

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT  
10 DECEMBER 2023



OUR SAVIOR'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

# SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

## *EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN WORSHIP, SETTING 10*

*The liturgy is in the front of the ELW starting on page 203.*

*The hymns begin in the middle of the ELW with numbers at the top of the pages.*

### PRELUDE

### RINGING OF THE BELL

### WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## *SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT*

### *~ HOPE FOR THOSE WHO ARE WEARY ~*

P: The Light shines in the darkness,

**C: but the darkness has not overcome it.**

P: During Advent our weary souls seek God's daily strength.

**C: The Lord gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.**

P: We grow weary when fear overshadows faith.

**C: The Lord gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.**

P: We grow weary when destructive actions erupt in the world around us.

**C: The Lord gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak.**

P: For all of us feeling weary this Advent season:

**C: Grant that we might have the peace of Christ as we wait, the love of Christ as we act, and the grace of Christ as we speak.**

## *CANDLE LIGHTING*

Today we light two candles. The **first candle** illuminates patience in the areas of our lives where God has called us to wait. The **second candle** extends the promise of strength to all who feel weary and weak in the shadows of this world. As we continue our Advent journey, may our hope be kindled as the light grows brighter.

**ACCLAMATION: HYMN #715 (REFRAIN)**

♪ **Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.**

**Shine through the darkness.**

**Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.**

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

**C: Amen.**

P: Everlasting God,

**C: you love justice and you hate wrongdoing.**

**We confess the fear, greed and self-centeredness  
that make us reluctant to work against oppression.**

**We are complicit in systems of exploitation.**

**We choose comfort over courage.**

**We are careless with creation's bounty.**

**Look upon us with mercy.**

**Turn our hearts again to you.**

**Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways  
for the sake of our waiting world.**

**Amen.**

P: Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal and God's blessing rests upon us all.

**C: Amen.**

## HYMN #264 "PREPARE THE ROYAL HIGHWAY"

### GREETING

P: 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.**

### KYRIE [PAGE 203]

♩ **Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.  
We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.**

**Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.  
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.  
Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!**

**CANTICLE OF PRAISE [PAGE 204]**

♪ **Glory be to God in heaven; peace, goodwill to all the earth.  
Mighty God of all creation, Father of surpassing worth:  
we exalt you, we adore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.  
Saints and angels bow before you; here on earth our songs we raise.**

**Glory be to Christ forever, Lamb of God and Lord of love.  
Son of God and gracious Savior, you have come from heav'n above;  
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.  
Hear our prayer; restore, forgive us; in your promise firm we stand.**

**Holy One we now acclaim you; Lord alone, to you we call;  
Holy One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:  
Jesus Christ, with God the Spirit, in the Father's splendor bright.  
For the peace that we inherit, glory be to God on high!**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. (*concluding...now and forever.*)

**C: Amen**

**READINGS**

L: The Word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION [PAGE 205]**

♪ **Alleluia! Lord and Savior: open now your saving word.  
Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.  
Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.**

**GOSPEL**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Mark, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**YOUTH SERMON – REV. LEAH HOLLOWAY-NILSEN**

**SERMON – REV. LEAH HOLLOWAY-NILSEN**

**HYMN #256 “COMFORT, COMFORT NOW MY PEOPLE”**

## **CONFESSION OF FAITH: NICENE CREED**

P: Living in the Hope of the Gift of Christ's coming again, we confess our faith.

**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**

P: With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

*(Each petition ends: P: Merciful God, C: receive our prayer)*

P: Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

**C: Amen.**

## **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

## **OFFERING**

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: Let us pray. *(concluding...our Savior and Lord.)*

**C: Amen.**

## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **PREFACE [PAGE 207]**

P: It is indeed right...and join their unending hymn:

**C:     ♫ Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
          heav'n and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.**

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**



## LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

## *CELEBRATION OF HOLY COMMUNION*

*All who are baptized into Christ Jesus are invited to receive Holy Communion  
Gluten-free wafers and white grape juice are available.*

**♪ O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;  
you suffered death our lives to save: have mercy now, we pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;  
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mercy now, we pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;  
eternal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.**

## HYMN #487 "WHAT FEAST OF LOVE"

### POST COMMUNION BLESSING

**P:** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and  
keep you in his grace.

**C:** Amen

### POST COMMUNION HYMN

**♪ Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
praise him, all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heav'nly host;  
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.**

### POST COMMUNION PRAYER

**P:** Let us pray. (*concluding...* Jesus Christ our Lord.)

**C:** Amen.

**BLESSING**

P: Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

**HYMN #249 “ON JORDAN’S BANK THE BAPTIST’S CRY”**

**DISMISSAL**

P: Go in peace. Keep awake.

**C: Thanks be to God!**

**RINGING OF THE BELL**

**POSTLUDE**



**Pastor:** Rev. Leah Holloway-Nilsen  
**Organist:** Jason Boussetot or Linda Whitman  
**Acolyte:** Caden Will  
**Lector:** Joyce McCutcheon  
**Communion Assistant:** Neil Holmquist  
**Usher:** Shane Glover  
**Cleaners:** Brian Boussetot and Mary Timmerman

### CONTACT INFORMATION

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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/clparish1861](http://www.facebook.com/clparish1861)

### THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

Wednesday	10:00 am	Naomi Circle at Diane Christensen's
	5:45 pm	Christmas program practice at Our Savior's
	6:15 pm	Mid-week Advent meal at Our Savior's
	7:00 pm	Mid-week Advent service at Our Savior's
	7:30 pm	Bible Jam Christmas Party at Our Savior's
Saturday	10:00 am	Christmas Program Practice at Our Savior's
Sunday	8:00 am	Worship Service at Faith
	9:25 am	Sunday School at Our Savior's
	10:30 am	Christmas Program at Our Savior's

**Those to keep in prayer:** Mallory Boussetot, Diane Sievers; the homebound: Carol Christensen, Ron Gasper, Delores Lahann, Lucy Lee Petersen, Myrna Kay Peterson, Rusty Porth, Betty Schau, Bus Seastrand and Vera St. John; and those serving in the military.

During the month of December, **winter coats, hats and gloves** will be collected for the Carroll Assistance Center.

## Advent Schedule

Join the confirmation students and Pastor each Wednesday for our mid-week Advent service. A meal will be served at 6:15 pm with the Advent service starting at 7:00 pm

Dec. 13 – Our Savior’s Lutheran Church

Dec. 20 – Faith Lutheran Church

The confirmation students have selected Holden Evening Prayer and will plan scriptures and hymns for the service. If you would like to assist the confirmation students in leading the vocal music, please contact Pastor.

The **God Squad Christmas party** will be at 7:30 pm on Wednesday, December 13, at Our Savior’s Church. Junior high and high school youth are invited to join in the holiday fun!

The **Sunday School Christmas Program** will be held at 10:30 am on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, at Our Savior’s. A rehearsal is at 5:45 pm on Wednesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, at Our Savior’s. The final practice at 10:00 am on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, will be followed by Christmas Caroling and a pizza party at Happy Joe’s in DeWitt.

All reports for the **Faith and Our Savior’s Annual Reports** are due in the church office by **Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>**. These reports include: Pastor, Council Presidents, God Squad, Memorials and Gifts, Our Savior’s Cemetery, and all Committees (Education, Outreach, Property and Management, and Worship). Financial reports, budgets, and audit reports are due in the church office by Monday, January 15, 2024.

**Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**, there will be **one** morning service at Faith at 9:00 am. There will be no Sunday School that morning.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service** at Our Savior’s at 9:00 pm.

**Christmas Day Worship** at Faith at 9:00 am

**Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>**, there will be **one** service at Our Savior’s at 9:00 am. There will be no Sunday School that morning.

# THE BEGINNING OF THE STORY

*Mark 1:1-4 This is the beginning of the story of how Jesus Christ, the Son of God, brought the good news to men. There is a passage in Isaiah the prophet like this-- "Lo! I send my messenger before you and he will prepare your road for you. He will be like a voice crying in the wilderness, 'Get ready the road of the Lord. Make straight the path by which he will come'." This came true when John the Baptizer emerged in the wilderness, announcing a baptism which was the sign of a repentance through which a man might find forgiveness for his sins.*

Mark starts the story of Jesus a long way back. It did not begin with Jesus' birth; it did not even begin with John the Baptizer in the wilderness; it began with the dreams of the prophets long ago; that is to say, it began long, long ago in the mind of God.

The Stoics were strong believers in the ordered plan of God. "The things of God," said Marcus Aurelius, "are fun of foresight. All things flow from heaven." There are things we may well learn here.

(i) It has been said that "the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts," and so are the thoughts of God. God is characteristically a God who is working his purposes out. History is not a random kaleidoscope of disconnected events; it is a process directed by the God who sees the end in the beginning.

(ii) We are within that process, and because of that we can either help or hinder it. In one sense it is as great an honour to help in some great process as it is a privilege to see the ultimate goal. Life would be very different if, instead of yearning for some distant and at present unattainable goal, we did all that we could to bring that goal nearer.

"In youth, because I could not be a singer,  
I did not even try to write a song;  
I set no little trees along the roadside,  
Because I knew their growth would take so long.  
But now from wisdom that the years have brought me,  
I know that it may be a blessed thing  
To plant a tree for someone else to water,  
Or make a song for someone else to sing."

The goal will never be reached unless there are those who labour to make it possible.

The prophetic quotation which Mark uses is suggestive.

I send my messenger before you and he will prepare your road for you. This is from Malachi 3:1. In its original context it is a threat. In Malachi's day the priests were failing in their duty. The offerings were blemished and shoddy second-bests; the service of the temple was a weariness to them. The messenger was to cleanse and purify the worship of the temple before the Anointed One of God emerged upon the earth. So then the coming of Christ was a purification of life. And the world needed that purification. Seneca called Rome "a cesspool of iniquity." Juvenal spoke of her "as the filthy sewer into which flowed the abominable dregs of every Syrian and Achaean stream."

Wherever Christianity comes it brings purification.

That happens to be capable of factual demonstration. Bruce Barton tells how the first important journalistic assignment that fell to him was to write a series of articles designed to expose Billy Sunday, the evangelist. Three towns were chosen. "I talked to the merchants," Bruce Barton writes, "and they told me that during the meetings and afterward people walked up to the counter and paid bills which were so old that they had long since been written off the books." He went to visit the president of the chamber of commerce of a town that Billy Sunday had visited three years before. "I am not a member of any church," he said. "I never attend but I'll tell you one thing. If it was proposed now to bring Billy Sunday to this town, and if we knew as much about the results of his work in advance as we do now, and if the churches would not raise the necessary funds to bring him, I could raise the money in half a day from men who never go to church. He took eleven thousand dollars out of here, but a circus comes here and takes out that amount in one day and leaves nothing. He left a different moral atmosphere." The exposure that Bruce Barton meant to write became a tribute to the cleansing power of the Christian message.

When Billy Graham preached in Shreveport, Louisiana, liquor sales dropped by 40 per cent and the sale of Bibles increased 300 per cent. During a mission in Seattle, amongst the results there is stated quite simply, "Several impending divorce actions were cancelled." In

Greensboro, North Carolina, the report was that “the entire social structure of the city was affected.”

One of the great stories of what Christianity can do came out of the mutiny on the Bounty. The mutineers were put ashore on Pitcairn Island. There were nine mutineers, six native men, ten native women and a girl, fifteen years old. One of them succeeded in making crude alcohol. A terrible situation ensued. They all died except Alexander Smith. Smith chanced upon a Bible. He read it and he made up his mind to build up a state with the natives of that island based directly on the Bible. It was twenty years before an American sloop called at the island. They found a completely Christian community. There was no gaol because there was no crime. There was no hospital because there was no disease. There was no asylum because there was no insanity. There was no illiteracy; and nowhere in the world was human life and property so safe. Christianity had cleansed that society.

Where Christ is allowed to come the antiseptic of the Christian faith cleanses the moral poison of society and leaves it pure and clean.

John came announcing a baptism of repentance. The Jew was familiar with ritual washings. Leviticus 11:1-47; Leviticus 12:1-8; Leviticus 13:1-59; Leviticus 14:1-57; Leviticus 15:1-33 details them. “The Jew,” said Tertullian, “washes himself every day because every day he is defiled.” Symbolic washing and purifying was woven into the very fabric of Jewish ritual. A Gentile was necessarily unclean for he had never kept any part of the Jewish law. Therefore, when a Gentile became a proselyte, that is a convert to the Jewish faith, he had to undergo three things. First, he had to undergo circumcision, for that was the mark of the covenant people; second, sacrifice had to be made for him, for he stood in need of atonement and only blood could atone for sin; third, he had to undergo baptism, which symbolized his cleansing from all the pollution of his past life. Naturally, therefore, the baptism was not a mere sprinkling with water, but a bath in which his whole body was bathed.

The Jew knew baptism; but the amazing thing about John's baptism was that he, a Jew, was asking Jews to submit to that which only a Gentile was supposed to need. John had made the tremendous discovery that to be a Jew in the racial sense was not to be a member of God's chosen people; a Jew might be in exactly the same position

as a Gentile; not the Jewish life, but the cleansed life belonged to God.

The baptism was accompanied by confession. In any return to God confession must be made to three different people.

(i) A man must make confession to himself. It is a part of human nature that we shut our eyes to what we do not wish to see, and above all to our own sins. Someone tells of a man's first step to grace. As he was shaving one morning he looked at his face in the mirror and suddenly said, "You dirty, little rat!" And from that day he began to be a changed man.

No doubt when the prodigal son left home he thought himself a fine and adventurous character. Before he took his first step back home he had to take a good look at himself and say, "I will get up and go home and say that I am an utter rotter." (Luke 15:17-18.)

There is no one in all the world harder to face than ourselves; and the first step to repentance and to a right relationship to God is to admit our sin to ourselves.

(ii) A man must make confession to those whom he has wronged. It will not be much use saying to God that we are sorry until we say we are sorry to those whom we have hurt and grieved. The human barriers have to be removed before the divine barriers can go. In the East African Church, a husband and wife were members of a group. One of them came and made confession that there was a quarrel at home. The minister at once said, "You should not have come and confessed that quarrel just now; you should have made it up and then come and confessed it."

It can often be the case that confession to God is easier than confession to men. But there can be no forgiveness without humiliation.

(iii) A man must make confession to God. The end of pride is the beginning of forgiveness. It is when a man says, "I have sinned," that God gets the chance to say, "I forgive." It is not the man who desires to meet God on equal terms who will discover forgiveness, but the man who kneels in humble contrition and whispers through his shame, "God be merciful to me a sinner."