



***Welcome to
St. Paul Lutheran Church
Child Development Center and Pre-School
Rev. Dr. George R. Qualley, D.R.S., Ph.D., Pastor***

December 15, 2024

Luke 3:7 KJV

Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

St. Paul
Lutheran



Taylor, TX
LCMC

***Welcome to
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REJOICE
IN THE LORD ALWAYS

PHILIPPIANS 4:4

WELCOME

WE'RE GLAD YOU JOINED US



lcmc

Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ

INTRODUCTION

Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

**LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH PRAYER –
Third Sunday of Advent**

Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away.

Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
alive in the world,
reviving creation,
arriving soon.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy,
we confess that we have sinned.
**We trust earthly powers and human
authority alone.**
We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

God of might,
we confess that we have sinned.
We have turned away from our neighbors.
We have trusted false promises.

God in our midst,
we confess that we have sinned.
We plead: come to us.
Bring your mercy to birth in us.

A righteous branch springs forth:
it is Christ the Lord, our Savior,
in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy.
By the power of the Holy Spirit,
receive the grace and forgiveness of God
through + Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.
Amen.

Gathering Hymn

“He Came Down”

Hymn # 253

**1 He came down that we may
have love;
he came down that we may
have love;**

Hymn # 253

**he came down that we may
have love;
hallelujah forevermore.**

Hymn # 253

**2 He came down that we may
have light;
he came down that we may
have light;**

Hymn # 253

**he came down that we may
have light;
hallelujah forevermore.**

Hymn # 253

**3 He came down that we may
have peace;
he came down that we may
have peace;**

Hymn # 253

**he came down that we may
have peace;
hallelujah forevermore.**

Hymn # 253

**Final He came down that we
may have joy;
he came down that we may
have joy;**

Hymn # 253

**he came down that we may
have joy;
hallelujah forevermore.**

Hymn # 253

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

In peace, let us pray to the Lord

Lord, have mercy.

*For the peace from above, and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord*

Lord, have mercy.

*For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being
of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us
pray to the lord*

Lord, have mercy.

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

Lord, have mercy

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord
A-men.

THIS IS THE FEAST

***This is the feast of victory
for our God.***

Alleluia, alleluia

(sung twice)

***Worthy is Christ,
the Lamb who was slain
whose blood set us free
to be people of God***

***Power, riches, wisdom, and
strength,
and honor, blessing, and glory
are his***

***This is the feast of victory
for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia***

(sung twice)

***Sing with all the people of God,
and join in the hymn of all
creation:***

***Blessing, honor, glory, and might
be to God and the Lamb forever.
Amen.***

***This is the feast of victory
for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia***

(sung twice)

***For the Lamb who was slain
has begun his reign. Alleluia.***

***This is the feast of victory
for our God.
Alleluia, alleluia***

(sung twice)

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: Zephaniah 3:14-20

The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against
you,

he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;
you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The LORD, your God, is in your midst,

a warrior who gives victory;

he will rejoice over you with gladness,

he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing

¹⁸as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise
and renown in all the earth.

²⁰At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the LORD.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalmody Isaiah 12:2-6

In your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (Isa. 12:6)

² Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,
for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might,
and has become my salvation.

³ **With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.**

⁴ And you will say in that day:

Give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name;
make known the deeds of the LORD among the
nations;

proclaim that this name is exalted.

⁵ **Sing praises to the LORD, who has
done gloriously;**

let this be known in all the earth.

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

SECOND READING: Philippians 4:4-7

Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns with the hope that they will experience God's joy and peace.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your

requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia.

Lord, to who shall we go?

***You have the words
of eternal Life.***

Alleluia.

GOSPEL

The Holy Gospel according to Luke 3:7-18

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: Luke 3:7-18

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you."
¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.



CHILDREN'S
SERMON

Sermon

Rev. Dr. George R. Qualley



Hymn of the Day

“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”

Hymn # 240

**¹ Light one candle to watch for
Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall bring salvation to
Israel,
God fulfills the promise.**

Hymn # 240

**2 Light two candles to watch for
Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall feed the flock like a
shepherd,
gently lead them homeward.**

Hymn # 240

**³ Light three candles to watch
for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
Lift your heads and lift high the
gateway
for the King of glory.**

Hymn # 240

**Final Light four candles to watch
for Messiah:**

let the light banish darkness.

**He is coming, tell the glad
tidings.**

Let your lights be shining!

Hymn # 240

With the whole church let us confess our faith.

CREED

The Nicene Creed

**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

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

A brief silence.

God who reforms, fill your church with courage to do your will. Empower your people in taking risks that bear fruit. Raise up leaders who will proclaim the good news. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God who creates, you hold in balance diverse ecosystems. Encourage efforts to protect wild lands from devastation. Care for animals and people in the path of destructive fires, storms, and other disasters. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God who leads, this world cries out for true justice. Guide legislatures, judges, and lawyers in actions steeped in love and restoration. Increase the desire to advocate for all who are confronted with discrimination and oppression. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God who embraces, help us notice the places where your people are hurting or sick (especially). Show your compassion and remember your people in love. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God who abides, you dwell among the people of this congregation. Deepen our relationships with one another, and make us aware of the diverse talents and gifts present here. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

We pray for all our military, especially those deployed. We keep in our prayers all the Wounded Warriors that have returned home to heal. We pray for our missionaries; for Cheryl Kruckemeyer our missionary in Tanzania, for Ed and Karen in South Asia serving with the World Mission Prayer League, and for our sister congregations at St. John Lutheran Church in Thrall, Texas and Emmanuel's Table in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Bless and protect all our local nurses, doctors, healthcare workers and first responders, our students, teachers and school administrators. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God of all wisdom, you hold the whole world in your hands. Protect and nurture your creation and help your church to steward well all that you entrust to our care. By the power of your Holy Spirit, guide the District Council of LCMC Texas and give them wisdom as they steward your call for us to multiply disciples and churches. Today we also give you thanks for Holy Cross in Yoakum, Texas and their interim pastor, Rusty Bailey. We pray for their discernment in the call process. Bless their work for your Kingdom's sake. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God who consoles, we thank you for the time we have had with loved ones who have died. Comfort us with the promise of everlasting life in you. Lord, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

*The Lord be with you
And also with You*

Lift up your hearts

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

***It is right to give our thanks
and praise***

It is indeed right, our duty and our
joy...

...we praise your name and join their
unending hymn:

***Holy, holy, holy Lord,
Lord God of power and might,
heaven 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.***

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.

Do this for the remembrance of me.

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

THE 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.**

COMMUNION

*Holy Communion is offered both in the center aisle line
and at the altar rail.*

Lamb of God

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.***

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.***

***Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace.***

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

SENDING

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you
peace.

Amen.

Sending Song

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

Hymn # 290

[Refrain]

**Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and
ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!**

Hymn # 290

**1 While shepherds kept their
watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light.**

[Refrain]

Hymn # 290

[Refrain]

**Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and
ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!**

Hymn # 290

**2 The shepherds feared and
trembled
when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth.**

[Refrain]

Hymn # 290

[Refrain]

**Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and
ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!**

Hymn # 290

**Final Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn.**

[Refrain]

Hymn # 290

[Refrain]

**Go tell it on the mountain,
over the hills and
ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain
that Jesus Christ is born!**

Hymn # 290

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.

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