



## MESSIAH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Setting 10

December 13, 2020

Third Sunday of Advent

**PRELUDE**

Fantasia on "Veni Emanuel"

Alec Rowley

### **GATHERING**

Let us prepare our hearts

**as we await the coming of our Lord.**

Let us watch for the one who heard our cries

**and shouldered the suffering of our world.**

Let us anticipate the coming of Christ's eternal world

**with wholeness, reconciliation and plenty for all.**

Let us wait in expectation for the day

**when God's glory is revealed in all its fullness.**

**Lighting Hymn He Came Down v.3 # 253**

### **GREETING**

In the name of the Father, and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

### **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 honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Loving and forgiving God, **we confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

People of God, hear this glad news: by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free—free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, + comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

# Prepare the Royal Highway

1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!  
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!  
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!  
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.

Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.

Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:  
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

*Refrain*

Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

The image shows a musical score for a refrain. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The lyrics are written below the treble staff, aligned with the notes. The lyrics are: "Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!".

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*  
 Music: BEREDEN VÅG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.  
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The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.  
**And also with you.**

## KYRIE

1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.  
 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.  
 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.

The image shows the beginning of a musical score for the Kyrie. It consists of a single treble clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is written in the treble staff. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes. The lyrics are: "1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer. 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin. 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.".

We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.  
 Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.  
 Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

## Canticle of Praise



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.  
2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.  
3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:  
Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;  
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.  
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.  
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.  
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.  
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

## 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.**

## First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

*Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.*

<sup>1</sup>The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; <sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; <sup>3</sup>to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. <sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the

former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. <sup>8</sup>For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. <sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. <sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God!**

### **Psalm: Psalm 126**

*The LORD has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3)*

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, then were we like those who dream.

<sup>2</sup>**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

**Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD has done great things for us, and we are glad indeed.

<sup>4</sup>**Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

<sup>5</sup>Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy.

<sup>6</sup>**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

### **Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

*Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.*

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil. <sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God!**

## Gospel Acclamation



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav - ing word.



Let it burn like fire with - in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le - lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

## Gospel: 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.

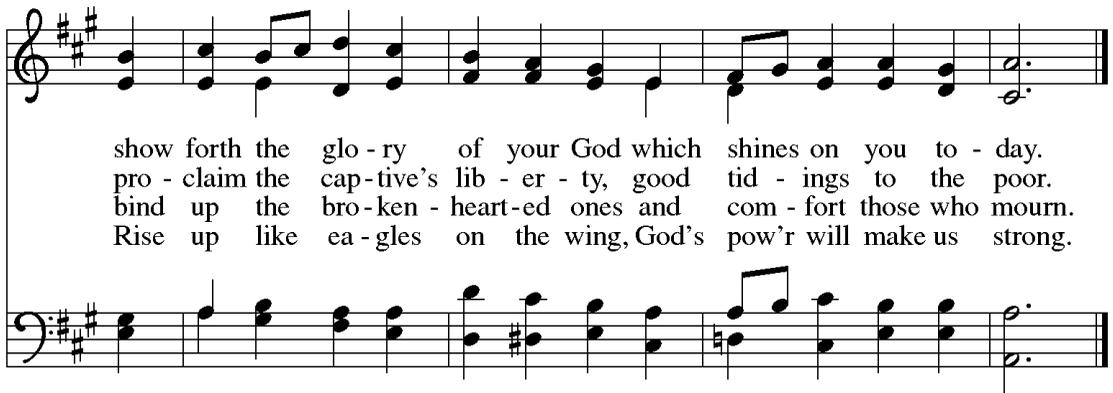
This is the Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ!**

## SERMON

# Arise, Your Light Has Come!



1 A - rise, your light has come! The Spir - it's call o - bey;  
2 A - rise, your light has come! Fling wide the pris - on door;  
3 A - rise, your light has come! All you in sor - row born,  
4 A - rise, your light has come! The moun - tains burst in song!



show forth the glo - ry of your God which shines on you to - day.  
pro - claim the cap - tive's lib - er - ty, good tid - ings to the poor.  
bind up the bro - ken - heart - ed ones and com - fort those who mourn.  
Rise up like ea - gles on the wing, God's pow'r will make us strong.

Text: Ruth Duck, b. 1947

Music: FESTAL SONG, William H. Walter, 1825–1893

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## Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.\* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

*A brief silence.*

God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of Bishops Eaton and Candea, Pastor Amy, Dr. Gustafson, Dr. Lucas, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. We pray for the United States, for President Trump and President-elect Biden, grant them the wisdom to transition well and simply, that our country might be blessed through their leadership. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storms. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. We ask your continued blessings on the ministries of the Sprout House Mini Miracles infant program and Sally Johnson and on the Dala Pantry and Logan Dawes. Make your church a place of refuge and healing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love. Especially we pray for the family and friends of Har Shogren as they have laid to rest his ashes. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. 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.**

**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.**

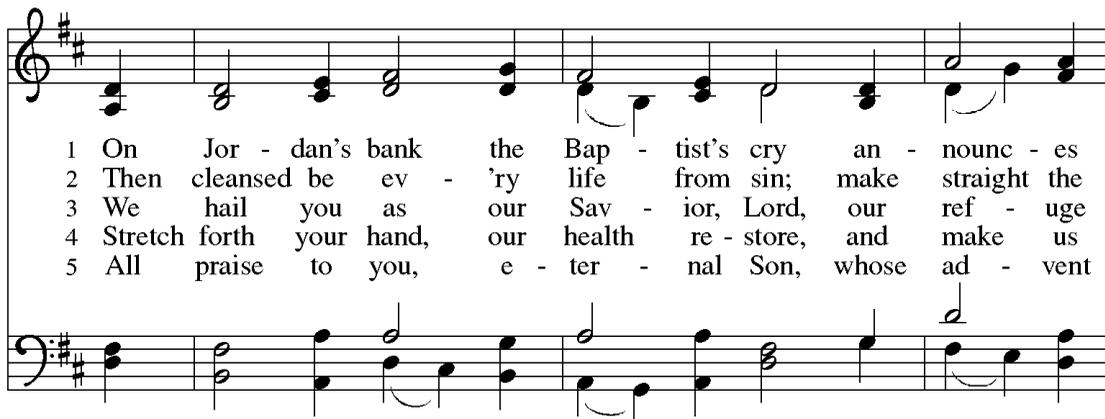
## Offering Prayer

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.**

## Blessing

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, ✝ now and forever.**Amen.**

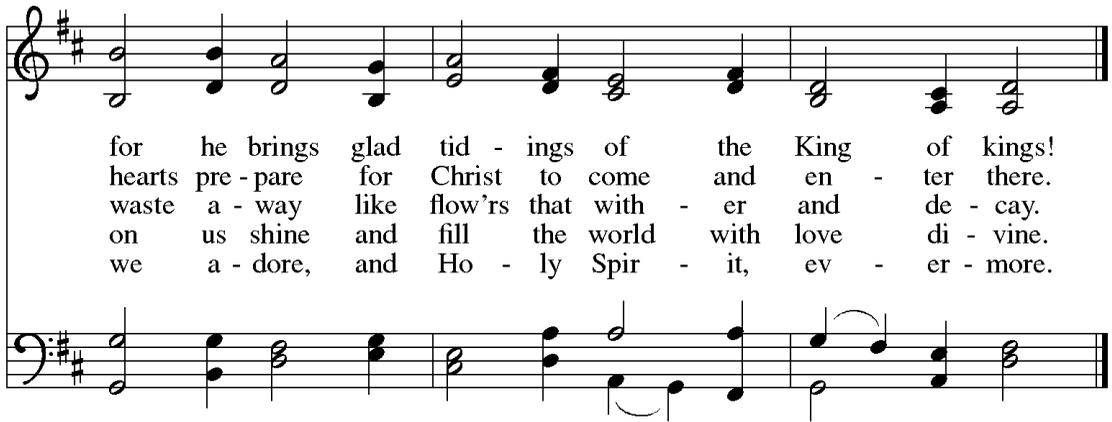
## On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es  
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the  
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge  
4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us  
5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,  
way for God with - in, and let us all our  
and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we  
rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -  
has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!  
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.  
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.  
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.  
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite  
 Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

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**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee

Paul Manz

Messiah Lutheran Church  
 11/30/2020

	Actual Nov-20	Actual Jan - Nov 20	Budget Jan - Nov 20
Revenue	\$8,692.64	\$142,970.41	\$135,905.00
Expenses	<u>14,237.45</u>	<u>142,984.44</u>	<u>150,977.80</u>
Surplus (Deficit)	<u><u>-\$5,544.81</u></u>	<u><u>-\$14.03</u></u>	<u><u>-\$15,072.80</u></u>
Reserve Balance	<u><u>\$70,284.07</u></u>		

## Members, Friends, and Family for Whom We Pray

### Members of Messiah:

Rolland Christenson, Donna Forsberg, Walli Ellis, Betty Peterson, Gloria and Gene Holdsworth, we pray especially for the family of Har Shogren

### Friends of Messiah

Donna Stejksal	Daniels' friend	Karla Goewert	Friend of Kirsten Bruce
Denise	Pari Ford's mother	Orin Shogren	Har's brother
Bill Stephenson	Joy Janis's brother	Danielle	Robbie Peterson's
Dawn	Sharon Hoffman's Daughter	VanDeVyvere	granddaughter
Chip Brock	Bill and Caroline Brock's son	Krista Bahler	Betty Peterson's Niece
Dorothy Carmichael	Friend of Messiah	Betty Finney	Sharon Hoffman's friend
Erin Erb	Friend of Sherry Peterson	Meghan Presley	John & Margaret Presley's daughter
Stephani White	Betty Holcombe's daughter		

### Serving the U.S.A.

Alex Klapp	Betty Russin's grandson	Vicki Charboneau	Elaine Eller's granddaughter
Ben Youngquist	S Hoffman's nephew	Jeremy Guy	Hensley's son-in-law
Luke Hammontree	Daniel's grandson	T.J. Paulsen	Barb Malm's child

### Serving the U.S.A. Overseas

Daniel & Miranda Norland Randy/Gretchen's son & wife

### Seminary

Kaylie Ines

**Please pray for all affected by Covid-19:** Healthcare workers/administration/staff, residential staff and residents, those who seem unaffected and those who are currently aware they are infected and are fighting the virus. Also, we pray for all who are being negatively affected by the virus and it's social disruption.

## **WIDER CHURCH NEWS: BY JEANNE AHLERS**

Here's a way to shop for Christmas and help someone in need at the same time!

It has been said that Lindsborg runs on coffee! If that's the case, the coffee has to come from somewhere. So, enter Prima Nakayenze. She's a coffee farmer in Uganda. And if she can't sell her coffee, she can't eat.

She is one of many farmers who grow Lutheran World Relief Farmers Market on her farm in the Mt. Elgon region of Uganda. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected even these; it has crippled coffee farmers who depend on steady supply chains to move coffee from their farms to your cup.

So this Christmas, you can send your love by giving their coffee. You'll not only be sharing a delicious gift with someone you love, you'll ensure coffee farmers can earn desperately needed income from their crops.

And if you want to make your gift even more special, for \$25 you can give an LWR Farmers Market Coffee gift set that includes two delicious bags of coffee, an LWR Farmers Market mug, and the satisfaction of knowing your purchase has directly supported struggling coffee farmers like Prima Nakayenze. Order by December 15 for Christmas delivery in the 48 contiguous states.

# Cookies for Christmas!



There is nothing better than homemade cookies and treats at Christmas time! The Messiah Lutheran Church Council will provide each congregation household with a special container of fresh treats on **Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup> from 2-3 PM.** Drive through the north church parking lot to pick up your container of goodies!

If you would like to give your offering online you can do so on our website at <https://www.melclindsborg.org/giving>. We are grateful for your generous support.

Please pray for **USD 400 and all teachers, students, administrators, and staff**, that they might remain healthy and mindful of best health practices, that learning be deep and strong, and the all might benefit from the community of learning.

**Dala Pantry** – Remember that Messiah Lutheran members are asked to provide the following items for the Dala Pantry donations – canned chicken, tuna, pickles, vienna sausages, peanut butter & jelly; Bethany is asked to bring single serving macaroni and cheese, ravioli, applesauce, fruit cups and canned tuna.

**The Dala Pantry** has gained a few new volunteers but is still looking for people to be of assistance from time to time. Please let Logan know if you are interested! [daweslm@bethanylb.edu](mailto:daweslm@bethanylb.edu).

**Advent messages** will be posted on the Messiah Facebook page each Wednesday in Advent. Please watch for them in the upcoming weeks. They may get to be posted on our website as well, Pastor is uncertain of the technology. 😊

As Covid numbers in our area are skyrocketing, **our worship has returned to recorded only**. Please watch the website for the youtube link each Sunday morning at 9:30.

### **Faithful Pals**

As we move through this time of distancing, faith education of our younger members is very challenging. It would be really super if we could have some members who would commit to writing letters, as Pen Pals once wrote, to our younger members. It might also be an interesting idea to have couples who have been married more than 15 years write to couples married less than 15 years...?

The idea would look like this. Faithful Pals would offer to write at least twice a month, making sure to identify themselves as members of Messiah and sharing a return address. Along with the name, age, and address of a recipient, writers would receive prompts. Prompts would not need to be used but would be there as a way to direct letters in a vein of faith-sharing. Recipients would simply receive the letters. There would be no expectation that they would write back. Hopefully, parents and guardians would help younger recipients to respond as they are able.

If it is helpful, the office can supply envelopes and stamps. If you are interested, please email [mlchurch@mlc.kscoxmail.com](mailto:mlchurch@mlc.kscoxmail.com) or call 785.227.3977 to receive your information.

Your commitment to writing would be really important. Please contact Pastor Amy at 785.452.0969 if you have any questions.

**DECEMBER 13, 2020**  
**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**



*Jesus brings good news.*

## DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>John 1:6-8, 19-28</b>	<b>John's witness to the light</b>
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11</b>	<b>Good news of deliverance</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>1 Thessalonians 5:16-24</b>	<b>A call to rejoice</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Romans 10:14-17</b>	<b>Those who bring good news</b>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>1 Thessalonians 3:6-13</b>	<b>Timothy's encouraging report</b>
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Genesis 18:1-18</b>	<b>A son for Abraham and Sarah</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Psalms 126</b>	<b>A people who dream</b>
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Luke 1:26-38</b>	<b>The birth of Jesus foretold</b>

## SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

*The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners. Isaiah 61:1 (NRSV)*

## PRAYERS AND BLESSING

### **A Prayer for the Week:**

God of power and might, help us to be aware of the needs of people and be prepared to bring joy and good news to people through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

### **Mealtime Prayer:**

May this gift of food fill our hearts with laughter and make us shout with joy. Amen.

### **A Blessing to Give:**

May the God of peace make you holy in spirit and soul and body. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

## HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Joy to the World*

## WEEKLY MILESTONES CARING CONVERSATIONS

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Think or talk about a time when you felt sad or brokenhearted.
- When you feel discouraged, who do you talk to or what do you do to feel better?
- Jesus comes to change our lives. How does Jesus make a difference for your life and the lives of others?

## DEVOTIONS

*Read:* Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11.

An American emailed his friend in Zimbabwe and asked if he was well. The response was “I am well if you are well.” That response comes with a communal understanding of wellness. We can’t be well on our own. Neither can we truly feel okay about ourselves if we feel safe and protected while our neighbor does not feel okay. Isaiah 61:1-2 brings good news for all, including—and especially—the oppressed, the brokenhearted, captives, prisoners, those who mourn and those who owe debts (The year of the Lord’s favor was a time to forgive debts). God’s work of justice and mercy that brings joy will be seen in all the nations (v. 11) and is for all, not just a select and privileged few. How do you see the wellbeing of others as important to your own wellbeing?

*Pray:* **God of justice, we give you thanks that your goodness and mercy is for us and for all the world through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Isaiah 61:11)**

## SERVICE

There is a theme of joy in our readings this week. This joy includes God’s promise to overcome pain, disappointment, and fear. Think of someone currently experiencing difficulties. How can you be the hands and voice of God’s good news to that person this week?

## RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Place the wise men further away from the nativity set for now. Wait to place Jesus in the manger until Christmas Eve. On your Advent wreath, light the first candle of hope, the second one of peace, and the third one of joy. Pause for a moment to sit in silence and look upon the nativity set and think about the good news and joy the coming of Jesus brings us. *Say this Bible verse:* **Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.** (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)

*Pray:* **Lord God, thank you for being with us in times of sadness and times of joy. Give us hope, peace and joy as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Amen.**

In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: [www.milestonesministry.org](http://www.milestonesministry.org)