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St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Wilton, WI
Third Sunday of Advent
December 15, 2019
**Inviting People to
Journey with Christ's Family
in Spreading God's Love and Mercy**

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

*The Sunday Assembly, Lorraine S. Brugh, Gordon W. Lathrop, Augsburg Fortress, 2008
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Gathering

*The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God**

Welcome and Announcements

Prelude.....A time for silent reflection

Advent Wreath Lighting

*"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" vs. 1-3 **ELW #240***

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
the parent who rouses us from slumber,
the shepherd who gathers us on the holy mountain,
the deliverer who sets us free.

Amen.

Let us come before the living God in confession.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

As we wait and watch for the promised day of salvation,
we open our hearts to you, O God.
Search us and know us.
Reveal all that we keep inside.
To you, O God, we confess our sins,
known and unknown.
Forgive us, renew us,
and lead us in your ways of justice and peace.
Make us reflections of the radiant love
of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Beloved children of the Most High,
you are gathered before the righteous judge
who has mercy on all.
Splash exuberantly in the waters of baptism,
where sin is washed away in the river of life.
Dwell peacefully in the loving arms
of the one who nurtures all creation.
Go forth boldly in the assurance that your sins are forgiven
in the name of the one who is coming and is already here,
☐ Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

*Gathering Hymn "Awake! Awake, & Greet the New Morn" **ELW #242**

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**

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.
C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace from above,
and for our salvation,
Let us pray to the Lord.
C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace of the whole world,
for the well-being of the Church of God,

Do you have any blue jeans you are looking to clear out of your closet or dresser drawers? If so, would you consider donating them to Ella (Dan) Yoder? Ella uses blue jean/denim material for the backing on the potholders she makes to supplement her family income. Ella's husband, Dan, is a faithful blood donor to the Wilton Community Drive. If you have any jeans or denim material to donate, please give them to Nalani. Thank you.

Bishop Arends is retiring at the end of his current term. The process of electing a successor has begun, and is detailed in the information placed on the table in the narthex. The involvement and feedback from members of the Synod congregations is encouraged. Please feel free to take a copy of this information with you as you familiarize yourself with the election process.

We hope you have time to attend the Community Christmas concert this afternoon, beginning at 4:00 PM. Folks have been working hard to provide a time when you can relax before the final hustle and bustle of the Christmas season.

You may now contact Pastor Cathleen on a landline, #608-435-0097. This telephone itself is a "Caption Call". This means a written display of what you are saying is displayed for Pastor to read, and continue the conversation. Be patient, it takes a few seconds for your side of the conversation to be displayed. You may also leave a voice mail message.

In case of emergency, contact Pastor Cathleen, via text, 608-865-1074, Justin Arndt (608-435-6336) (414-587-6642) or Nalani Bever,
To activate the prayer chain, please contact Nalani (608-387-2311)

Office Hours: Wednesday, 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Additional Contact Information:
Pastor Cathleen: cathleenmorris@go.mccormick.edu

Sending

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

Steve
Murray,
Bill Collar,
Family

and friends of Bob Brandau and David Roalkvam

IN THE MILITARY

Jacob Picha, Todd Nofsinger, Dylan Dougherty, Robert Cale,
Seth Tormoen

THOSE SERVING TODAY

Ministers: All God’s People, Pastor: Cathleen Morris, Organist: Nalani
Bever, Greeters: Louise and Bob Buchholz, Altar: Lori and Joel Arndt,
Reader: Barb Ornes, Communion Server: Joel Arndt,
Ushers: Tim Deichler, Bart Arndt, Justin Arndt, John Ornes

CALENDAR FOR December 15 -- December 22

Sun., Dec. 15	Council Meeting	11:30 AM
	Community Christmas Concert	4:00 PM
Sun., Dec. 22	Christmas Program Practice	8:00 AM
	Sunday School	9:00 AM
	Worship	10:15 AM

ANNOUNCEMENTS

You are welcome to participate in the ELCA Good Gifts purchases along with the Sunday School children. We have placed order blanks in the narthex. If you would like your order to be sent in along with the children’s, please make your check payable to St. Paul’s. Ornaments are also on the back table. You may place an ornament of your purchased item on the church Christmas tree, and take an ornament home for your tree. Please see Nalani Bever if you have any questions.

If you would like to donate toward the Christmas poinsettias please complete the form located on the table in the narthex, place it in the envelope which is by the form and either place your envelope in the offering plate, or just hand it to Nalani.

and for the unity of all,
Let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For this holy house,
and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

*Canticle of Praise “This is the Feast” ELW p.149

*Prayer of the Day

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Word

*God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.**

FIRST READING

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God’s coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

Isaiah 35:1-10

¹The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.”

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God’s people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;

**temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine
is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever.
Amen.**

P: God fills the hungry with good things.
Come with joy to the feast.

Distribution

Everyone who believes in Jesus is welcome at Christ’s table.

“Lamb of God”

ELW p. 154

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**God of abundance,
we give you thanks that in this holy meal
you have invited us to feast with you and one another.
May the taste of your love remain with us,
and may our words and our work in your name
invite others into your bountiful grace.
Send us from your table to proclaim your presence,
even as we await the glorious coming of Christ our Savior.
Amen.**

Benediction

Sending Hymn

“People, Look East”

ELW #248

Dismissal:

P: Go in peace. Christ is with you.

C: Thanks be to God.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Katie Wallace, Shirley Meranti, Linda Bauer, Helen Summerfield, Lois
Schultz, Linda Finnigan, Stuart Thayer, Becky Smith, Florence Krause,
Judy Bever, Tammy Roscovious, Darlene and Paul Babbitt, Pam
Eaton, Jeff Sullivan, Dakota Holiday, Carla Von Haden, Eileen Arndt,

Meal

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ*

*Offertory Prayer

Giver of every good thing,
we set before you the gifts that you have already given
to sustain our lives and to share with others.
Help us to be good stewards of the earth and all that is in it,
and let our lives be a testimony to the abundant feast
you prepare for all who hunger.
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 our Lord our God.

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

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.....
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

ELW p.153

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Words of Institution

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us:

**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**

they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
¹⁰And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 146:5-10

⁵Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;
⁶**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;**
⁷who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who
hunger.
The LORD sets the captive free.
⁸**The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who
are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.**
⁹The LORD cares for the stranger;
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of
the wicked.
¹⁰**The LORD shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

SECOND READING

*In anticipation of the Lord’s coming, Christians are called upon to
cultivate patience rather than discontent*

James 5:7-10

⁷Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel Acclamation

ELW p.151

GOSPEL READING

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

The gospel according to Matthew 11:2-11

Glory to you, O Lord.

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

*Hymn "Light Dawns on a Weary World"

ELW #726

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 (Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**)

***PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you all.

C: And also with you.

P: Let us show signs of Christ's peace.

OFFERING

*Offertory Hymn "We Are An Offering"

ELW #692