

Grace Lutheran Church

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Pastor Ken Scheck II
Ms. Cindy Olson, Minister of Music
December 15, 2019

A Change in Tone

John the Baptist, just last week crying out in the wilderness with a voice unmistakable and bold, has dramatically changed his tone. Now imprisoned by Herod, he has abandoned his confident pitch that pulsed at the river Jordan's banks. His confidence tottering and proclamation fading, John now implores about his cousin Jesus, "Is he the one?"

A stream of hope had run through the crowds on the Jordan's banks. It had flowed through those who rushed from the water, dripping with baptismal verve and ready for the kingdom of heaven John announced. But now it was drying up. John was filled with misgivings, his hope having evaporated inside the prison walls.

Where is justice for the prophet? What of mercy for John? A prison cell was his reward for proclaiming heaven's kingdom come, for unlocking a conclusive truth at the portals of a warping empire. Malicious bars of injustice imprisoned him, hammered in a forge of vengeance: this man called by God, the first of two miracle children born of wonder foretold by angels, the ascetic in the desert, arouser of hope, baptizer of Jesus himself—held in chains! All the glowing hope looked to be a fading tale told by a disappointing martyr.

Life. Who has lived it and managed to escape injury and heartache of expectations lost, fair due denied, the prize withheld? We each experience tragedies immense and minute, discouragements that sting and pass, despair that aches and endures. How thin the air of promise can feel.

Jesus offers transcendent hope when he answers John. It is hope that sees beyond short-sighted optimism, hope that prevails against searing evidence to the contrary, hope that exceeds the pace of setbacks and remains persistent when, like John, we cannot help but ask, "Are you the one . . . , or are we to wait for another?" It is Advent hope.

From sundaysandseasons.com.

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BEFORE WORSHIP

Please fill out our Participation Card and place it in the offering plate every Sunday. This card helps the ministry of both the Congregational Care and Community Outreach Committees. Sometimes there are additional questions on the back of the card, so don't forget to check both sides of the card.



Third Sunday of Advent

December 15, 2019

The season of Advent is a time of preparation for the expected Messiah, who came in an unexpected way, as the baby Jesus. The color of the season is blue (like the night sky), representing the Christ who is called Dayspring (source of day).

Holy Silence is observed as we enter to worship.

Welcome/Worship Instructions

Arise in body or spirit.

Gathering Hymn *Awake, Awake and Greet the New Morn*

ELW 242

The CELEBRATION OF LIGHT ON THE ADVENT WREATH - Shepherds Candle

- Ⓟ Leap with love, flames of light,
- Ⓞ **we begin another week of patient preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ.**

- Ⓐ As candle flames bless us with brilliance on this winter tide,
- Ⓞ **may our gift-giving be part of our preparation for God's greatest gift, Emmanuel.**

- Ⓟ Let each present we prepare to give be a sign of God's gift of Life, Joy and Peace to our world.
- Ⓞ **Let us wrap every Christmas gift with love, so that our gifts become Advent prayers, awakening our hearts to the true mystery of Christmas.**

Advent Hymn "As We Make our Advent Journey"

tune ELW #269

I

As we make our Advent journey,
let us walk as in the Lord.
Pilgrims with a holy calling
trav'ling, strengthened by God's word,
toward the stable, toward the manger,
toward the gift of God made flesh.

II

In the desert, blooms and blossoms
mark the Way of Holiness.
As we travel with rejoicing
strengthen, ransomed, undistressed.
Now restored by water springing,
in the Lord, we new begin.

The RESPONSIVE LITANY of SEEKING

- Ⓐ With feeble hands and fearful hearts we come into your presence, O Lord, seeking forgiveness.
- ☞ **Like a parched desert we need your streams of joy.**
- Ⓐ Come, Lord Jesus, into our desert world. Bring the joy and gladness of your forgiveness. Bring the joy and gladness of your presence.
- ☞ **Come to us, Jesus, and strengthen us to do your work.**

Prayer of the Day

- Ⓐ Let us pray, Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way;
- ☞ **through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen**

Sit

First Reading

Isaiah 35:1-10

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.

Ⓐ A reading from **Isaiah:**

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.**

1 My soul is filled with joy as I
 2 I am low - ly as a child, but I
 3 I pro-claim the power of God, you do

sing to God my Sav - ior: you have looked up - on your
 know from this day for - ward that my name will be re -
 mar - vels for your ser - vants; though you scat - ter the proud -

ser - vant, you have vis - i - ted your peo - ple.
 mem - bered, for all will call me bless - ed.
 heart - ed, and de - stroy the might of princ - es.

Refrain D G D G

And ho - ly is your name through all gen - er -

a - tions! Ev - er - last - ing is your mer - cy to the

peo - ple you have cho - sen, and ho - ly is your

name.

4 To the hungry you give food,
 send the rich away__ empty.
 In your mercy you are mindful
 of the people you have chosen.
Refrain

5 In your love you now fulfill
 what you promised to your people.
 I will praise you Lord, my Savior,
 everlasting is your mercy.
Refrain

Second Reading

James 5:7-10

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

☒ A reading from **James**:

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.**

Arise in body or spirit.

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel Reading

Matthew 11:2-11

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.

☒ The Holy Gospel, according to **Matthew**.

☑ **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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.**

Sit

Children’s Time

All children [including infants] and youth who desire to come forward for the children’s sermon are welcomed and encouraged to do so. Parents/caregivers are welcome to accompany their child during the children’s message. There may be a time of dance and celebration that is offered.

Message

Silence for reflection

Arise in body or spirit

Hymn of the Day

All Earth is Hopeful

ELW 266

Kneel or sit as able.

Prayers

A Keeping awake as we watch for Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

A Holy God, we rejoice that your promises take on flesh in Jesus. Grant patience to your church awaiting the fulfillment of your reign of justice and peace. Restore in us the hope that we are called to proclaim to the world. Embolden your church to take up the cross against the powers of oppression and death, and guide the faith of our bishops and congregations and all the servants of your church, including *Bishops Elizabeth and Craig, Assistants Chrysanne, David and Roseanne; our synod companion churches, Bethlehem Lutheran Church/ Lansing, Pleasantview Church in Dowling; Minister of Music Cindy and Pastor Ken.* We lift our hearts to you,

C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

A Life-giving God, we rejoice that you coax flowers from the desert and water from the wilderness. Send rain to parched fields and sun to flooded plains. Nurture all that lies sleeping under frozen ground. We lift our hearts to you,

C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

A Almighty God, we rejoice in your authority as Prince of peace. Deliver us from those who wield power through unjust and oppressive ways. Raise up prophets to speak your truth in this and every nation. Protect the lives of those who serve in the military, including *Zack Green (Mikolajczyks), Parker Stancil (Freedlunds), Cody and Myrina Crawford (Clements), Alexis and Dylan Kelmer, Austin and Aaron Endsley (Burdicks), Brandon and Stevi Kay Miller (McManaway), Brady Rudesill (Hansen), Joel Taggart (Varkulas), Kayla and Lance Champaco (Pohls), and Julia Ehredt (Schrieners, Halsteads).* We lift our hearts to you,

C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

A Not knowing the day or hour of your coming, O Lord, your people cry to you. God of all generations, we praise you and thank you for children of all ages. From those who are days old to our oldest member here at Grace of 100 years old. We ask you to help us be open to your direction as we seek a Youth and Family Committee chair. We thank you for our interim chair. We lift our hearts to you,

C **Come, Lord Jesus.**

A Gracious God, we rejoice that you dwell in human bodies. Renew signs of your joyful presence in people of all shapes, sizes, ages, and abilities. Empower all to embrace their callings and the gifts of your Spirit. We pray especially for *Doris Allarding, Gary Burdick, Penny Burdick, James Colvin, Irene Corr, family of Sharon Curd, Sue Eifler, Mark Furrow, Sue Gibbons, Karl Golnek,*

Cathy Hallaxs, Delmer Hansen, Denver Kiersey, Norma Ludlow, Tom Marlow, Purser family, Dick Sass, Carol Stewart, Tim Sullivan, Kalie Triick, George Ulrich Jr., Pat Wagner, Cheryl Wilke, Rusty Wilkins, Cameron, Lynnze, Lisa and Vicky. We lift our hearts to you,

☩ Come, Lord Jesus.

Ⓐ Generous God, we rejoice that you create us to praise you. Strengthen the voices and hands of all who prepare to celebrate Christ's birth with music, dancing, and proclamation, in worship and in the community. We lift our hearts to you,

☩ Come, Lord Jesus.

Ⓐ Be attentive, gracious God, to the individual petitions we lift to you in loud voice or in the silence of our hearts.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Eternal God, we rejoice that all who die in Christ are raised to new life. We thank you for the lives of those who have prepared the way for us and have now joined the great cloud of witnesses. We lift our hearts to you,

☩ Come, Lord Jesus.

Ⓟ You hear the cries of our hearts, O Lord. Fill us with hopeful expectation, that in each day and hour we may love and serve our neighbors, in Jesus' name.

☩ Amen.

Offering of Gifts and Music

Everyone at worship is encouraged to fill out a Participation card and place it in the offering plate every Sunday morning.

Arise in body or spirit.

Offertory

Create in Me

Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me.
Cast me not a - way from your pres - ence, and take not your
Ho - ly Spir - it from me. Re -
store to me the joy of your sal - va - tion, and up -
hold me with your free Spir - it.
Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -
new a right spir - it with - in me.

Offering Prayer

- Ⓐ Let us pray . . . God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives.
- Ⓑ Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen

Sharing the Peace of God

- ☐ The peace of Christ be with you always.
- ☑ **And also with you.**
(We share the peace of Christ with one another.)

Great Thanksgiving

- ☐ The Lord be with you.
- ☑ **And also with you.**

- ☐ Lift up your hearts.
- ☑ **We lift them to the Lord.**

- ☐ Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
- ☑ **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

☐ It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everliving God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, Holy, Holy



☑ Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na. Ho - san - na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

Table Prayer

- ☐ Holy God, our Bread of life, our Table, and our Food, you created a world in which all might be satisfied by your abundance.
- ☑ **You dined with Abraham and Sarah, promising them life, and fed your people Israel with manna from heaven. You sent your Son to eat with sinners and to become food for the world.**

- ☐ In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
- ☑ **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

- ☐ Remembering, therefore, Christ's life given for us and his rising from the grave, we await his coming again to share with us the everlasting feast.
- ☑ **By your Spirit nurture and sustain us with this meal: strengthen us to serve all in hunger and want.**

- ☐ By this bread and cup make of us the body of your Son.
- ☑ **Through Christ all glory and honor is yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy Church, both now and forever. Amen**

Lord's Prayer

- ☐ Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:
- ☑ **Our Father in heaven, holy be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

Invitation to Communion

- ☐ Taste and see that the Lord is good.
- ☑ **Thanks be to God.**

Sit

Communion at Grace

All who are present are invited to receive Holy Communion. This sacrament is a gift to all who come with open hands and open hearts to the presence of Jesus.

✠ **Bread** is served by the Pastor. **Wine** is served from a *common cup* by the Assisting Minister.

✠ If you need gluten free bread, please let the Pastor know when you come forward.

✠ If you prefer wine from the *pouring chalice* in an **individual cup**, take an empty cup from the tray and have it filled by the Worship Assistant. Return the individual chalice/cup to the basket provided.

✠ **Grape Juice** is provided in the pre-filled cups in the center of the serving tray.

✠ A **Verbal Blessing** may be given by the Pastor, if you do not wish to commune.

✠ If you wish **communion brought to you** in the pew, please notify the usher.

Lamb of God

☒ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of
God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Rejoice, Rejoice Believers

ELW 244

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

ELW 490

Sending of Communion (*only if needed*)

- Ⓐ Gracious God, as you raised Jesus from the dead, you give new life through bread and wine: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are *homebound*. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
- ☞ **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

- Ⓐ O God, our life, our strength, our food, we give you thanks for sustaining us with the body and blood of your Son.
- ☞ **By your Holy Spirit, enliven us to be Christ's body in the world, that more and more we will give you praise and serve your earth and its many peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

Mission Minutes

Arise in body or spirit.

Blessing

- Ⓟ God's blessing be with you, Christ's peace be with you, the Spirit's outpouring be with you all, now and always.
- ☞ **Amen.**

Sending Song

Light Dawns in a Weary World

ELW 726

Dismissal

- Ⓐ Surrounded by God's people of every time and place, go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
- ☞ **Thanks be to God.**

Week at a Glance

Sunday, December 15	Worship Services at 8 am Intergenerational Christmas Program 10:45 am Birthday Party for Jesus / Luncheon to follow
Tuesday, December 17	Council Dinner 6 pm Women of Faith 1:00 pm / Applebees
Wednesday, December 18	Advent Meal 6:00 pm; Special Music 6:50 pm Prayer Service 7:00 pm

Today's Worship Leaders

	8:00 am	10:45 am
Assisting Minister	Chris Bush	Vickey Argo
Lector	Chris Bush	~ ~ ~
Communion Server	Jan Schreiner	Mark Anton
Acolyte/Crucifer	Mark Anton	Lexie Watson
Usher	Dave Neeb / Kay Marsh	Mark Anton / Joe Longcor
Greeter/Coffee Hr.	Lyle & Joyce Proksch	(Greeter only) Kleinbrinks
Children's Church	~	~ ~ ~
Table Guild	Lisa Golnek	
Bread Maker	Laura Scheck	

Next Sunday's Worship Leaders, December 22, 2019

	8:00 am	10:45 am
Assisting Minister	Randy Teegardin	Traci Wales
Cantor	Jack Vos	Anna Scheck
Lector	John Burdick	Kristi Winick
Communion Server	Brenda Teegardin	Phyllis Lietz
Acolyte/Crucifer	Mark Anton	Volunteer
Usher	Mark Anton/Volunteer	Gary Golnek/Doug Neeb
Greeter/Coffee Hr.	Volunteers	Bill and Lorraine Freedlund
Children's Church	~	Kim and Lydia Markwart
Table Guild	Lisa Golnek	
Bread Maker	Laura Scheck	

Stewardship Information

Worshippers last week: 134 Weekly Giving: \$4,622.00 Budget Amount: \$4,617.93

Council Mtg Tuesday evening at 6:00 pm.

Adult Forum will continue a study on the book of *Romans* today. Come join us in the conference room at 9:30 am.

The Last Wednesday Night Advent Service is this week on December 18th. The Outreach Committee will provide a dinner of homemade soups, breads, cheese & crackers with dessert. The proceeds will go toward Family Promise. Buddy and Bows will perform that night. Our theme for worship on that Wednesday will be *Eternal Light*. Hope to see you there.

Christmas Family Adoption – Gifts and Christmas dinner boxes. We plan to adopt 6 families this year (18 children total). Gift boards are set up in the gathering area with tags for each child (2 gifts each) and instructions for returning gifts to the church.

Women of Faith – Mark your calendars! We are having our December gathering at Applebee's on Tuesday, December 17th at 1:00 pm. Please put your name on the sign up sheet in the gathering area for a table count.

Pastor Ken is our mutual ministry contact for the week, please use the following cell phone number to reach her or leave a message: 269.370.4632.

Nursery Now Available! Our Nursery was used this past Sunday. Grace now has a Nursery Attendant for your children during both worship services. We are pleased to welcome *Heather Albright* to our staff for the loving care of God's young ones! Keep inviting young families to come and share in God's love.

Thanks to all who helped with the Holly Trolley this past Thursday!

Christmas Eve Worship is December 24, 2019 at 7:00. Come share in singing Carols, hearing the Nativity Gospel, lighting candles, partaking in Holy Communion and celebrating God's love. *There is special preservice music that begins at 6:30.*

There is a special **Christmas Lessons and Carols service on Sunday, December 29th at 10:00 am.** Please mark your calendars. If you are interested in reading one of the readings, please let Pastor Ken know. The readings can be picked up this morning.

We will start collecting votive candles for Epiphany beginning next Sunday.