

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Sunday, January 3, 2021
Second Sunday of Christmas

Introduction to the day

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of goodness and lovingkindness,
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.

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.

GATHERING SONG *Angels We Have Heard on High* (ELW 289)

1 Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain

*Gloria in excelsis Deo;
gloria in excelsis Deo.*

2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heav'nly song? *Refrain*

3 Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn king. *Refrain*

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

P: Let us pray.

C: 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. Amen.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31:7-14

L: A reading from Jeremiah.

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.

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.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: 147:12-20 read responsively

¹²Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem;
 praise your God, O Zion,
¹³**who has strengthened the bars of your gates
 and has blessed your children within you.**
¹⁴God has established peace on your borders
 and satisfies you with the finest wheat.
¹⁵**God sends out a command to the earth,
 a word that runs very swiftly.**
¹⁶God gives snow like wool,
 scattering frost like ashes.
¹⁷**God scatters hail like bread crumbs.
 Who can stand against God's cold?**
¹⁸The LORD sends forth the word and melts them;
 the wind blows, and the waters flow.

¹⁹**God declares the word to Jacob,
statutes and judgments to Israel.**

²⁰The LORD has not done so to any other nation;
they do not know God's judgments. Hallelujah!

SECOND READING: Ephesians 1:3-14

L: A reading from Ephesians.

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

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.

L: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia. Alleluia.

GOSPEL: John 1:[1-9] 10-18

P: The holy gospel according to John.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

[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.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Silence for meditation

HYMN OF THE DAY *Of the Father's Love Begotten* (ELW 295)

1 Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.

2 Oh, that birth forever blessed, when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer, first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.

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

A: 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.

A: 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.

A: 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.

A: 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.

A: 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 (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

C: Your mercy is great.

A: 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.

A: You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith (*especially*). 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.

P: 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.

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.**

SENDING

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

BLESSING

P: 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.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Postlude

Announcements

We extend our sympathies to family of Denise Taylor who died on Tuesday, December 29 at Williamsport Hospital due to complications of COVID.

Remember in prayer: Rowen Aldridge, Betty and Jim Allen, Luke Antolick, Mary Bower, Bob Braucht, Cindy Cummings, Dawn Hauser, Dave Kuehl, Ralph Lehman, Sara Leighow, Caleb Leone, Ruth Lupold, David Mitchell, Bob and Phyllis Moriarity, Kathy Neal, Rev. Donald and Ruth Nice, Jack Rishel, Joann Rishel, Ben Saar, Jane Shaffer, Rev. Gary Shumway, John Truax, Jillian Waldman, and all of our shut-ins; the safety of our military troops around the world (Mark Baier, Jade Cordrey, Paul Laidacker, Kenny Leitch, Maddison Myers, Tyler O'Neal, Adam Shaffer, Aaron Stabley, Paul St. James, Jenna White); Everyone affected by the fires on the West Coast; Family Promise and the homeless in our counties. Bishop Eaton, our Presiding Bishop; and Bishop Collins, Bishop of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. For our Companion Synod in Liberia and Ansbach-Wurzburg, Germany; our sister church, St. Wunibald in Heidenheim, Germany and for the New Love Center as it seeks to build a new food hub.

Epiphany Service that was scheduled for January 6 has been cancelled.

The Lutheran Church **Women's Prayer Chain** is a vital ministry of St. John Lutheran. Anyone in need of prayers is asked to contact any of the following persons:

Gloria Ely – 570-873-3597
Sarah Davidson - 570-398-0659
Joyce Braucht - 570-398-2852

Giving Plus+ Download the “Giving Plus+” app from your app store for your cell phone. Also available on our web site. Enter your email, make up a password, and walk through the choices to give the church an electronic donation by check or debit/credit card. People were asking if they could give electronically by debit/credit card.

Give+ Text: Simply send a text message to 570-865-1101 with the amount you would like to contribute. Within a few minutes, you'll be sent a text with a link to register. Click on the link and enter your cardholder name and credit or debit card information. Once your registration is complete, you will receive a text verification and a receipt of your donation via email.

Church Envelopes - Please call the church office Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday at 570.398.1676 to arrange pick up or drop off of your 2021 offering envelopes. Thank you

Upper Room and The Word and Season - If you would like the January edition of either they are located on the table by the Thompson St. entrance. Please call the church office at 570.398.1676 to arrange distribution. Thank you.

Annual Reports - A reminder to the chairs of all ministries of St. John Lutheran – your annual reports must be submitted to Molly by January 10 to be included in the annual report to the congregation at the annual congregation report due at the end of the month. Thank you

THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

Sunday, January 3, 2021 *Second Sunday of Christmas*
9:00 a.m. Worship Service on Facebook
2:00 p.m. Catechism 7th and 8th Commandments
7:00 p.m. AA meeting

Tuesday, January 5, 2021
7:00 p.m. Council - *Installation of 2021 Council*
7:30 p.m. A.A. and N. A. meetings

Wednesday, January 6, 2021
10:00 a.m. Prayer Trinity Epsicopal

Thursday, January 7, 2021
4:00 p.m. Pack boxes

Friday, January 8, 2021
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Food Distribution

Sunday, January 10, 2021 *1st Sunday after the Epiphany*
9:00 a.m. Worship Service on Facebook
7:00 p.m. AA meeting