

Faith Lutheran Church

Sunday, December 6, 2020

Second Sunday of Advent



Welcome

Lighting the Advent Wreath Advent 2 (Candle of Peace)

In this Season of Advent, we wait for the coming Peace into our world. We await the birth of Emmanuel, God with us, who comes into our lives in a new way.

As we light the candle of peace, turn our wills to bear the fruit of repentance, transform our hearts to live in justice and harmony with one another, and fix our eyes on the root of Jesse, Jesus Christ, the peace of all nations.

let us rejoice in the faithfulness of the Lord. Amen.

Light two candles.

Confession and Forgiveness

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

Amen.

Together let us humbly confess
that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Most merciful God,

**that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as
ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us,
and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your
holy name. Amen**

In the mercy of almighty God,
Jesus Christ was given to die for us,
and for his sake

God forgives us all our sins.

As a called and ordained minister
of the church of Christ,
and by his authority,

I therefore declare to you
the entire forgiveness of all our sins,
in the name of the Father,
and of the ☩ Son,
and the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Opening Prayer

Please join me in the Prayer of the Day:

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings and Psalm

- Isaiah 40:1-11 *Good news of God's coming to a people in exile*
- Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 *Righteousness shall prepare a pathway for God.*
- 2 Peter 3:8-15a *Waiting for and hastening the day of God*

The Holy Gospel according to Mark 1:1-8

The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,'"

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Sermon

Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God our father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

You all might have heard about John the Baptist many times before during church sermons and Bible studies, especially during the Christmas seasons. When it comes to preparing a way for Jesus, there is always mention about John the Baptist. Well, John the Baptist was a well-known figure in Jesus' times. He is the one who appears before Jesus to proclaim the Good News about the Messiah, the savior of the world, the Son of God, as it is written by the Isaiah: "*I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way*"----- "*a voice of one calling in the wilderness, prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for Him.*"

In today's Gospel Mark 1:3, we hear the same words that were prophesied by the prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament. This preparatory message of John the Baptist is mentioned in all four of our Gospels, and noticeably Jesus' birth was predicted long before Jesus even came into this world to save it. John preaches in the wilderness saying, "repent, because the kingdom of heaven has come near." It was a reminder for the people in those days to mend their relationship with God. And I believe that reminder from John is not only to the people in those days but also applies to us, to examine our relationship with God.

The Bible says, we all are like sheep gone astray, but the good news is Jesus came down to bridge the gap and to gather the sheep to direct us to God. The preparatory message from John to “prepare the way” is the preparation made to save the world through Jesus Christ. let’s understand it this way, if we are baking a bread we need preparation. We need a few items to bake bread, the dough should be properly and perfectly mixed, to get that perfect taste, and most importantly the oven’s temperature must be on the perfect heating settings. Preparation is important; if we have proper planning with good preparation, the results will be good.

In the same way, John the Baptist came to prepare the way for Jesus. Before Jesus started His ministry on earth, John came ahead of Him proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. *“And the people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.”*---V.5.

The whole act of baptism of people and preparing the way for Jesus, reveals God’s love towards humanity. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son to save the world.” (John 3:16) **The main point of this verse is to emphasize God’s saving power towards humanity.** The love of God towards His people is so powerful that God offered His only begotten Son to save us, to save you and me, to give us everlasting life, so that we do not perish but have eternal life. In return God wants nothing from us, he just wants us to love one another.

Since we already have the Grace of God through Jesus Christ, we can fully trust Him. Even in our brokenness, anxiety, failures, and fear, wherever we are at in our life’s journey, we can trust God and give fully ourselves to God, knowing that God will accept us. God has power to renew our mercies, our brokenness, and to restore us to life again.

In spite of John’s well known establishment among the community, John always pointed people to the coming of Jesus. Preparing the way for Jesus, he kept telling people that he is nothing compared to the one who is coming. And Jesus calls the John the Baptist “greatest of men.” What lesson do we learn from John’s character from today’s Gospel? I believe the greatest lesson we can learn from today’s text is John’s humility. He humbled himself in front of Jesus and obeyed God’s command.

John baptized Jesus in the Jordan river and proclaimed, *“the one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of His sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”*-----V.8. John was extremely humble to prepare the way for Jesus. And I believe his preparations in making the “paths straight” paved the way for the outcome of Jesus’ salvation in the world.

For all Christians all over the world, baptism is important, although different denominations do it differently. We Lutherans believe in child baptism. We enter into a relationship with God after baptism. We feel God’s love, guidance, and protection through the Holy Spirit which we received at the time of our baptisms. It is through baptism that we are deeply rooted in Christ and Christ always remains in and with us.

A little girl wanted to get baptized but her mother wanted her to attend some classes to make sure she knew what she was committing herself to. After one of the classes, her mother asked, “honey, what does baptism mean?” Thinking hard, the little girl finally said, “well, it isn’t the water that makes you clean.” The mother thought, “yes she understood.” Then smiling brightly, her daughter quickly added, “it’s the soap.” I am sure we all know enough about baptism, excluding soap. (Found the story on sermon stories website).

John’s ministry was preparing a way for Jesus. A great and successful preparation for the kingdom of God. **The Good News for today, is God loved us and chooses us to prepare the way for God’s kingdom.** We are God’s children, God chooses to be with us always.

As we prepare a way for Jesus, let us prepare our hearts and minds to welcome Jesus once again into our hearts, in this season of advent.

Amen.

Blessing

The peace of the lord be with you always
and also with you.

Amen.

Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

A brief silence.

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

For the whole church of Christ, especially the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and all congregations, our national Bishop, Elizabeth, and our synodical Bishop Katherine. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O God our healer, show you compassion for the whole human family that is in turmoil and burdened with illness and fear. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O God, come to our aide as the Coronavirus spreads globally, heal those who are sick and protect their families and friends from being infected. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace, especially Beverly Tankersly, Pastor Matthew Lamb, Connie Mattson, Debra Carr, Lori Strickland, Eric Marken, Eva Mohr, Al Picotte, Bill Duff, Bill Vaneffen, Sandra Kaye, and the family and friends of Ralph Oja, Ide-mudia, George Strickland, and Vylla G. Picotte. For whom and what else do we pray silently or out loud? (*Pause...*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

O God of all hope, strengthen and encourage those in public service and in the medical profession-caregivers, nurses, attendants, doctors, all who commit themselves to caring for the sick and their families. 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.

Offering

It is generally at this time during the service that worshipers are invited to share their gifts for the Mission and Ministry of the church. Whether you choose to pause at this time or make your contribution following this service, we encourage you to continue your support of the ministry.

Offertory Prayer (please join in prayer)

Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.

Our Lord's Prayer

I invite you to join in praying the prayer our Lord Jesus taught us...

**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 debts, as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen**

Benediction

All mighty God, Father, ☩ Son and the Holy Spirit
Bless you now and forever
Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sources:

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VIRTUAL AFTER SERVICE COFFEE HOUR

Join us on Dec 6, 2020 at 11:30 AM for a
Virtual Coffee Hour on Zoom, following Sunday's service.

Join Zoom meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5075253636?pwd=dldsMkpIVDJhc2NaV2NPaVUvTU4ydz09>

Meeting ID: **507 525 3636**

Passcode: **2B9AJd**

One tap mobile

+13017158592,,5075253636#,,,,,0#,,516651# US (Washington D.C)

+13126266799,,5075253636#,,,,,0#,,516651# US (Chicago)

Meeting ID: 507 525 3636

Passcode: 516651

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5075253636>

ANNOUNCEMENTS

❖ **Pastor Rita is currently available for phone calls and email!** ❖

Following quarantine guidelines, Pastor Rita is not available for face-to-face meetings, but she is available via phone and email if you need to get a hold of her.

Her phone number is **(312) 478-6212** and her email is **critawilliam@gmail.com**

WELCOME PASTOR RITA!!!

❖ **In-person Worship Services at Faith are suspended through December 8th.** ❖

As soon as the situation is assessed we will notify you if the suspension of in-person service is lifted or if it is extended.

❖ **Watch Faith's Worship Service Live on Sundays on our Facebook page!** - You can catch our Service at 10:20am every Sunday at **www.facebook.com/FaithLC1966** . You can also find us online by searching for **FaithLC1966** in any browser. If you have any questions or comments, please call the church office at (906) 632-7246.

❖ **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE** ❖

With the Coronavirus Pandemic, we have opted to go virtual for Christmas Eve. We are planning on having a package containing Holy Communion elements and a DVD of our service. These packages will be available for **pick-up December 20th and December 21st from Noon-2PM both days.**

Please call the office to let us know if you are interested in a package.

The deadline for ordering a Christmas Eve service package is December 11th!

❖ **Youth Wreath Fundraiser** – Wreaths will be available for socially-distanced **pick up on December 6th & 7th from Noon—2PM**. If you haven't already paid for your wreath, please remember to bring it at the time of pick up. Proceeds from this fundraiser are going to support Faith Lutheran's youth

❖ **If you would like to purchase a poinsettia** in honor or memory of loved ones to adorn our sanctuary on Christmas Eve, contact Sean in the office at 632-7246. The cost per poinsettia will be \$8.00. **The last day for orders has been extended to December 11th**. Poinsettias will be available for socially-distanced pick up the following Monday.