

First Lutheran Church – ELCA
1200 4th Avenue - Worthington, MN 56187
Ministers: All baptized members – Jeanette McCormick, Pastor
Web Site: felcwgtn.org & **Email:** felcwgtn@frontiernet.net
December 9 & 13, 2020; 3rd Sunday in Advent
Christmas Play Service

GATHERING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

God calls us together as the people of God. Christ calls us together as the people of God. The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God. Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **Amen.**

SONG: ELW 294: “In the Bleak Midwinter” (verse 1) – Performed by Joshua Hein

In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak midwinter, long ago.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 124)

Let us pray. **Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH – Stephanie Bauman

During the third week in Advent, we spend time thinking about joy.

From Psalm 5:11, we hear these words, “But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, so that those who love your name may exult in you.”

Two purple candles and one pink candle are lit.

Too often, we think joy is something big, O God. A brass band or a parade can certainly bring us joy. Just as easily and far more often, we can feel joy in a hug or the squeeze of hand, we can see joy in a smile or hear it in laughter. Help us to not overlook the simple joys that peak into our lives daily. This week in our Advent journey, open our eyes to the joy that surrounds us. Amen.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

A reading from Isaiah.

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

¹The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please join me in reading Psalm 126 responsively.

PSALM: Psalm 126

The Lord has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3)

¹When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.

²Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great things for them.”

³The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

⁴Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like the watercourses of the Negeb.

⁵Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

⁶Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

A reading from 1 Thessalonians.

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ’s coming.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil. ²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28

The holy gospel according to John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

John’s gospel describes Jesus as the “light of the world.” John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” ²²Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us.

What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said. ²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S PAGEANT AND MUSIC

Song #1: "Go Tell It On the Mountain" (verse 1) - Sung by the Hein Family

Refrain:

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

1) While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heaven there shone a holy light. (*Refrain*)

Song #2: "Joy to the World" - Performed on bells

Song #3: ELW 278/277 – "Away in the Manger" (verse 1) - Performed by Kinsley and Dyson Neugebauer

Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, The little Lord, Jesus laid down his sweet head;
The stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay, The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay

Song #4: "A Star in the East" - Performed by Erin Makela

There's a star in the east on Christmas morn; Rise up shepherd and follow
It'll lead to the place where Christ was born; Rise up shepherd and follow

Follow, follow, rise up shepherd and follow; Follow the star of Bethlehem
Rise up shepherd and follow

Leave your sheep and leave your lambs; Rise up shepherd and follow
Leave your flocks and leave your rams; Rise up shepherd and follow

Follow, follow, rise up shepherd and follow; Follow the star of Bethlehem
Rise up shepherd and follow

If take good heed of the angel's words; Rise up shepherd and follow
You'll forget your flocks, you'll forget your herds Rise up shepherd and follow

Follow, follow, rise up shepherd and follow; Follow the star of Bethlehem
Rise up shepherd and follow

Song #5: "Jesus Loves Me" - Performed on Bells

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, lay leaders, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship, including those who have helped First and Grace Lutheran churches during this pandemic. Embed your word in their hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. We especially lift from our midst: **Members:** Todd Hallstrom, Ron Almjeld, Linda Towne, Charlene Wachter, Bob Dieter, Mary Kraft, Marilyn Frisch, Julie & Denny Christensen, Dianne Sanderson, Betty Nelson; **Members in Nursing Homes:** Bobbie Elvin, Gene Wachter, Sandra Marsh; **Members in Care Facilities:** Joan Doeden, Jean Bender; **Family Members & Friends:** Lois Gruis, Josh Hansen (Mary Ingenthron's son), Lee Morrison (Terry Morrison's son), Henrietta Lais, Tom Morgan (Sandy Randall's dad), Peggy Konold (Norma Radenbaugh's daughter), Brad Martens (Valerie Veen's son), Joyce Larson (Brenda Hurlbut's mom), Andrew Place (Marless Milbrath's cousin's grandson), McGaughey's brother/uncle-in-law; **Our service men and women; Our Missionaries:** Chuck & Sybil Rounds in Costa Rica and Love INC.

Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love (*especially Lucy, martyr of the church*). Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

QUESTION AND ANSWER TIME WITH THE SUNDAY SCHOOL KIDS

OFFERTORY – Christmas Music Selections - Performed by Nancy Hofstee

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

LORD’S PRAYER - Recited by FLC Sunday School Kids

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace. **Amen.**

SONG: - “Angels We Have Heard on High” - Performed by Cindy Anderson

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Office Hours - Monday—Thursday 8:00 am – 12:00 pm (noon) —1:00 - 4:30 pm & Friday 8:00 am—12:00 pm (noon).

Radio Sponsor: In memory of Gloria & Aaron Widboom by their family.

Due to the rising numbers of Covid-19 infections, we will not have in-person worship or youth activities through January 19. Council will revisit this decision at their January meeting. **Services** will be on-line or drive-in. You can drive to the church on Wednesday or Sunday and listen to the service on FM 107.9 on your radio. We will have bulletins and communion supplies in the mailbox in the parking lot and by the front steps. There will be ushers to direct you.

The Card Ministry members would like to thank everyone for purchasing our cards! During these uncertain times, members continue to make cards at home. Sales from the cards have helped to fund the food ministry, coat ministry and Love INC. We continue to make cards that are sent to the shut-ins. If you would like to be a part of this ministry, contact Darcy Poppema or Janet Zierke. There is a job for everyone. Join the fun!

Gift Cards will only be available in the office during office hours. Please call ahead to see if someone is available to get you cards. Thank You!

2021 Offering Envelopes will be available for pick up in your mailbox by Wednesday, December 16. Please pick them up during office hours and reminder to not use them until January 2021 as some of the numbers that you had this year have changed. Thank you.

2020 Offering – The last day to get your offering in for 2020 will be Monday, December 28. Please drop it off during office hours. All offering received through the mail will need to be in before Christmas. This allows us to get it deposited for this year. Thank you!

Christmas Services – Drive-In (FM 107.9) & On-Line ONLY

Wednesday, December 23

6:00 PM—Traditional candlelight communion service with Christmas hymns.

Thursday, December 24

4:00 PM—Traditional candlelight communion service Christmas hymns.

8:00 PM—Traditional candlelight communion service with Christmas hymns.

Friday, December 25

9:00 AM—Intimate traditional communion service with Christmas hymns.



The office will be closed Thursday, December 24 and Friday, December 25 for the Christmas Holiday.

Drive-in service will be held on Wednesday, December 30.

There will be no drive-in services on Sunday, December 27 and January 3. On December 27, Shetek Lutheran Ministries is preparing a service for us to use and on January 3, the synod is preparing a service. It will be on our Facebook, website and on KWOA radio.



Annual Reports are due into the church office by Wednesday, December 30. Please get your reports in by this date as we will be sending out the reports this year and Natalie will need a few extra days to get the reports in the mail on time. Thank you!



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