** – Saturday, January 18 from 9a to noon. Making prayer shawls, comfort blankets, hats/mittens. (CaringHandsVernonHills@gmail.com)
- **Donating to Storm/Fire Victims** – ELCA's Lutheran Disaster Response is one of the oldest, most effective and most respected organizations for getting money where it can be put to good use. Donate at ELCA.org.
- **Scouting!** – Boys and girls ages Kindergarten through high school have an opportunity to build skills and have fun through Scouting. Thanks for supporting our Pack and Troop!
- **PreSchool Prayers** – Keep the children, families and staff of our PreSchool in prayer.
- **Support for Anelly** – Our ministry partner Anelly, a young mother of two who has supported refugees in Chicago, has a recurrence of cancer and other challenges. Please lift her in prayer and consider supporting the Meal Train (HollySJ@earthlink.net).
- **Sue's Pantry** – Call for toilet paper! And anything needed to keep a home and family clean – dish soap, laundry detergent, body wash, shampoo.
- **Love INC** – Housewares, nonperishables and volunteers. Want to learn more? Have a family in need of a bundle of clothes or housewares? Give the details to Natalie she will get us covered! (Thanks, Natalie.) (<https://loveinclakecounty.org/>)
- **COOL Ministries** – We support the COOL pantry in Waukegan with non-perishables. Collection bins in hallway or give online. (CoolMinistries.org)
- **Prayer concerns?** Consider reaching out so that our network of Prayer Warriors can pray. You may remain anonymous. Email ChristLutheranVH@aol.com with your request. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.** Your presence in worship is very important. Thank you for being part of this community of faith. If you would like to support our service, we welcome donations, which can be provided by credit card or Paypal through the link at the bottom of our webpage, ChristLutheranVH.org. Thank you!