

*Faith Lutheran Church*

*Sunday, December 13, 2020*

*Third Sunday of Advent*



*Welcome*

*Lighting the Advent Wreath Advent 3 (Candle of Joy)*

In this Season of Advent, we wait for the coming Joy 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 Joy, help us to hear your promise in this advent season, that in hearing, we may receive the spirit's gift of Joy. And may our spirits be kept sound at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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

*Light three 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 and humbly confess  
that we have not lived as God desires.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Most Merciful God,

**we confess 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 hearts;**

**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 your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

## Opening Prayer

Please join me in the Prayer of the Day:

**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.**

## Readings and Psalm

- Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 *Righteousness and praise flourish like a garden*
- Psalm 126 *The LORD has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3)*
- 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 *Kept in faith until the coming of Christ*

## The Holy Gospel according to 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.*

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

<sup>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"  
as the prophet Isaiah said.

<sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

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!**

Today's Gospel text is very much similar, to the text..... we had,... last Sunday. **(Pause)** Last Sunday we saw how important..... the **preparation** is in our lives to achieve good results. God sent **John the Baptist** to prepare a way for Jesus,..... to carry out God's plan **to save the world.**

In today's Gospel text, John proclaims Jesus as "the true light of the world." The text clarifies that, John the **Baptist is not the light**, (V. 19-28). However, John was sent to bear **witness to the Light**. (V. 29-34). And most importantly..... John's **main goal** is that all may believe that..... Jesus is the true light of the world.

I want to talk to you today..... about the light, .....**(PAUSE)** Jesus Christ, **the light of the world.** Light is a metaphor used many times in the Old Testament..... as well as in the New Testament. Light represents the coming of the Messiah, a saving power. ....Many times, Jesus declared himself as the **"light of the world."**

Many times in our scriptures Jesus is referred to as **"light."** Jesus is the light of world, who brings hope and comfort to our **broken world.** Jesus brings light and life at the same time into our lives to restore..... and heal **our broken lives.** **(Pause)** The light in Christ is full of Grace. You may have heard

about **Christ Candle**. We light this candle on many occasions like, at the time of baptism, confirmation, and also on Christmas eve. On the fourth Sunday of advent all four candles are lit. Then, on Christmas eve the Christ candle is lit along with all four Advent candles..... After Christmas we usually remove the Advent candles but the Christ Candle remains at the altar in many churches. This is done to remind us about the.... **“light” which Christ** brought to this world....., through His **Birth,... Death and ...Resurrection**.

On this third Sunday in advent, the Gospel reading brings us the.... **light and life** in the midst of a ....terrible **global pandemic**. And by now, most of us have heard the news about scientists completing a vaccine that will offer hope and life to many of us today. Although .....the vaccine offers hope for an end to the pandemic, we cannot deny the fact that more brutal months lie ahead. This vaccine discovery signifies **a small light**,..... which gives us global hope and joy for our future existence.

There are some physical lights that are important and without them our existence on this planet..... would be different. For instance, the light which we receive from the sun, moon, and stars. Light allows us to see things much better. Light also allows our physical eyes to see better and more clearly.....

I was talking to one of my colleague last week, and he shared how much better he can see after his eye surgery. With his improved vision he realized, how old he has grown during these past years.....**(Pause)** He was finally able to see his face clearly with his improved vision in his eyes.

Things can be seen better in the light. We often think of **Jesus as our savior**. John begins his Gospel with **“the light**,.... which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.” (John1:9)

An old farmer from the interior of India had not been able to see things very clearly due to his old age, He decided to see a **missionary doctor**. To his surprise he was healed through a very simple cataract surgery. This was very good news because he could see things much better in the light. Therefore, he went back and shared his experience with other farmers in his neighborhood. Several dozen of the farmers went to visit the missionary doctor..... to improve their eye sight.....**(Pause)** There is no more powerful recommendation than speaking out of our own experience of healing and restoration. Having seen the light himself, the farmer brought other farmers to the giver of light.

This is similar to the message we heard in last Sunday’s sermon. John the Baptist came to give witness to the light of the world, Jesus Christ. He testified about what he knew so that others might believe in the light which God sent to save the world.

Jesus Christ also regards His people as a **light in the world**. And, since we are to be a light in the world, then we definitely have a significant role in the community..... Therefore, we are the **torch bearers for the world**. Through our good deeds, and love we become a light to show others the way. Through our actions and deeds, we can improve the **vision of the world** by being a light that shows the way to Jesus Christ,..... **the true light of the world**. Our light can spread around the world as we share **the Gospel through our good deeds**. We as Christians must live out the Gospel, so that the world can witness the love and peace of Christ. the objective of our witness is to lead souls to Christ, for the glory of God. The goodness comes from the **grace of God**. We glorify God by our good deeds..... towards our neighbor and **become a light**, dispelling the **darkness in the world**, and by spreading the light of Christ to the world..... The **never-ending grace of the cross** and the..... bright light of resurrection, gives us hope for our future.

**The Good News for today is that the light of the world, Jesus the Christ himself is shining bright upon us so that we can reflect that light to others.**

So let us not hide our light. Let it shine, let everybody who encounters you experience the light within you. It is the mighty grace of our God that allows us to shine bright in the world. We are called to be Children of God, like John the Baptist and the old farmer who showed others the way to the light. Let us all become part of Gods divine plan and witness the bright light of the world.

*“May the peace and light of God which surpass all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.”*

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 your 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, Lois Stoppel, Tom Krause, and Jon Cowan. 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. Spread the Light of Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**

Sources:

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### **VIRTUAL AFTER SERVICE COFFEE HOUR**

Join us on Dec 13, 2020 at 11:30 AM for a  
Virtual Coffee Hour on Zoom, following Sunday's service.

1. Go to [www.zoom.us](http://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!** ❖

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](mailto:critawilliam@gmail.com)**

### WELCOME PASTOR RITA!!!

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

The situation will be assessed again on January 4<sup>th</sup>, and 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](https://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 20<sup>th</sup> and December 21<sup>st</sup> 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 has been extended to December 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> !**

### ❖ **CHRISTMAS WREATHS still available!**

If you missed ordering your wreath this year, we've got some good news! They are still available **BUT** you must let us know by Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>. If you order a wreath in this timeframe, they will be available to pick up around Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup>.

❖ **On Sunday, December 27<sup>th</sup>**, we will be broadcasting a service lead by Bishop Finegan. So for that Sunday we will not be sending out our typical weekly mailing or email.