



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



1st Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2020 10:30 Service of the Word

The new church year begins today with the first Sunday in Advent. For the first three weeks in this four-week season we will look at: faith, hope, and love. Today we begin with faith. Faith is a an easy word to use but one that has many definitions. How you understand it can have a significant impact on how you shape your life. In worship we'll delve into some of the meanings of faith and hopefully set us on a course that will lead to growth and strength.

Welcome to worship today!

This order of worship is designed to accompany what is happening live on Zoom. In order to make things work smoothly please keep your computer's microphone off unless you have a speaking part. It may be helpful to use a headset or earbuds to minimize feedback. You are welcome to use the chat feature to ask questions or provide feedback. Following worship we will have a time for those who would like to chat.

† OPENING †

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

C: Amen

Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever.

C: Amen.

P: Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Silence for reflection and self-examination

P: Loving and forgiving God,

C: 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.

P: 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.

C: Amen.

Opening Music

Prayer of the Day

A: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

WORD

First Reading Habakkuk 2:2-5

B: ²Then the LORD answered me and said:

Write the vision;

make it plain on tablets,
so that a runner may read it.

³For there is still a vision for the appointed time;
it speaks of the end, and does not lie.

If it seems to tarry, wait for it;
it will surely come, it will not delay.

⁴Look at the proud!

Their spirit is not right in them,
but the righteous live by their faith.

⁵Moreover, wealth is treacherous;
the arrogant do not endure.

They open their throats wide as Sheol;
like Death they never have enough.

They gather all nations for themselves,
and collect all peoples as their own.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word the Lord

C: Thanks be to God!

Scripture Poetry Psalm 121 (*read together*)

**C: If I look to the mountains,
will they come to my aid?**

**My help is the Lord,
who made earth and the heavens.
May God, ever wakeful,
keep you from stumbling;
the guardian of Israel**

**neither rests nor sleeps.
God shields you,
a protector by your side.
The sun shall not harm you by day
nor the moon at night.
God shelters you from evil,
securing your life.
God watches over you near and far,
now and always.**

Second Reading Romans 3:21-27

D:²¹But now, apart from law, the righteousness of God has been disclosed, and is attested by the law and the prophets, ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction, ²³since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; ²⁴they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; ²⁶it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷Then what becomes of boasting? It is excluded. By what law? By that of works? No, but by the law of faith.

After the reading the reader may say: The Word the Lord

C: Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation (Habakkuk 2:4)

C: Alleluia. The righteous live by their faith. Alleluia.

Gospel Reading John 15:12-17

The gospel is announced:

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John 15th chapter.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

[Jesus said to the disciples] “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. ¹⁶You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father

will give you whatever you ask him in my name.¹⁷I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

After the reading:

P: The gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you O Christ.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

Response to the Word

P: In Christ you have heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation.

C: We believe in him and are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.

E: Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**C: 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.**

E: Build yourselves up on your most holy faith;

C: pray in the Holy Spirit.

(Jude 20)

E: Keep yourselves in the love of God;

C: look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. *(Jude 21)*

E: If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation:

**C: Everything old has passed away;
behold, everything has become new!**

(*2 Corinthians 5:17*)

† PRAYER †

Prayers of Intercession

P: With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

The pastor will begin the prayer with a petition and then invites the congregation to add additional petitions and thanksgivings. These three petitions will be read by people in the congregation:

A: Mighty Fortress, protect all people who are poor or oppressed. Grant that the leaders of nations respond with justice and relief to those who suffer. We pray especially for the people of Honduras. Bless all elected officials as they assume new leadership roles. Lord in your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

B: Immortal, invisible God only wise, we pray for the church, both our congregation and assemblies around the globe. Give us your life. Show us your presence. Grant us your wisdom. Shepherd for another year of grace for church leaders and musicians. Guide the missionaries we support: the Rev. Karen Anderson in Chile and the Rev. Matthew Nickoloff in Rochester. Lord in your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

E: Mothering God, visit with your power any who are homeless or unemployed, and all who are hungry. Protect children from all manner of abuse. Comfort those who live with chronic pain, anxieties, and addictions. Lord in your mercy...

C: Hear our prayer.

The pastor concludes the prayer:

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C: Amen.

Peace

A: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

A: We share that peace with one another.

The congregation may greet one another with messages of Christ's peace.

Special Music

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C: 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

† ENDING †

Blessing

P: 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.

C: Amen

Closing Music

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: God's Work. Our Hands.

Snow Clearing Volunteers/Helpers

We are looking for people to help with snow removal at church this winter season. We work in teams; if you're not comfortable driving an easy-to-operate small plow truck, we also need snowblower operators, shovelers, and salters. If you can assist, please contact Tom Urbanic at turbanic@rochester.rr.com or 585-489-5965.

Mitten Tree

We will still have a Christmas tree in the gathering area for donations of gloves, mittens, scarves, and hats of all sizes. These items will be donated to the Victim Resource Center. The deadline is December 20th.

Church Christmas Tree Decorations

We are still setting up and decorating a church tree this year. Please see your newsletter for a collection of chrismons—Christian symbols used to decorate a tree. Please select one and print it out (on heavy paper or cardstock if possible). You may cut it out or leave it uncut. Decorate it to your liking and put your name(s) on it. Then return it to church.

We'll place them on the tree. During the Christmas Eve service we'll give some camera time to the decorations on the tree. Thank you!

Advent Wreath Travels

The Advent wreath marks our progress through the season of Advent, with an additional candle being lit each Sunday. Since we cannot worship in-person this Advent, we are creating an Advent wreath that will travel from household to household. This will be similar to earlier in the year when we had the altar candles touring from house to house. If you or your family would like to host the wreath please be in touch with Pastor Jon.

At the beginning of each worship service during Advent you are encouraged to light the appropriate candles of your own Advent wreath. If you do not have one please consider getting one, or making one. Even a collection of four candles will suffice. Blue candles can be hard to find so feel free to substitute whatever colors you have.

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