

From your Council President – November 30, 2021

I hope you all had a very Happy Thanksgiving and could enjoy the time with family and friends. In addition to the good food and games, there was time to shop and begin decorating for Christmas. My neighbors took advantage of the nice weather to get their lights up and put inflatables in the yard. Our street looks transformed and is especially nice when it gets dark, and everyone gets home. Yet another reason to be thankful.

Our church looks transformed too. The “Elves” of the Worship Arts Committee had brought out the blue Advent colors, banners, lights, and messages. Last Sunday we observed the new church year and the beginning of Advent with a service using the “Everlasting Light” liturgy and lighting the first candle of advent (Love). Recordings of the service may be viewed on YouTube at; <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiHbmFBDWLG1W-jcI8jRhOQ>

This coming Sunday we will celebrate by lighting the second advent candle (Light) and hearing special music from our choir. Please join us if you are able to **at 10:00 AM on Sunday, December 5, 2021**, in the sanctuary. We are still following our Covid protocols of wearing masks, sitting socially distant, and not singing from the pews.

As we move through the Advent season and prepare to welcome the Christ child on Christmas Eve, do not forget the projects your church is working on for year end. Weekly bible study is back on Thursdays, beginning on December 2nd. Contact Carolyn or Janet in the office for details.

The Faith In Action group is collecting gifts for the families we have sponsored so if you have a tag or two you have taken do not forget to get the items in to Gae and Suzanne by December 12th.

Our rotation for Interfaith Hospitality starts up again on December 19th. Please contact Doug Odell if you can assist with the meals during the week.

The Council is preparing the church budget for next year and needs the various committee estimates back by December 8th. In addition, the annual report will be prepared at year end, and we could use all reports and commentary turned in ASAP to Janet in the church office. An electronic document in Word format is preferred.

Your continued prayers for your church and its leadership are appreciated. Please give thought as to how you can best serve the needs of our transition, discernment regarding our present state and planning the direction of our future mission here at Holy Cross.

Your servant in Christ, Bryan Struve, Council President

**Worshipping at Home with Holy Cross Lutheran Church
December 5, 2021 – Second Sunday in Advent**

INVOCATION

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

We gather in the name of God, the Creator of Light; † Jesus, the Light of the World; and the Holy Spirit, the Light who illumines our path.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In this season of light, let us go before God and confess how our words and actions contribute to the darkness instead of adding to the light.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of Love and Light,

We confess that we are not always the light-bearers you desire us to be. We shine a spotlight on the transgressions of others while trying to keep our own sins hidden in the dark. We burn bridges by being impatient, opinionated, and judgmental. We inflame others by lashing out in anger. We go through our days enveloped in the gloom of fear and doubt. We let our witness become a smoldering ember until it dies out completely.

Forgive us Jesus, the Everlasting Light. Come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel. Teach us to walk as children of light, surrounded by your love, forgiveness, and healing. We ask this in the name of Christ. Amen.

God is light, and in God there is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus † cleanses us from all sin.

Amen.

GREETING

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.

ADVENT KYRIE (AN EXPRESSION OF GOD'S CONSTANT MERCY)

Lord, have mercy on your people. Christ, have mercy on us.
Shine your light into our darkness. Fill us with your holy love.
Be our strength in times of trouble. Set us free from chains that bind.
Breathe new life into our spirits. Purify our hearts and minds.

Kyrie eleison. Christe eleison.
Heal all conflicts between nations. Teach us how to live as one.
Show us how to love our neighbor. Run to those who cry for help.
Word made flesh who lives among us; Christ our Lord, Emmanuel.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

READINGS AND PSALM

Malachi 3:1-4

My messenger is a refiner and purifier

Baruch 5:1-9 (alternate)

The return of scattered Israel

Luke 1:68-79

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us. (*Lk. 1:78*)

Philippians 1:3-11

A harvest of righteousness on the day of Jesus Christ

Luke 3:1-6

Prepare the way of the Lord

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Prepare the way of the Lord.* All flesh shall see the salvation of God. *Alleluia.* (*Luke 3:4, 6*)

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 254 "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

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

OFFERING PRAYER

God of Light, our world is a very dark place. Therefore, we offer the gifts of ourselves, our time, and our resources, trusting you will use them to set the world aglow with your loving presence. May our offerings continue to shine brightly before others so that they may see our good works and give glory to you. We ask this in the name of Christ.

Amen.

✠ GREAT THANKSGIVING

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With thanksgiving we remembered that "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 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 all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. Now we bring to you this

same bread of life and this same cup of blessing, that you may be strengthened through your participation in the body of Christ.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Jesus, our bright Morning Star, we give you thanks that you have fed us well through the bread and wine of your Supper. May it enable us to shine brightly in all the dark places of our world with your love, justice and peace. We ask this in your holy name. **Amen.**

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, Lamb of God.

BLESSING

May Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path. † Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the Way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

A brief silence.

You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. Make our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay preachers confident in their preaching, that their words and our lives witness to your grace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send your Spirit to all living creatures that are endangered. Provide them with shelter and care, and bring us into right relationship with the earth that you create and call good.

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to reach out with compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely, or ill (*especially*). Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We remember your saints, both those publicly celebrated and those more humbly remembered. Confident that your work will be completed, we live in faith until the day of your coming. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.