

***⁷This is what the LORD says: "Sing with joy for Jacob; shout for the foremost of the nations. Make your praises heard, and say, 'LORD, save your people, the remnant of Israel.' ⁸See, I will bring them from the land of the north and gather them from the ends of the earth.....a great throng will return. ⁹They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back.
Jeremiah 31:7-9***

What has made you smile lately? A small child's giggle? A funny gift? A funny video? A kindness given to you by someone? This is the time of year for many smiles and a Happy New Year around the corner. Many people are waiting for 2021 and rightfully so; let us move on into the new!

Yet I would ponder to say there have been many joys in 2020. The people that the prophet Jeremiah speaks to have gone through a tough time as well. We can hear these words in our times of peril right now for each of us at this time. God has promised the Israelites many things, he will bring them back to where they longed to be, they will come with weeping yet will have their sorrow turned to joy. We will even dance with no more sorrow (See below). God keeps his promises. Let me know, as I would love to hear, what has made you smile in 2020! What are you waiting for?

In the hard times and the joys, know you are not alone. God, Emmanuel is with us. Nothing is impossible with God. The light of the world has arrived. Jesus Christ is born, God has come to earth and nothing will ever be the same!

A blessed Christmas and New Year to all!

Peace,

Pastor Brenda Wicklund.

***¹²They will come and shout for joy on the heights of Zion; they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD- the grain, the new wine and the olive oil, the young of the flocks and herds. They will be like a well-watered garden, and they will sorrow no more. ¹³Then young women will dance and be glad, young men and old as well. I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow. ¹⁴I will satisfy the priests with abundance, and my people will be filled with my bounty," declares the LORD.
Jeremiah 31: 12-14***

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Church Council-Monday, January 4th at 6:30 pm. In person or Zoom.

Budget meeting-Wednesday, January 13th at 7 pm. In person.

Confirmation-Wednesday, January 13th at 5 pm. Zoom

-Wednesday, January 20th at 5 pm. Zoom.

-Wednesday, January 27th at 5pm. Zoom.

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Pastor Brenda Wicklund

January 3, 2021-Second Sunday of Christmas



OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

“We are called by God to grow in faith together, sharing Christ’s love with each other and our community”



Within the gospel reading’s profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God’s grace and truth.

Prelude

Welcome

Hymn “Good Christian Friends, Rejoice”

- 1 Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today; ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now. Christ is born today! Christ is born today!
- 2 Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this! He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore. Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!
- 3 Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice; now ye need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save! Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall. Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Confession and Forgiveness

L: 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.

C: Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

L: God of goodness and lovingkindness,

C: we confess that we have sinned against you and our neighbors. We have turned away from your invitation to 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.

L: 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.

C: Amen.

Greeting

Red Worship Book pg. 203

L: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

L: 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.

C: Amen.

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gifts of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-14

⁷Thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel."

⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here.

⁹With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock."

¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again.

¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.

¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.

Special Music

"Silent Night"

Pastor Brenda and Josie Kordiak

Psalm 147:12-20

L: Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem;

C: praise your God, O Zion,

L: who has strengthened the bars of your gates

C: and has blessed your children within you.

L: God has established peace on your borders

C: and satisfies you with the finest wheat.

L: God sends out a command to the earth,

C: a word that runs very swiftly.

L: God gives snow like wool,

C: scattering frost like ashes.

L: God scatters hail like bread crumbs.

C: Who can stand against God's cold?

L: The LORD sends forth the word and melts them;

C: the wind blows, and the waters flow.

L: God declares the word to Jacob,

C: statutes and judgments to Israel.

L: The LORD has not done so to any other nation;

C: they do not know God's judgments. Hallelujah!

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made know as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

The Holy Gospel according to St. John

C: Glory to you, O Lord. (spoken)

Red Worship Book pg. 206

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.

Gospel: John 1(1-9) 10-18

[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 the 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 Our Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ. (spoken)

Red Worship Book pg. 206

Sermon Adjusting Your Eyes-John 1:1-18

Pastor Brenda Wicklund

One of my devotions that I use daily during the year is a Daily Text that gets me through the Bible in a year. As I write this, I am finishing up with the book of Revelation. As January 1 comes into play, I will begin with Genesis one of my favorite books in the Bible. So full of excitement and promise and it goes by so quickly, problems and heartache, yet God always comes through.

However, for these first verses brings us to these beautiful words: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth was formless and empty darkness was over the surface of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.*

Genesis 1:1

God is one the move in the beginning of the world as we hear these words similar as we move to the Gospel of John in our reading today: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, and the Word was God, He was with God in the beginning.*

John 1:1

Is Christmas over for you? Have you taken down your tree? Did your tree start losing its needles? Have you eaten all your cookies and returned what you needed to exchange? The first chapter of John reminds us that each day is Christmas as God has come to earth, these words matter and God only works in love. God has shown us that love for all he has created, from the dandelion to the snowflake, the huge mountains and the rocks, to the very young child to the very old; God created and loves all that He made and it is all good.

“The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” (John 1:5)

These are words to live with each day, not just on Christmas Eve most certainly. It might be that we need to adjust our eyes and especially so in these times and experiences we have all been through in this so hard and eventful 2020.

Our relationships have changed, whether we can gather with others or not has affected our closeness or not with our family and friends. What about from our relationship with work, school, family and other functions? Relationships feel like they are going away with separation from church, from each other even school and work? Church functions, even our worship has changed. How do we keep our relationship with God nurtured in these difficult times? Is our relationship with each other and God going away? How do we see the love and light of Jesus Christ?

We adjust our eyes because we know and have experienced the love of God and the light is not going away. We adjust our eyes when we see and feel darkness all around us, because the light of the world has come for all. We hear the witness of the writer John in his Gospel that the light shines. We have seen and heard the truth. We have received grace upon grace and that is not going away, not ever. No matter what happens or what we experience, we have God and the Son Jesus Christ to give us born as a child in the flesh, light to the world, and grace upon grace. Light in the darkness and hope in the hopeless times.

We hear the power of the echo to Genesis 1 before the fall, before the call of Abraham and Sarah and the children of Israel, for the sake of those people scattered, authority and rebirth, recreation and recovery of the intentional being of God (Joy Moore). Love and light. This is God’s intention to give light and life to all, and he does so with Jesus Christ. That light is never going to go away. The darkness will never overcome it. It just cannot.

God came down, and the world will never be the same. Even when it does not feel that way, when it feels dark and lonely, light that candle. Receive that grace that God gives to our very being. Light shines in the darkness. Adjust the light when there is none. Only through the darkness will we see light.

We have experienced and seen the light. For those who cannot see it be the witness. For those whose eyes cannot not adjust to the light, it might even be our own at times do some adjusting. Continue to adjust. Adjust and see the light, bask in the grace of Jesus Christ and be the witness. **Amen**

Hymn

“What Child Is This”

Red Worship Book 296

1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping? Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping? This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing; haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!

- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding? Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading. Nails, spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you; hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!
- 3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king, to own him. The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him. Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby; joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

Prayers of Intercession

L: 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.

L: 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.

C: Your mercy is great.

L: 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.

C: Your mercy is great.

L: 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.

C: Your mercy is great.

L: 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 or sickness. Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

L: 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.

C: Your mercy is great.

L: You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith. 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.

C: Your mercy is great.

L: 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.

C: Amen.

Offering Prayer

L: 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.

C: Amen

Words of Institution

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.

The Lord's Prayer

Red Worship Book pg. 208

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.

Prayer

L: We give you thanks, gracious God, that you have once again fed us from your very self with the body and blood of Christ. Through this mystery, send us forth to proclaim your promise to a world in need, through the same Jesus Christ, our Savior.

C: Amen.

Blessing

Red Worship Book pg. 114

L: Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary, proclaimed joy through the angels, sent the shepherds with good news, and led the magi by a star, bless you this day ☩ through the Word made flesh.

C: Amen.

Hymn

“Angels, from the Realms of Glory”

Red Worship Book 275

- 1** Angels, from the realms of glory, wing your flight o'er all the earth; once you sang creation's story, now proclaim Messiah's birth: Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 2** Shepherds, in the fields abiding, watching o'er your flocks by night, God with us is now residing, yonder shines the infant light. Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 3** Sages, leave your contemplations, brighter visions beam afar; seek the great desire of nations, you have seen his natal star. Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king.
- 4** All creation, join in praising God, the Father, Spirit, Son, evermore your voices raising to the eternal Three in One. Come and worship, come and worship, worship Christ, the newborn king

Dismissal

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

the worship is ended ... let the service begin...



Prayer Concerns ~ (Names will be on for one month unless requested longer.)

Larry Lammers (brother-in-law of Elaine Garaghty), Sue Youngblom, John Bassett, Max Tatting, John Shober, Pearl Anderson (sister of Joyce Seegebarth), Kent Wicklund, Gary Wells, Chelsley Exsted and 2 children (granddaughter and great grandchildren of Pat Anderson), Colton Thompson (grandson of Dale and Kathy Thompson), Peter Thorvig, Kay Conway, George and Joan Wells (brother/sister-in-law of Gary and Gail Wells), Eric Mettling (deployed for service), Jessica Lindahl, Carol Bostrom, Leigha Ness (Pastor Brenda's great-niece), and Barbara Ekberg (sister of Loretta Sprado.)

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