

Third Sunday of Advent

December 13, 2020 (Real Church Virtual)



Announcements / Lighting of the 3rd Advent Candle

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence is kept for reflection

P: Loving and forgiving God,

C: we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.

P: People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free— free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Hail to the Lord's Anointed

Verse 1

Hail to the Lord's anointed, great David's greater Son! Hail, in the time appointed, your reign on earth begun! You come to break oppression, to set the captive free, to take away transgression and rule in equity.

Verse 2

You come with rescue speedy to those who suffer wrong, to help the poor and needy, and bid the weak be strong; to give them songs for sighing, their darkness turn to light, whose souls, condemned and dying, are precious in your sight.

Verse 3

You shall come down like showers upon the fruitful earth; love, joy, and hope, like flowers, spring in your path to birth. Before you on the mountains shall peace, the herald, go; and righteousness in fountains from hill to valley flow.

Verse 4

Kings shall fall down before you, and gold and incense bring; all nations shall adore you, your praise all people sing. To you shall prayer unceasing and daily vows ascend; your kingdom still increasing, a kingdom without end.

Greeting

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all!

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

A: Let us pray together,

C: 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.

Children's Message

First Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

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.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

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

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.

P: A reading from... **C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

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.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon – Pastor Paul

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 the Church / Sign of the Peace / Special Interlude from 2017 Christmas Concert

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.

Final Announcements and Blessing

P: The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, † now and forever.

C: Amen.

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Faithful God

Verse 1

I see You turning ashes to beauty, bringing this dead man to life. Here You are in the midst of the sadness, wiping the tears from my eyes. I can hear the song of redemption filling my heart with Your praise.

Chorus

Faithful God, You reign forever; we will hope in Your great name. Strong and mighty King of heaven, we will worship You, oh faithful God.

Verse 2

You see me as a child who's forgiven, clothed in the mercy of Christ. Here I am, unashamed and surrendered; I have been bought with a price. Can you hear the sound of Your people shaking the earth with Your praise?

Chorus

Faithful God, You reign forever; we will hope in Your great name. Strong and mighty King of heaven, we will worship You, oh faithful God.

Bridge

You turned my mourning into dancing and celebration. You took my sorrow and You gave me Your joy. You broke my bondage and You gave me my liberation, and I will ever praise You. You turned my mourning into dancing and celebration. You took my sorrow and You gave me Your joy. You broke my bondage and You gave me my liberation, and I will ever praise You, and I will ever praise You.

Chorus

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Bethlehem

LUTHERAN CHURCH

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December 13, 2020

POINSETTIAS: *Despite the cancellation of indoor church services, we are still decorating for the possible Christmas eve outdoor 'story and carols'.* Please call Kate Holtfreter at 231-590-3946 before December 13th to order a plant and say who it is in honor of, in celebration of, etc. You can send her a check for \$10.00 made out to Bethlehem Lutheran Church (or BLC) and write poinsettia in the memo line.

Stewardship Encouragement 2021 is Underway! Many pledge cards have been received. Even though the due date (December 1st) is now past, it is not too late to send your pledge in. You can either mail the envelope to BLC or provide it with your offering during Parking Lot Communion at church (Sundays 11-11:45 a.m.) Many thanks and God bless!

Covid hits our congregation! Please keep praying for all who are being hit by this illness especially one of our own council members. Even though all in that household were being careful, someone who was ill came to their home without wearing a mask and all are now very sick. Through the wonders of ZOOM this person was able to participate in the most recent council meeting, and the rest of us saw how ill someone could be even without being hospitalized. Another council member had to be in work/home only quarantine for 2 weeks due to recent multiple exposures in that person's essential job. *Know that any of the tough decisions that the council is making are with the well-being of all members in mind.*

Advent Nights & Blue Christmas this year will all be online. We are excited to announce that we have teamed up with three other Lutheran pastors in the area to provide Advent Wednesday content for all four Advent Wednesdays in December (12/2, 9, 16 and 23) with a special "Blue Christmas" service for the 16th. We invite you to join us on either Facebook or YouTube on Wednesdays at 7:00PM for this special programming.

The DECEMBER issue of the STAR is ready! The STAR is no longer being subsidized by anonymous donors. We thank them for the generosity for three months and their hard work in preparing it for mailing. (There is even a rolling pin involved!!!) The cost of postage for the STAR is now being taken from the general fund. If anyone wants to make an extra donation towards postage due to the monthly cost of keeping all members informed, a notation can be made on any check or envelope. If you read the STAR on line and have not told us, please make certain you contact the office so we are not sending out copies needlessly. Printed STARS will also be available in the "Shooting Star box" outside the church entry later this week. Feel free to check online at www.bethlehemtc.org < About Us > "The Online Bethlehem Star" or type this URL to get these directly: <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/the-bethlehem-star-newsletter>

The outdoor **"Shooting STAR Dispenser" at BLC is now full** with several paper publications, including the December STAR and the current week's worship folder/bulletin. If you would like a copy of a DVD, please contact the church and one will be produced for you.

Calling all Knitters!!: There is an overabundance of yarn skeins in the bin under the mailboxes in the narthex. PLEASE feel free to grab some to make hats, mittens, prayer shawls, etc.! The yarn is sorted according to kind, so you can be sure to find something appropriate for whatever project you have in mind. Questions? Call Betty R. (947-1013)

Christ in Our Home Devotionals for October/November/December. They can be picked up at the name tag table on Sunday mornings, from the STAR box below the outside mailbox, or during parking lot communion. The newest *Living Lutheran* magazine is also available in the same locations.

The daughter of one of our members, Kathi Ivany-Mort, is in need of a vehicle. She is a single parent of three children, two of which have special needs. She has limited funds but would be open to a fair price and/or payment plan if desired. If you have a vehicle that would seat five people and possibly AWD or 4WD, please contact Kathi on her cell at 231-313-1647 or Kathi's husband, Jef Mort, at their home phone 231-929-4911.

From Kathi Ivany: "Praise the Lord! And a special thank you to Margo for your kind and generous gift for my daughter! Erica and her family can certainly use it at this time of the year....I have recently discovered that Erica is trying to save money for an internet connection, so that her children can receive an "inter-face connection" with their schools."

As an aside, an internet company in Rapid City is charging very high fees now to install internet in homes, and though Erica has tried to contest this, it looks like this is the reality these days. Continued prayers for all those trying to stay connected in these challenging times. - Pr. Paul

We're still collecting Oleson's receipts, and we're hoping you've been saving yours for Bethlehem. Please drop them off in the bin under the mailbox counter. Thanks.

The BLC book club will take a Christmas break and not meet again until Tuesday, January 26th. More information on the book to be discussed will come later.

Keep "Hope Spreading": Don't forget our blog "Hope Spreads Further" is still going strong! We've had many very inspiring entries and hope to read more. We invite you to help us build this blog or just read current entries at <http://www.bethlehemtc.org/hope-spreads-further>. Reach out to Pastor Paul at paul.busekist@bethlehemtc.org or Sharon at admin@bethlehemtc.org if you'd like to contribute to the blog!

"Zoom Bible Study", gathering via Zoom is going strong each Wednesday from noon until about 1:15pm, and each week we are having great conversation and fellowship. We are using the Augsburg Fortress study of two of Paul's letters: 1st and 2nd Corinthians. Please contact Pr. Paul if you are interested in joining.

Administrative Assistant Needed at Father Fred: This is a full-time Administrative Assistant position with benefits. The person filling this role must be flexible, able to function well in a highly stimulating environment, respond to interruptions as they occur and work independently to accomplish assigned tasks. The overall function of this role is to provide organizational, clerical and Executive level support.

Entry Requirements:

Education: Minimum two yr. college degree required

Experience: Three to five years of administrative/executive assistant level experience in a professional environment / Previous accounting experience preferred /Advanced level knowledge of Microsoft Office programs / Familiarity with QuickBooks preferred

More details visit fatherfred.org

Send Resume to Executive Director, Candice Hamel chamel@fatherfred.org