

**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World  
and  
St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church  
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***Holy Communion Service  
Third Sunday of Advent  
December 14, 2025***

## PRELUDE

played by organist

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CHOIR INTROIT

## OPENING HYMN

LBW [Green Book] # 87

*“Hail to the Lord’s Anointed”*

## INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father, the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

## GREETING

P Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the promised gifts of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

C And also with you.

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the Holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

C Amen.

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

C Long-expected God, we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We become impatient while waiting, and weary of keeping awake. We are hesitant to love all others as you love us. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God’s timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

**P** God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. In Christ ✠ we are freed and forgiven, saved by his grace. He is our Savior and Redeemer.

**C** **Amen.**

### **Prayer of the Day**

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

## **BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

**Congregation sings verse 3**

***“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”***

### **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**P** Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. Bless us as this light grows and gives hope in our sorrow and sighing. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Allow your light to shine into our lives and hearts.

**C** **Amen.**

*Light 3 candles.*

**Congregation sings verse 3 of “Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”, again**

# **WE HEAR GOD'S HOLY WORD PROCLAIMED**

## **Introduction**

*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 First Lesson is from Isaiah chapter 35 verses 1-10**

*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.*

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus <sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and shouting.

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.

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup> Say 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."

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;  
<sup>6</sup> then 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;  
<sup>7</sup> the 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.  
<sup>8</sup> A 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.  
<sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
<sup>10</sup> And 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.

**C Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10**

*The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)*

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

## **The Second Lesson is from James chapter 5 verses 7–10**

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

- <sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, 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. <sup>8</sup> You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!
- <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

**C Thanks be to God**

## **GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:**

*(Congregation stands and sings “Open Our Eyes” following the Second Lesson.)*

### **The Gospel Lesson from Matthew chapter 11 verses 2–11**

*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.*

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

<sup>7</sup> As 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? <sup>8</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is the one about whom it is written,

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

<sup>11</sup> “Truly 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.”

A Reading from the Gospel according to Matthew.

**C Praise to you, O Christ**

## **SERMON**

The Rev. Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus  
*“A Man for All Reasons”*

## **CHOIR ANTHEM**

*“He Came Down”*

## **THE NICENE CREED**

**C 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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.**

**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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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.**

*\*the word “catholic” in the creed means “universal.” It is the original word used as this profession of faith was adopted by the early Christian Church.*



## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

L ... God of grace,  
C hear our prayer.

**OFFERTORY**                      *“Awake!, Awake, and Greet the New Morn”*

### Offering Prayer

P Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. May the gifts we bring before you strengthen your Church and its mission. Now, through this holy meal, satisfy our hunger and thirst for your love and grace, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.

C Amen.

## THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

### THE LORD’S PRAYER

LBW [Green Book] Page 71

### Invitation to Communion

P Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised. This is the Table of the Lord. All is ready and everyone is always welcome.

*Holy Communion Distribution (The Congregation is invited to come forward to receive Holy Communion or a blessing. If you are unable to come to the altar, Holy Communion will be brought to you in the pew. We believe Christ is truly present in, with, and under the bread and wine/juice. Those who are baptized and share that belief are always welcome at this table. Please speak to the Pastor if you have any questions. The inside circle of glasses contains white non-alcoholic grape juice.)*

## **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**C** God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. Amen.

## **Blessing**

**P** May God who comes among us, Father, ✠ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant us patience in our waiting, peace in the darkneses around us, and good news to share today and always.

**C** Amen.

## **CLOSING HYMN**

**WOV [Blue Book] # 626**

***“People Look East”***

## **Dismissal**

**P** Go in peace. Let us trust always that God is near.

**C** Thanks be to God.

## **POSTLUDE**

**played by organist**

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**Interim Pastor:** The Rev. Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus

**Organist and Choir Director:** Sharon Heck

**Flowers are given by:** *Advent Environment*

## **THOSE WHO SERVE TODAY**

<b><i>Presider:</i></b>	The Rev. Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus
<b><i>Organist:</i></b>	Sharon Heck
<b><i>Holy Communion Assistant</i></b>	Carmen Leslie
<b><i>Acolyte</i></b>	Sylvia Makus
<b><i>Reader</i></b>	Carol Costello
<b><i>Prayer Leader</i></b>	Rhoda Finck
<b><i>Financial Team</i></b>	Wendy Alfageme and Susan Avila

## **THIS WEEK**

<b>TODAY:</b>	Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall
<b>Wednesday:</b>	3:00 p.m. Advent Gathering and Supper
<b>Next Sunday:</b>	10:30 a.m. Holy Communion Service
<i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>	

### **Redeemer Finance: Monthly Offering through December 7**

Budgeted Monthly Expense	\$8,250.00
Offering	<u>\$3,922.00</u>
<b>Needed for Budget</b>	<b>\$4,328.00</b>

*We have also received a donation from Sa-Rang Church for the use of our facilities and cleaning.*

## **CHURCH COUNCIL**

**President:** Kay Pushman, **Vice President:** Wendy Alfageme,  
**Secretary:** Nancy Anderson, **Treasurer:** Doris Weinert  
**Members at Large:** Susan Avila, Carol Costello, Sandy Langdale,  
Carmen Leslie, Betty Lucero, Sylvia Makus, Linda Peters and  
Michael Vanvales

## **REMEMBER IN PRAYER**

**Barry**, Jean, Kathy, Wendy, Beverly, Nancy, Evelyn, Shirlene, Carol, Mickey, Evelyn, Gloria, Christa, Alice, Barbara, **Cedric**, Lucy, Karen, Kelly, Raymond, Marilyn, Brian, **Carl**, **Jessica**, Carol, Rose, Sandra, Elaine, Barbara, Betty, **Nancy**, **Phyllis**, Sylvia, Flo, Eileen, **Erich**, Leslie, Linda, **Ronnie**, **Kay**, Violet, Linda, Ron, Collette, **Lisa**, Patty, **Barbara**, Joan, **Susan**, Kathy, **Juanita**, Clarence, Debbie, Joan, Doris, Linda, **Bruce**, Alma, Martha, Marianne, Robert, Laura, Jim, **Loretta**, Ray, Patty, Delrie, Bill, Betty, Lorna, M. Teresa, Joan, Mike, Frankie, Donna, Ernie, Eileen, Darleen, Sharon, Danuta, Lynne, Ethan, Kurt, Brinly, McCall, Kathy, Nayleen, Nicole, Donald, Maria, Andy, Owen, Tom, Anastasia, Claire, Fran, Chris, Kyle, Michele, Wes, Sam, Kolt, Brigid, Joanna, Dale, Tom, Rosalia, Elaine, Rachel, Mike, Jesus, **Richard**, **Kelsey**, Margaret, Steven, Dian, EK Song, Linda, Ronni, Sibonay, Keith, **Wendy**, Carmen, Pyongyang, Leslie, **Ann**, **George**, **Margie**, **Sung-ho Kim**, **John**, **Jann**, **Kathy**, **Toni**, **Andrew**, and **Bob**.

Please contact the church to add people to the prayer list.

*Please pray for those affected by disastrous floods, hurricanes, and wildfires, and for first responders during devastating calamities.*

*Please pray for our Presiding Bishop, Yahiel Curry, and local Bishop, David Nagler of the ELCA, and our Presiding Bishop, Sean Rowe, and local Bishop John Taylor of the ECUSA. We also pray for the victims of the Ukrainian/Russian, Israel/Hamas conflicts, the civil strife in Africa, and the victims and families of all violence and natural disasters.*

*Gracious God, none who trust in your Son can be separated from your love. Give to those who live alone peace and contentment in their solitude, hope and fulfillment in their love of you, and joy and companionship in their relations with others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## Announcements

- † Welcome to everyone this morning, and especially to our guests and visitors. Please join us after the Service for Fellowship in the Fellowship Hall.
- † Please take a moment and fill out the attendance slip found in the rack in the pews. Please place it in the offertory plate. Visitors, especially, are invited to fill out a card found in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate. Thank you!
- † The Sa-Rang Korean Church have offered to provide our members with a box lunch as we depart our December 21 Service. We are grateful that they have chosen our beautiful church to worship, and thank them for their generosity.
- † We wanted to remind everyone that we are continuously collecting food donations of canned and boxed foods for the hungry. Thank you to all those who have brought in food over the last few weeks. This food is donated to Lutheran Social Services in Orange County to help our wider community.
- † We ask you to listen carefully to the names read during the Prayers of the People (**bolded** in the prayer list) and read over the Prayer List in the bulletin. Please let us know when we can remove them. The prayer list is meant for additional prayers when someone is going through a special need for more prayer. Examples: surgeries, cancer, heart concerns, falls, broken bones, hospital stays, accidents, hospice, and such immediate conditions in need of extra prayers. **We are planning to clear the Prayer List and begin anew with the beginning of the year. Please make your prayer request again to be included. We would like the first and last name of the person and your name if you are requesting prayers for someone else.**
- † We will be gathering on Wednesday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. for our final Advent program, followed by a meal together at 4:00 p.m.

- ✝ If you would like to add beauty to our altar beginning on December 14, there is a sheet to sign up for poinsettias. The cost for each plant is \$10. Please complete the dedication line, and it will be included in our bulletin.
- ✝ Our Christmas Eve Service is December 24 at 10:30 followed with brunch. Please join us for fellowship on this joyful day. If you are able to help with the event, there is a signup sheet.
- ✝ Forms for the Memorial Cross Wall are on the table in the back of the sanctuary. If you wish to honor a friend or family member in this way, please fill out a form.
- ✝ Please let us know if you are having medical issues, so we can offer pastoral care and our prayers during your difficult times. Speak to a member of the Church Council or call the office number: (562) 598-8697.
- ✝ The elevator is working. Please see Kay Pushman, Wendy Alfageme or Sylvia Makus to use the elevator, even if you have used it before.
- ✝ The **NEW 2026 Flower Chart** is available for sign-ups in the entryway Please sign your name, *and include any dedication you would like printed in the bulletin.* **The cost for the two altar bouquets is still \$30. We are now asking you to purchase both bouquets.** If you only want one-or none for your personal use, our Outreach Committee will be happy to deliver the remaining bouquet(s) to someone on our prayer list. Thank you for your support in sharing our love and care for those going through difficult times. A card will be delivered with your name as the person donating the flowers. If you take the flowers in the plastic holders, please return the holders. We try to reuse them and are currently out of them.
- ✝ Call for the Leisure World On-Call Bus Service up to three days in advance if you are having issues with it in regard to getting to Church on Sundays. (562) 472-1367 is the dedicated line.

✝ Printed copies of our current newsletter and midweek communiqué are available on the table in the back of the sanctuary. The newsletter is also online on our website at: [www.redeemersealbeach.com](http://www.redeemersealbeach.com). They are both sent out via email, if we have your email address. If you are not receiving the newsletter by email, or the midweek communiqué from the pastor, please put your email address on the attendance sheet in the pew pocket and put it in the collection plate, so we can add you or correct the address we have.