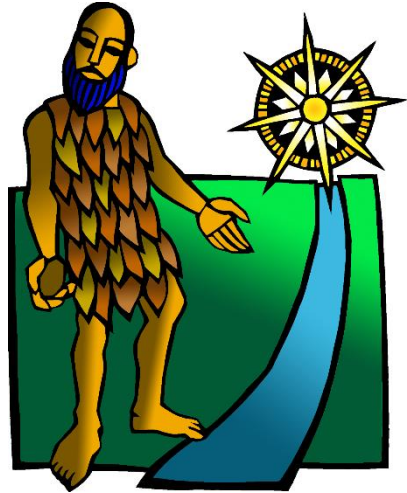


Dec. 11th 2022

Third Day in Advent



CALL TO WORSHIP

There will be signs in the heavens and
distress among the nations.

**When Christ returns in power and glory
people will faint with fear.**

But when you see these things, lift up your
heads:

Our redemption is drawing near!

Heaven and earth may pass away,

But the Word of God will stand unshaken.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

Reader 1: We light this candle as a symbol of God's love for us
and our love for one another.

Reader 2: For the Lord rejoices over us with gladness, and
renews us in his love. He exults over us with singing and turns our
shame to praise.

Congregation: Come, Lord Jesus, come!

GATHERING SONG *Come. Thou Long-Expected Jesus (ELW#254)*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Assured that God hears our repentance, let us turn our minds to the
truth, confessing our sins to God and one another.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

**The Lord is near. In your presence, Holy God, we confess that we need
repentance. We have broken your commands against idolatry. We do
not live in peace with your creation or your people. We have not
trusted your word, and we are afraid. Forgive us, restore us, and turn
our shame into praise, for the sake of the One who proclaims the good
news and for the sake of all the world. Amen.**

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

In the name of the one God who lives and moves among us, you are forgiven. The Lord has taken away the judgments against you. Do not worry. Live in peace.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray...**Merciful God, you come into our midst longing for communion with us, becoming one of us. Break our resistance to life with you, show us the path toward just relations, and bring us into your unimaginable peace; in Jesus' name. Amen.**

HYMN OF THE DAY (ACS #908)

In a Far-Off Place, Jesus Comes



1 In a far - off place, Je - sus comes to earth.
2 For the poor in heart, Je - sus comes to earth.
3 In our deep - est night, Je - sus comes to earth:



Sheep and cat - tle grace the site. As the
Hum - ble shep - herds start the news. For each
ra - diant star to light our way. Sum - mer's



an - gel songs be - gin, like the whis - per of the wind,
home - less in - fant born, for the meek and those who mourn,
heat or win - ter's chill, with a warm and lov - ing will,



na - ture's hope a - wakes a - gain; Je - sus comes.
for the wear - y and the worn, Je - sus comes.
to a world that needs him still, Je - sus comes.

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

God of signs and wonders, we come to your word again and again, seeking understanding and the new life it offers. By the power of your Holy Spirit, illumine our hearts and minds so that we may believe this testimony and have eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ, our teacher and Savior, we pray. **Amen.**

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM (Fisher)

Guess Who's Coming to Bethlehem?

The animals in the Bethlehem stable have been informed of the coming Messiah, but they aren't quite sure who it will be. The lamb naturally thinks it's a lamb; the dove thinks it's a dove who will bring peace...and the other animals have their own thoughts as to who this mysterious visitor will be!



Family and friends, please sing along with the students on the musical selections found in your bulletin.

WORD (BYGLAND)

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

A reading from Isaiah.

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. ³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the

feeble knees. ⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." ⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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

PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (*Ps. 146:8*)

⁵Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;

⁶**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps promises forever;**

⁷who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The LORD sets the captive free.

⁸**The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.**

⁹The LORD cares for the stranger; the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

¹⁰**The LORD shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

A reading from James.

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

⁷Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient.

Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

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

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." ⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' ¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one

has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

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

SERMON *(BYGLAND)*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God our Helper, we thank you for keeping our lives always in your care and protection and pray for any and all who are in harm’s way.

For those walking in the midst of danger...

For those who are treading a slippery path... for those exhausted and seeking relief... or those who face a mountain of worry or debt or any other obstacles...

Be Guardian and Guide, we pray, setting all our feet on your paths of righteousness and peace. We pray for those who are struggling with a new challenge or call...

with a major transition in life or livelihood... with their faith and understanding... with grief, ancient or new...

Keep in your tender care and mercy, O God, those who are sick in mind, body, or spirit... those weighed down by depression or pain... those recuperating from surgery or accident...

Protect not only us and those we love, but also the whole wide world you so love. In places of war, bring peace... in places beset by natural disaster, bring calm and restoration...

Where there is unrest and injustice, make justice our aim. Where hope has grown tired and thin, lift our sights, so that we may see hope beyond hope, life beyond death, and you, lifted up before us. In the name of Christ, who gave himself for our sake, we pray. **Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Let us bring to God our offerings, with thanksgiving that God provides more than enough for all. Let us give, as each is able, for the benefit of Christ’s church and God’s world.

OFFERING SONG *Let the Vineyards be Fruitful (ELW #184)*

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Gracious God, in gratitude for all that you have given us, we bring our tithes, offerings, and labor to help feed a world hungry for healing and hope; for the sake of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.
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SENDING HYMN *All Earth is Hopeful (ELW #266)*

CHARGE

Fear not, people of the Lord. God brings you strength and victory.

BLESSING

As you depart this day, may you feel the Lord's presence and hear his song singing over you now and forevermore.

Let it be so! Amen.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Dec. 11th 6:00 PM BLC Christmas Program with Cookie Reception following.
- Dec. 11th 80th Birthday Celebration for Roger Krostue. 4-6:30 PM American Legion EGF. Not gifts Please.
- Dec. 14th 9:00 AM Pastor Gretchen will be leading a Bible Study for All Women. Both Congregations are invited to attend. Topic: Good things come in small packages
- Dec. 13th 8:00 AM Stretch and Pray
- Dec. 14th 9:00 AM WELCA Bible Study
6:15 PM Confirmation at BLC (Grades 6&7)
7:30 PM Bygland council

