

**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World and
St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church
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*Celebration, Worship, and Communion Service
Third Sunday of Advent
December 17, 2023*

PRELUDE

played by organist

PIANO DUETS

Cedric Elmer and Sharon Heck

“O Come All Ye Faithful”

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING HYMN

LBW [Green Book] # 25

“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”

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, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

C **Amen.**

P God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

C **Everlasting God, you love justice, and you are displeased with our wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that often make us reluctant to work against oppression. We become complicit in systems of exploitation. We tend to choose comfort over courage. We have become careless with creation’s bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.**

P Hear these words of assurance: God clothes us with garments of salvation and covers us with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of + Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. God’s covenant is eternal, and God’s blessing rests upon us all.

C **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

C Stir up the wills of your faithful people, **Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Third Sunday of Advent

Use this blessing when lighting three candles.

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.

Congregation sings

Verses 1,2, & 3 [while Candles are lit]

“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”

WE HEAR GOD'S WORD PROCLAIMED

INTRODUCTION

"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. The third part of our six-part series takes us into the realities that Mary and Joseph faced as God called both of them to usher in the advent of the promised Messiah, the Savior of the World.

The First Lesson is from Isaiah chapter 61 verses 1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

- ¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
- ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
- ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of
mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD,
to display his glory.
- ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
my whole being shall exult in my God;
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots,
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise
to spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God

PSALM: Psalm 126

The LORD has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3)

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.

²Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy.

Then they said among the nations,

"The LORD has done great things for them."

³The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.

⁴Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses of the Negeb.

⁵Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

⁶Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.

The Second Lesson is from 1 Thessalonians chapter 5 verses 16-24

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God

Holy Gospel: Matthew 1 and Luke 1 & 2 (Selected Verses)

Two passages from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke offer us an insight into that with which Joseph and Mary were dealing as Mary carried the Son of God in her womb. As we continue to read the stories of the nativity, infancy, and childhood of Jesus, today we will hear about the reaction of Joseph when he learned his fiancée was expecting a baby. We will hear about his dream when he too was visited by an Angel, and how this man of faith then reacted to a very complex set of circumstances that had come the way of this betrothed couple. The time span of this part of the story is the final six months of Mary's pregnancy.

Matthew 1: ¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had

resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son.

Luke 2: ¹In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child.

L The Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ

SERMON

Bishop Murray Finck

"For the Love of Mary"

CHOIR ANTHEM

"I Want to Walk As a Child of the Light"

APOSTLES' CREED

L I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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 THE PEOPLE

L ... Merciful God,
C receive our prayer.

OFFERTORY

“People, Look East”

OFFERING PRAYER

P God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.
C Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE LORD'S PRAYER

LBW [Green Book] Page 71

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together. Come, take your place at the table.

Communion Distribution (The Congregation is invited to come forward by the ushers to receive Communion. If you are unable to come to the altar, Communion will be brought to you in the pew. All baptized and believing Christians are invited to the table. Anyone with any questions can speak to the Pastor. The inside circle of glasses contains grape juice.)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

C Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

BLESSING

P The God of peace bless us, the love of Christ sustain us in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit + remain upon us now and forever.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

LBW [Green Book] # 30

“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”

DISMISSAL

P Let us go in peace, keeping awake, waiting, watching.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

played by organist

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Worship Coordinator: Jerry Brady (714) 534-2673

Organist: Sharon Heck

Flowers are given by: *No Requests.*

THOSE WHO SERVE TODAY

President: Bishop Murray Finck
Communion Assistant Carmen Leslie
Reader / Prayer Leader: Nancy Anderson
Financial Team: Kay Pushman and Doris Weinert

THIS WEEK

Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Sanctuary Communion Service
**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT and
CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATION**

Redeemer Finance: November Offering through December 3, 2023

Budgeted Monthly Expense	\$8,341.00
Offering	<u>\$9,700.00</u>
Needed to meet expenses	\$1,359.00

We received a very generous one-time gift from one of our members. We truly appreciate your kindness to the Church.

CHURCH COUNCIL

President Jerry Brady, **Vice-President** Wendy Alfageme, **Secretary** Nancy Anderson, **Treasurer** Phyllis Mackey, **Finance Chair** Kay Pushman

Members at Large: Sandy Langdale, Carmen Leslie, Betty Lucero, Sylvia Makus, Michael Vanvales, and Anne Walshe

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Jean, Kathy, Wendy, Beverly, Dena, Nancy, Evelyn, Shirlene, Jerry, Dondi, Carol, Mickey, Evelyn, Gloria, Christa, Alice, Barbara, Cedric, Lucy, Karen, Kelly, Raymond, Dick, Marilyn, Brian, Carl, Jessica, Carol, Rose, Ken, Sandra, Elaine, Carmen, Barbara, Betty, Nancy, Phyllis, Sylvia, Gil, Flo, Eileen, Erich, Leslie, Linda, Ronnie, Kay, Violet, Linda, Ron, Collette, Lisa, Patty, Barbara, Joan, Dee, Susan, Anita, Norma, Lathy, Juanita, Clarence, Debbie, Joan, Anne, Doris, Linda, Bruce, Alma, Martha, Marianne, Robert, Laura, Jim, Loretta, Ray, Patty, Delrie, Bill, Betty, Lorna, M. Teresa, Joan, Mike, Frankie, Donna, Ernie, Eileen, Darlene, Sharon, Danota, Lynne, Ethan, Kurt, Brinly, McCall, Kathy, Nayleen, Nicole, Donald, Maria, Andy, Owen, Tom, Anastasia, Claire, Fran, Chris, Kyle, Michele, Bill, Wes, Sam, Kolt, Maeve, Brigid, Joanna, Dale, Karla, Sands, Gloria, Tom, Rosalia, and Wendy.

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 and Israel/Hamas conflicts, 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 everyone this morning, and especially to our guests and visitors.
- ✝ Thank you to Bishop Murray Finck for Presiding for today's Service. He continues exploring with the congregation an in-depth understanding of the nativity, infancy, and childhood of Jesus. We are honored that Bishop Finck will be with us for Sundays through the first Sunday of the new year.
- ✝ Barbara Long is an avid baker especially at Christmas, and bakes much more than she can use. She has offered to have a Bake Sale Fundraiser on December 31 at our coffee hour. A perfect place to purchase homemade goodies for your New Year's celebrations.
- ✝ We are again trying to plan an acceptance of new members! Bishop Finck has agreed to accept new members for us so please speak to him. We need to plan a date so please pick up a member's form from the entryway and return it as soon as possible.
- ✝ At this time, we are encouraging people to consider wearing a mask again, especially in Church, due to the spike in Covid-19 cases. Initial symptoms are headache and fever. Please consult with your doctor if you are experiencing these or other symptoms. We continue to have masks available in the entryway for your use. We need to join together to keep everyone safe and healthy.
- ✝ Please take a moment and fill out the attendance slip found in the rack in the pews. Please place it in the offertory plate. Thank you!
- ✝ The NEW 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.
- ✝ Printed copies of our current newsletter are available in the entryway. It is online on our website at: www.redeemerasealbeach.com. It is sent out via email, if we have your email address. If you are not receiving it, please let us know so we can confirm your address.