

Faith Lutheran Church
Sunday, January 3, 2021
Second Sunday of Christmas

Welcome

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
who was in the beginning,
who makes a dwelling among us,
who covers us with justice and mercy.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of goodness and loving kindness,
**we confess that we have sinned against you
and our neighbors.**

We have turned away from your invitation to a new life.

We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden.

**In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins,
those we know and those known only to you,
for the sake of the one who came to live among us,
Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.**

Hear the good news of peace and salvation!

God forgives us all our sins,
not through our own work,
but through ☩ Jesus Christ, made known to all people.

With all who come to the manger,
rejoice in this amazing gift of grace.

Amen.

Opening Prayer

Please join me in the Prayer of the Day:

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, 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

- Jeremiah 31:7-14
- Psalm 147:12-20
- Ephesians 1:3-14

Joy at the gathering of God's scattered flock

Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion.

The will of God made known in Christ



The Holy Gospel according to John 1:1-18

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

[¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

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. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.]

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

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!

The Bible begins with the well-known verse: "*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*" *In the beginning* takes us back to Genesis 1, when God created the heaven and the earth. These verses in Genesis remind us that God was present at the beginning of creation and God himself created all that exists.

In today's Gospel text, John begins his message with the same three words..... "*In the beginning*" and introduces Jesus Christ as "The Word" as God Himself, who was present at the time of creation. Let's read these verses again (V.1-3) "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*"

This verse from John's Gospel fascinates me every time I read it. There is a lot of meaning in these few verses that we generally overlook. God is revealed in Jesus Christ. Sometimes we may wonder how the Word existed with God from the beginning. Was the Word within God? Or Did the Word exist right beside God when God created the universe? Many scholars believe that Jesus, the Word, was present with God at the beginning of creation.

The term "Word" is a very common Greek noun, which in Greek is "*logos*". It can have a wide range of meanings, depending on the context, such as: statement, message, declaration etc. But it's use in John 1:1 is a unique one. Here *Logos* means "the independent personified expression of God." Many interpretations have been written on the possible link between John's use of the "Word" and how it was commonly used in Greek philosophy. I believe John is purposely drawing analogies to Genesis 1. So, the idea of the "Word" or *Logos* of God, no doubt refers to God speaking and creating, such as.... "*And God said, let there be a light, and there was light.*" (*Genesis 1:3*) (Taken from Bible Interpreter)

The Gospel text for today also reminds us that Jesus as fully divine and fully human. Jesus coming down from heaven to live amongst us, is the very expression of God Himself. Jesus is God Himself, who continues to live amongst us. This is the Good News that captures the real meaning of the Christmas story. Just like in Genesis, John's Gospel talks about creation, God's new creation in Jesus Christ. The "Word" made flesh and dwelt amongst us.

Jesus has been part of creation from the very beginning, when God created the heaven and earth. And Jesus is also part of creation where God created the new world to save the creation. God has been at work from the very beginning and God is still at work. Jesus is the reason why the creation story exists. The creation story reveals that Jesus the Word lives amongst us and will always be with us.

Today's Gospel text is filled with metaphors and doctrines. But we can understand it as a form of testimony to the light, and to new life in Jesus Christ, The Word of God that lives with us and amongst us. After our Christmas day celebrations are over, we have eaten all the Christmas food and opened all our Christmas presents. We must reflect and remember that Jesus is the reason for this season. Jesus is the real meaning of Christmas and that which John gives witness to and reveals to the world.

God revealed Jesus Christ as "*Full of grace and truth.*" Grace is offered to us in many forms in our daily lives. God's faithfulness is often revealed to us and God's grace is available to all people through Jesus Christ. God's eternal plan is to reveal himself in Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth. He became human and lived with us and amongst us. "The Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us." This verse contains the truth behind the story of the angels, shepherds, the wise men, and the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, The Christmas story.

What does this mean for us? What is the simplest way to understand it?

Let me share a story that might bring clarity to this text today. There were two men who found themselves stranded together on a battlefield in World War II. They were able to make it to the safety of a foxhole in the midst of enemy fire. As they looked out across the battlefield, they saw the horror of dead and dying men. Sprawling across the ground was the twisted barbed wire left by deep fire and bombings. Some men lay lifeless. Others clinging to life, cried out for help. Suddenly, the two soldiers heard one of the injured men cry out: "where is God?" As they continued to look around, they soon noticed two medics, wearing the Red Cross on their arms and helmets. The medics carefully made their way to each body lying on the ground. One of the medics stopped to load a wounded soldier onto their stretcher. Once loaded they rushed the soldier to safety. As the medics continued to work, saving lives, the two soldiers came out of the fox hold. As they looked around, one of them boldly answered the wounded soldier's question...where is God? As he looked around, he whispered his answer...God is present in every situation. (Taken from Sermon Stories)

He lives with us and amongst us. He rescues us and saves us when we cannot save ourselves.

Jesus comes to be the light in the midst of dark and lonely moments. God is always with us to give us comfort in every situation of our lives. God continues to live amongst us through Jesus Christ.

Jesus knows our pains and our struggles. On Christmas day Jesus Christ was re-incarnated. He became fully human and identifies with our pain and struggles. The pain of loneliness, the sadness of losing a loved, the mental and physical trauma we endure. Jesus is with us through it all. He came down full of *grace and truth*. God can rescue us from every situation of our lives. Jesus personally reaches out to us and offers grace, mercy and truth. Through His birth, we can know Grace and mercy. God's grace is renewed in our lives every day. Throughout our life, we receive grace upon grace. And although we can't see God, we can feel his presence through Jesus Christ.

Grace and mercy connect us to the saving power of God. The Bible says the saving power of God is grace and salvation that comes through our belief in Jesus Christ. And it is through our belief that we receive God's grace. "Grace upon Grace given to us through our faith in Christ. And the truth is revealed in the Gospels by Jesus Christ.

Grace is defined as God's unmerited favor. God gives grace, not for any merit on our part, but as a sign of favor through Jesus Christ. This Grace is greater than our brokenness, our pain and struggles. God's grace carries us and gives us comfort in all our circumstances and situations of life. That is how much God loves us. Out of His love and grace, Jesus chose to be re-incarnated so that he might live with us and be one amongst us.

Grace and truth are two powerful words to remember during this Christmas season. The Truth is that we are saved by Grace alone. Christ is born into the world, The Word made flesh. Christ came into this world to accomplish God's plan of salvation in the world.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us so that we can know the truth and the grace of God. And the Jesus the Word lives with us and amongst us, rescuing and saving us, forever, and forever.

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

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. 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, our synodical Bishop Katherine, and our pastor Rita. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain, sickness, and suffering, especially Beverly Tankersly, Pastor Matthew Lamb, Connie Mattson, Lori Strickland, Eric Marken, Eva Mohr, Al Picotte, Bill Duff, Bill Vaneffen, Sandra Kaye, Tom Krause, Lois Stoppel, and Jon Cowan. For whom and what else do we pray silently or out loud? (Pause...). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith (*especially*). With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

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. We are grateful for the community's continued generous support especially during these trying times.

Offertory Prayer (please join in prayer)

Let us pray:

Gracious God, you came to us as one unknown, bringing joy and salvation to the earth. Nourish us at your banquet table, that with all who welcome your birth we may proclaim your peace, revealed in Jesus Christ, our Savior.

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

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.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus!

Thanks be to God.

Sources:

Copyright © 2020 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License # SAS103560.

Permission to podcast / stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE, License # A-737326. All rights reserved.

VIRTUAL AFTER SERVICE COFFEE HOUR

Join us on Dec 20, 2020 at 11:30 AM for a
Virtual Coffee Hour on Zoom, following Sunday's service.

1. Go to www.zoom.us
2. Along the top towards the right corner, click on **"Join A Meeting"**

Enter the following information when asked for it...

Meeting ID: **897 9656 1726**

Passcode: **885647**

If not using a computer or smartphone, you can join by simply calling in and following the prompts.

Phone number: **1(301)715-8592**

(enter this information when asked)

Meeting ID: **89796561726#**

Participant ID: **0#**

Passcode: **885647#**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

If you would like to speak with Pastor Rita, she is available via phone and email. Her phone number is (312) 478-6212 and her email is critawilliam@gmail.com

❖ **In-person Worship Services at Faith are suspended through January 3rd.** ❖

The situation will be assessed again on January 5th, and we will notify you if the suspension of in-person service is lifted or if it is extended.

Faith's Annual Meeting will be held February 14, 2021. There are 3 seats to be filled on the council this year. If you are interested please get your information in to the office or to a Council Member. We also need 2 delegates to represent us for the Synod Assembly. More information will be available shortly.

❖ **ANNUAL REPORT TIME!**

If you are responsible for a committee which is included in the Annual Report, please get a report in to the office as soon as possible when 2020 ends. **The deadline is January 31st.** Reports can be emailed to faithlc1966@att.net with the subject "Annual Report". If you have any questions, please contact Sean in the office (906) 632-7246

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.

THANK YOU to everyone who purchased a wreath this year. We managed to raise almost \$200 for our youth here at Faith. Thank you and have a Happy New Year!!



FORTUNE LAKE LUTHERAN CAMP

Epiphany Virtual Worship Service

Lighting the Way

A celebration of Christ's light through
90 years of ministry together!

Sunday, January 10, 2021

Worship with the Fortune Lake
Association churches

In appreciation for your creativity throughout this pandemic, we invite you to share the link to this worship experience with your communities. Take a week off from worship planning! The link will be available on the Fortune Lake YouTube channel by Saturday, January 9. Questions? Call 906-214-2267 or email campdirector@fortunelake.org