



Worship for Sunday, December 13, 2020 - Third Sunday of Advent
St. Stephen the Martyr Lutheran Church
Greendale, WI www.ssmelca.org

Introduction to the day

“Rejoice always,” begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children got a robe,” go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.

WELCOME

PRELUDE - "Savior of the Nations, Come" arr. Dietrich Buxtehude

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

L: Today we relight the first two candles of the Advent wreath. The candle of **HOPE** and the candle of **PEACE**. Now we light the third candle of Advent. This is the candle of **JOY**. As the coming of Jesus, our Savior, draws nearer, our joy builds with our anticipation of his birth. From the Book of Isaiah we read the words of our Lord:

“But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight.” - Isaiah 65:18

Let us pray:

C: We joyfully praise you, O Lord, for the fulfillment of your promise of a Savior and what that means in our lives. Thank you for the gift of salvation through the birth of your son, Jesus. Create us anew as we wait, and help us to see your glory as you fill our lives with your living Spirit. Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

C: Amen

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

L: Loving and forgiving God,

**C: we confess that we are held captives 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.**

- L:** 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.**

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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

- C:** **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

(Read by: Mary Luedtke)

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.

- ¹The 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;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³to 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.
⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,

they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

⁸For 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.
⁹Their 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.
¹⁰I 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.
¹¹For 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.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

(Read by: Mary Luedtke)

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.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May 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. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Verses may be sung by a leader. Then the alleluia is repeated.

Music: "Alleluia 7," Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994, and the Taizé Community
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GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28

P: The holy gospel according to John. **C:** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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.

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.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,

'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

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

MESSAGE - "Opening Act"

Rev. Brian Hooper

Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others

HYMN OF THE DAY - "The Spirit Sends Us Forth to Serve"



1 The Spir - it sends us forth to serve; we go in
2 We go to com - fort those who mourn and set the
3 We go to be the hands of Christ, to scat - ter
4 Then let us go to serve in peace, the gos - pel



Je - sus' name to bring glad tid - ings
bur - dened free; where hope is dim, to
joy like seed and, all our days, to
to pro - claim. God's Spir - it has em -



to the poor, God's fa - vor to pro - claim.
share a dream and help the blind to see.
cher - ish life, to do the lov - ing deed.
pow - ered us; we go in Je - sus' name.

Text: Delores Dufner, OSB, b. 1939

Music: CHESTERFIELD, attr. Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820

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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

L: On this third Sunday of Advent, we join in prayer as we await God's salvation, responding to each petition with the words "Mighty Savior, come and save us."

A brief silence.

L: God of prophets and preachers, strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, and lay leaders. Protect Christians who are persecuted for the faith. While churches await a full return to assembly worship, empower the baptized with your faithful Spirit. Embed your word in our hearts. We pray for the church:

C: Mighty Savior, come and save us.

L: God of creation, grant relief to endangered animals and plants. Protect the rain forests, provide for those who rely on nature's rhythms for their livelihood. Train us to dwell on this earth in such a way that all people may thrive. We pray for the earth:

C: Mighty Savior, come and save us.

L: God of all lands, plant in the leaders of every nation a love of justice and a commitment to serve the common good. Calm tensions in the Middle East, and bring peace where civil conflicts rage. Equip regions to rebuild cities that have been destroyed by war. We pray for the nations:

C: Mighty Savior, come and save us.

L: God of exiles and wanderers, give a homeland to refugees. Provide housing for those whose dwellings have been destroyed. Protect street people from the cold and be with teenage runaways. Uphold the work of ELCA Good Gifts, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations. Comfort all who feel isolated from others. We pray for all in distress:

C: Mighty Savior, come and save us.

L: God of the sorrowing and the brokenhearted, give health to the sick, relief to medical workers, and comfort to mourners. Attend to those with lifelong illness. We beg for an end to the coronavirus and a fair distribution of the vaccines. We pray for the sick:

C: Mighty Savior, come and save us.

L: God of each one of us, we await peace and justice, health and wholeness. Sustain us as we await your coming. We pray for our community:

C: Mighty Savior, come and save us.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

L: God of sinners and saints, while facing sadness and death, we grieve; yet we offer you praise for all the saints, especially the saints who have died of COVID-19. At the end, father us into the joy of your glory. We pray for your salvation.

C: Mighty Savior, come and save us.

P: God beyond all things, God dwelling among us now, receive these prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ, who came, who comes, and who is coming now and forever.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

**L: The peace of Christ be with you always.
C: And also with you.**

OFFERTORY *(Thanks for sharing your gifts. Offering envelopes can still be mailed to the church, you can use the GIVE + app found on the resource tab at ssmelca.org or you may wish to sign up for Simply Giving to have your offering scheduled on an automatic basis.)*

OFFERING PRAYER

**P: 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.
C: Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.**

DISMISSAL

**P: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.
C: Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE - "The Spirit Send Us Forth to Serve" arr. Healey Willan

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Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Giving Parade - December 20, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

We are hosting a Christmas drive-thru event at SSM. We hope you'll stop by for a bit of Christmas cheer (and a treat for the kids). The event will include:

Collection of Children's Hats, Mittens, and Scarves

These items will be donated to a city school for students in need. Please bring new items, unwrapped.

Food Drive

Bring non-perishable food items and/or monetary donations. These donations will be distributed to the Bay View Food Pantry, Unity, and Faith/Santa Fe.

Collection of Items for the Homeless

Adult-sized hats and gloves will be given to shelters for the homeless.

Bay View Christmas Gift Drive

Monetary donations will be accepted to cover the costs of purchasing gifts for the Bay View Community Center. This takes the place of purchasing individual gifts this year.

Distribution of Holy Communion Kits

Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the sacrament of Holy Communion during the online, Zoom worship services on Christmas Eve and Epiphany (January 6). During this event, you will be able to pick up individual, pre-filled communion cups with wafers for both dates. Pastor Brian will consecrate the cups prior to distribution and a note will be included with a prayer and words for home distribution if you are not able to participate in the Zoom service(s).

Distribution of Candles for Christmas Eve

You can pick up a small candle for lighting during the Christmas Eve worship service.

How to Participate

Drive into the SSM parking lot any time between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 20th. Signs and arrows will lead you to stations for giving and receiving. You will not need to get out of your car. If you prefer, we can remove and/or place items in your trunk to reduce contact. Please wear your mask for interacting with the volunteers.

End of the Year Giving

Are you 72 or older, and do the terms Required Minimum Distributions (RMD) and Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCD) mean something to you? If yes, then you probably already know that due to the pandemic, the CARES Act waived all RMD's for 2020. However, you could still choose to direct a distribution from certain retirement accounts to a qualified charity such as St Stephen the Martyr before year end. Be sure to check with your tax advisor if this is something you are interested in learning more about.

KEEP THESE SSM MEMBERS IN PRAYER

Melissa Cooper, Joyce Gagliano, Greg Guiliani, Sue Herman, Sue Jarchow, Lynda Johnson,
Ken & Carolyn Kahl, Vic & Sandy Peterson, Teri Peterson, Patrick Rafalski, John Rech,
Joan Retzlaff, Dean Rockstad, Rob Rutzen, Richard Sontvedt, John Winter.
Louise Becker at the sudden passing of her daughter Janet.

PRAY FOR OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Roberta Henrichs, sister-in-law of Joan Retzlaff	Dawn Salopek, sister of Karen Miller
Laurence Freemont, friend of SSM	Janet Heino, great aunt of Stephanie Falksen
Katie Stull, granddaughter of Phil & LaVerne Morgan	Tinsley Marie, great granddaughter of Sue Herman
Jane Janicki, sister of the Winter Family	Cameo Abifarin, friend of Julie Herman
Jerelie Caston, daughter of Joan Retzlaff	Cathy & Mark Kossow, friends of Lynda Johnson
Nancy & Mike Andritsch, sister/brother-in-law of Barbara & Dan Davies	Tippecanoe's "Larry under the bridge", friend of the Homeless
Josh Knapp, friend of Amy Billman	Katie Manzeck, friend of Carol Manning
Linda Radike, friend of Julie Herman	Susan White, sister of Sally Kowalewski
Karen Stolz, neighbor of Julie Herman	Jon Kowalewski, husband of Susan Kowalewski
Roger & Kathy Blanchard, cousin of Bob Lieske	Lauryn Ramintho, great-granddaughter of Karen Miller
Billy Waters, husband of Darlene Waters & Stepdad of Lori Salas	Lucy Copeland, granddaughter of Dianne Niese
Daniel Kilimann, son of Joy Kilimann	Liane Guthrie, daughter of Dianne Niese
Carson Wudtke, grandson of Dan & Barb Davies	Leroy Robinson, father of Linda Schmidt
Sharon West, friend of Lynda Johnson	Maria Hill, friend of Lynda Johnson
Ted P., brother-in-law of Gail Jakus	Ann Scorzynski, friend of LaVerne Morgan
Jay Lessing, friend of LaVerne Morgan	Kristin White, daughter of Sue Herman
Jeanne Jimenez, daughter of Shirley Rau	Laura Sussman, mother of Kimberly Carroll
Cindy Molter, mother of Fred Ankebrant	Louie Baumgartner, son-in-law of Bob Lieske
Mark Molter, uncle of Fred Ankebrant	Richard Kurcharski, father of Jenny Resterhouse
Ashton Miller, nephew of Jenny & Kurt Koeff	Sharon Maschke, sister-in-law of Pam Maschke
Terry Betchner, friend of Dianne Niese	Finn Morgan, great-grandson of Shirley & Bob Lieske
Beth Klosinski, daughter of Linda Schmidt	Tim Ingram, grandson of Carole & Ron Ropel
Tom Ervin, former father-in-law of Shelly Rosenstock	Denise Hajos, friend of Kelly Sachse
The Lynn Gillen Family, granddaughter to Fred & Carol Mueller	Sandy, sister of Kevin Ernst

Welcoming all, Worshiping God, Serving others