

**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 15, 2024***

PRELUDE

played by organist

PIANO DUETS

Cedric Elmer and Sharon Heck

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHOIR INTROIT

OPENING HYMN

ELW # 257

“O Come. O Come, Emmanuel” Verses 1, 6, 7

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, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

C **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

C God of mercy, **we confess that we have sinned when we trust earthly powers and human authority more than you. We confess that we become fearful and cling to false comforts and promises. Merciful God, we confess we have not always loved you with our whole heart, soul, and mind; and we have failed to love and care for our neighbors as you ask of us. We seek your forgiveness. Come near to us. Bring us the assurance of your mercy and grace.**

P 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.

C **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

C 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.**

BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Third Sunday of Advent

P We praise you, O God, for the wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light three candles today, strengthen our hearts as we await and watch for the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve others in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

C Amen.

Light three candles.

Congregation sings verse 1-3

[as the candles are lit]

“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”

WE HEAR GOD’S HOLY WORD PROCLAIMED

Introduction

Rejoicing and praising God is the theme for this Third Sunday in Advent. The nearness of the God in every circumstance is cause for our joy. The coming of one “more powerful” than John the Baptist is good news, and cause for our exultation, as we are assured we are saved by his grace and love. We are called to prepare, to wait, to watch.

The First Lesson is from Zephaniah chapter 3 verses 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.

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

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

¹⁵ The 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.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:
“Do not fear, O Zion;

do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The 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

¹⁸ as on a day of festival.”

I will remove disaster from you,

so that you will not bear reproach for it.

¹⁹ I 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.

²⁰ At 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.

C Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6

In your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (Is. 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, for he 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.

The Second Lesson is from Philippians chapter 4 verses 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.

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I will say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

(Congregation stands and sings “Thy Word” before the Gospel.)

The Gospel Lesson is from Luke chapter 3 verses 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.

⁷ John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?

⁸ Therefore, bear fruits worthy of repentance, and 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. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, “What, then, should we do?” ¹¹ In reply he said to them, “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone

who has none, and whoever has food must do likewise.” ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, “Teacher, what should we do?” ¹³ He said to them, “Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.” ¹⁴ Soldiers 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.”

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah,

¹⁶ John 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 strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His 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.”

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

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

C Praise to you, O Christ

SERMON

The Rev. Murray Finck

*“What Shall We Do While We **Watch**?”*

CHOIR ANTHEM

“Awake, Awake, and Great the New Morn”

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 ... Lord, in your mercy,

C let there be light!

OFFERTORY

“In Thee is Gladness”

Offering Prayer

P Creator God, you made this world, and the incomprehensible universe, and now you draw near to us to offer us this spiritual food. Receive our gifts, that they may support your mission. We praise you for the gift of your great sacrifice, in, with, and under the bread and wine. Strengthen us with this heavenly meal that we may live each day in hope and expectation of the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE LORD'S PRAYER

LBW [Green Book] Page 71

Invitation to Communion

P God feeds us with love and mercy. This is the table of our Lord Jesus. All are always welcome.

Holy Communion Distribution (The Congregation is invited by the ushers 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 grape juice.)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

C Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread and the cup of salvation. We thank you for being God among us, for loving us and leading us to your peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy and light, then sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and be with us as we feed the hungry and love one another in your name. Amen.

Blessing

P God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and bringer of light, God, our hope for the journey, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, ✠ bless us and keep us now and forever.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

[Blue Book] WOV # 626

“People, Look East”

Dismissal

P Go in peace. Wait and watch, and prepare the way for Emmanuel. Let there be light.

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: *Poinsettias. Dale, Wendy, Linda, and Nancy. (No Bouquets available; only Poinsettias.)*

THOSE WHO SERVE TODAY

Presider: The Rev. Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus

Organist: Sharon Heck

Holy Communion Assistant: Carmen Leslie

Acolyte Sylvia Makus

Reader: Rhoda Finck

Prayer Leader: Nancy Anderson

Financial Team: Sylvia Makus and Kay Pushman

THIS WEEK

Wednesday: 3:00 p.m. Advent Reflection Study and Supper

Next Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion Service

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Redeemer Finance: December Offering through December 8

Budgeted Monthly Expense	\$7,308.00
Offering	<u>\$4,566.00</u>
Needed for Budget	\$2,742.00

CHURCH COUNCIL

President Kay Pushman, **Vice-President** Wendy Alfageme,

Secretary Nancy Anderson, **Treasurer** Phyllis Mackey, **Finance**

Chair Doris Weinert

Members at Large, Sandy Langdale, Carmen Leslie, Betty Lucero, Sylvia Makus, 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, Dick, Marilyn, Brian, Carl, Jessica, Carol, Rose, Sandra, Elaine, Carmen, Barbara, Betty, Nancy, Phyllis, Sylvia, Flo, Eileen, Erich, Leslie, Linda, Ronnie, Kay, Violet, Linda, Ron, Collette, Lisa, Patty, Barbara, Joan, Dee, 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, Karla, Sands, Gloria, Tom, Rosalia, Wendy, Elaine, Rachel, Mike, Jesus, Richard, Kelsey, Mike, Ginny, Christina, Margaret, Steven, Dian, and EK Song. Please contact the church to add people to the prayer list.

Please pray for our Bishop David Nagler, (ELCA) and Bishop John Taylor (ECUSA), the victims of the Ukrainian/Russian, Israel/Hamas conflicts, the civil strife in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and 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 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!
- † Everyone is invited downstairs to the Fellowship Hall for coffee, treats, and fellowship (we have tea, too!). You are encouraged to continue to wear your name tags at fellowship so we can greet one another by name. The basket will be available downstairs so your name tag can be collected and ready to wear next week.
- † Please join us on Wednesday, December 18 for an Advent Reflection Study and Supper at 3:00 p.m. and our Christmas Eve Service and Brunch with a Cookie Exchange on December 24 at 10:30 a.m.! The Bible Study will **NOT** meet on Wednesdays, until January 8.
- † We are planning to acceptance of new members! Please speak to Bishop Finck or Kay Pushman if you are interested in officially joining Redeemer Lutheran Church or St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church. Please also pick up a member's form from the entryway and return it as soon as possible.
- † Forms for the Memorial Cross Wall are in the Narthex if you wish to honor a friend or family member in this way.
- † 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.

- † Call on Tuesdays, after 5:00 pm, for the Leisure World Bus if you are having issues with it in regard to getting to Church on Sundays. (562) 431-6586 extension 2379.
- † If you are having a little problem with hearing on Sundays, please remember that there are speakers in the ceiling light fixtures so sitting closer to one of those may help. We are looking into improving the sound system for the Church Sanctuary.
- † The Flower Chart is available for sign-ups in the entryway. One bouquet is \$15.00. Both are \$30.00. Please include any dedication for your flower request when signing up or include a note beforehand if there is a dedication. If you take the flowers in the plastic holders, please return the holders. We try to reuse them and are currently out of them.
- † Printed copies of our current newsletter are available in the entryway. It is online on our website at: www.redeemersealbeach.com. It is 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.