



**WELCOME IN THE NAME OF
THE CRUCIFIED AND RISEN
JESUS CHRIST!**

Please use and share the following resources so that together we may worship God the Father who created us, God the Son who saved us, and God the Holy Spirit who called us to faith and who continues to call us to love God and neighbor.

Sunday, December 27, 2020, First Sunday Christmas

The psalmist calls on the natural world, celestial bodies, fire and earth, creatures, and all humanity, to praise God. The voices of Simeon and 84-year-old Anna join the chorus today, recognizing what God is doing in Jesus. Simeon's song is often sung after communion, for we have seen God's salvation in the assembled community and have held Jesus in our hands in the bread. Then, like the prophet Anna, we tell of Jesus to all who look for the healing of the world.

PRELUDE

In the Bleak Midwinter
Beverly Kriner, handbell solo

ENTRANCE HYMN

Once in Royal David's City

269

- 1 Once in royal David's city
stood a lowly cattle shed,
where a mother laid her baby
in a manger for his bed:
Mary was that mother mild,
Jesus Christ, her little child.
- 2 He came down to earth from heaven
who is God and Lord of all,
and his shelter was a stable,
and his cradle was a stall;
with the poor and meek and lowly,
lived on earth our Savior holy.
- 3 And our eyes at last shall see him,
through his own redeeming love;
for that child so dear and gentle
is our Lord in heav'n above;
and he leads his children on

to the place where he is gone.

- 4 Not in that poor lowly stable,
with the oxen standing by,
we shall see him; but in heaven,
set at God's right hand on high;
there his children gather round,
bright like stars, with glory crowned.

Text: Cecil Frances Alexander, 1818-1895

GREETING

The presiding minister and the assembly greet each other.

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.**

HYMN OF PRAISE

Angels We Have Heard on High

289

Click the link to view the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians sing the hymn. The words are printed below. [View Association of Lutheran Church Musicians](#)

- 1 Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.

Refrain

Gloria in excelsis Deo;
gloria in excelsis Deo.

- 2 Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heav'nly song? *Refrain*
- 3 Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn king. *Refrain*

Text: French carol; tr. H. F. Hemy, The Crown of Jesus Music, 1864

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, you wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and yet more wonderfully restored it. In your mercy, let us share the divine life of the one who came to share our humanity, Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

READING FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Isaiah 61:10--62:3

- 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.
^{62:1}For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,
and her salvation like a burning torch.
²The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will give.
³You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.

ANTHEM

Holy Child within the Manger
Philip and Beverly Kriner, duet

WOV # 638

GOSPEL

Luke 2:22-40

²²When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, [Joseph and Mary] brought [Jesus] up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹"Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;

³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel."

³³And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too."

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all

who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

SERMON FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

Linda Covert

SERMON

Pastor James Covert

HYMN OF THE DAY

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming

272

- 1 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
as seers of old have sung,
it came, a flow'r so bright,
amid the cold of winter,
when half-spent was the night.
- 2 Isaiah had foretold it,
the rose I have in mind;
with Mary we behold it,
the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
she bore to us a Savior,
when half-spent was the night.
- 3 This flow'r, whose fragrance tender
with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor
the darkness everywhere.
True man, yet very God,
from sin and death he saves us
and lightens ev'ry load.
- 4 O Savior, child of Mary,
who felt our human woe;
O Savior, king of glory,
who dost our weakness know:
bring us at length, we pray,
to the bright courts of heaven
and into endless day.

Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845-1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876-1948, st. 4

APOSTLES CREED

We confess our faith with the whole church using the ancient baptismal creed that summarizes the teaching of the scripture and the apostles.

**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.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God,
who was in the beginning,
who makes a dwelling among us,
who covers us with justice and mercy.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of goodness and lovingkindness,
**we confess that we have sinned against you
and our neighbors.
We have turned away from your invitation to new life.
We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden.
In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins,
those we know and those known only to you,
for the sake of the one who came to live among us,
Jesus Christ, our Savior.**

Amen.

Hear the good news of peace and salvation!
God forgives us all our sins,
not through our own work,
but through ☩ Jesus Christ, made known to all people.
With all who come to the manger,
rejoice in this amazing gift of grace.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. *A brief silence.*

Night and day, all creation praises you, O God. Strengthen your church across nations, denominations, and traditions. Fill us with wisdom, and unify our proclamation of your forgiveness and mercy. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

All creation is holy to you, O God. In this time when the Covid pandemic brings suffering, hardship, and death, we pray for healing, mercy, and comfort. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

The nations are upheld by your hand, O God. Cause righteousness and praise to spring forth, inspiring leaders to serve with compassion and integrity. Send your spirit of discernment upon legislators grappling with complex decisions for the sake of the common good. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Send the spirit of your Son into our hearts, O God. Come quickly to hearts that race with fear, hearts that break with grief, and hearts that long for wholeness, especially all whom we now raise in prayer before you [PAUSE]. Reveal your power to heal and to save. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Adopt us into your family, O God. Bless our elders with the peace and joy of Simeon and Anna. Strengthen those who have retired, those who work in older age, and those in need of income, food, company, or health care. Connect young and old across generations. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Let us depart in peace, O God, according to your word. For all your saints, we give you thanks. Prepare our salvation in the sight of all your witnesses of every time and place. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

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.

PASSING THE PEACE

We greet each other with a nod or gesture of Christian fellowship from a distance, and we invite you to text or email a word of peace to someone.

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you**

BLESSING

Almighty God,
who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary,
proclaimed joy through the angels,
sent the shepherds with good news,
and led the magi by a star,
bless you this day ☩ through the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

282

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold:
"Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heav'n's all-gracious king."
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.
- 2 Still through the cloven skies they come
with peaceful wings unfurled,
and still their heav'nly music floats
o'er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains
they bend on hov'ring wing,
and ever o'er its babel sounds
the blessed angels sing.
- 3 And you, beneath life's crushing load,
whose forms are bending low,
who toil along the climbing way
with painful steps and slow:
look now, for glad and golden hours
come swiftly on the wing;
oh, rest beside the weary road
and hear the angels sing!
- 4 For lo! The days are hast'ning on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when peace shall over all the earth
its ancient splendors fling,

and all the world give back the song
which now the angels sing.

Text: Edmund H. Sears, 1810-1876

POSTLUDE

Hark the Herald Angels Sing

Beverly Kriner and Audrey Christ, Organ/piano duet

arr. Roger Wilson

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CHRISTMAS COMMEMORATIONS

POINSETTIAS GIVEN IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

- ❖ MSG. James C. Bromwell by children and grandchildren
- ❖ Shirley & Wally Lengel by children and grandchildren
- ❖ Richie Wolesschok by Helen & family
- ❖ Dime Messina by Lou Messina
- ❖ Mr. & Mrs. Henry Strouse by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Baessler
- ❖ Mr. & Mrs. A.A. Hebden by Mr. & Mrs. Robert Baessler
- ❖ Loved ones by the Christ family
- ❖ My parents, Charles & Betty Stoops, by Wanda Michalsky
- ❖ My sister, Mary Null, by Wanda Michalsky
- ❖ Shawn C. Daniels by Stanley & Barbara Daniels
- ❖ Susan Healy Morgan by Stanley & Barbara Daniels
- ❖ Steve & Emma Minarick by Stanley & Barbara Daniels
- ❖ Mildred & Wilbert Newcomer by Wayne & Cindy Yeager
- ❖ Ralph & Marian DeLong by Brenda Searle
- ❖ William & Mildred Searle by Brenda Searle
- ❖ Virgil Scott by wife, Barbara, and family
- ❖ Our mother, Sandy Seitzinger by Tanya, Krystal, & Cali
- ❖ Sandy Seitzinger by grandchildren, Danika, Benjamin, Lucas, Max, & Natalie
- ❖ Our Loved ones by Philip & Beverly Kriner

POINSETTIAS GIVEN IN HONOR OF:

- ❖ Our children by Philip & Beverly Kriner
- ❖ Children & grandchildren by Brenda Searle

IN LEIU OF FLOWERS MONEY WAS GIVEN TO FAITH & FAMILIES MINISTRIES IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

- ❖ Bette Ann Miller by her son and grandchildren
- ❖ All our loved ones by the Edwards, Bromwell, and Miller families

IN LEIU OF FLOWERS MONEY WAS GIVEN TO THE MUSIC FUND IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

- ❖ Milton Blank by wife, Nancy Blank

PRAYER LIST

Joyce Freed, Shirley Foose, Lee Miller, Joanna Sirianni Edwards, Ed Freed, Pauline Crawshaw, Karen Tropp, Diane Buffington, Jack Harnock, Marie Harnock, Keith Shoener, Tom Gerber, Kelly Carl, Cheryl Feeser, Leslie R., Mary Beth (Krater) Dinneen, Sam Huff, Stewart Haver, Sue Sigler, Donna Evans, Joan Heckrote, Robert Schwartz, Craig Bracken, Kenny Noecker, Nancy Reese, David Huff, Paul Calderone, Nicholas LaScala, Gail Kunkel, Lee Llewellyn, Dennis Heydt, Caroline Eister, Jeanette Stine, Christopher Payonk, Seth Ney, Renee Shade, Cathy Hale, Ben Moyer, Gaylene Ebling, Wally Foose, Craig Heffner, Jane Deibert, Judy Reihman, Tom Cook, Sylvia Edling, Joe Dewald, Ronald Bromwell, Carla Zelinsky, Lisa Weiser, Janest Yost, Anna Mae Berger, Madge Miller, Kathleen Kelleher, Melissa Focht, Jason Brown, Teagan Brown, Brenda Phillips, Family of Keith Ramsey, Cecelia Kacmar, Lois Pavelko, Edith Kriner, Melanie Hart, Janice Moore, Christie O'Dell, John Cooper, Florence Shay, Clarence Zweizig, Jayden Leiby, Melvin Rodriguez & family, Dorothy Moyer, Bruce Stees, JoAnn Baker Copley, Deanna Carl, Linda Bonfiglio-Boyer, Carlene Wenner, Christy Deaton Stocks, Maria Motto, Katharine Macnutt, Peter Spontak, Nancy Cooper, David and Angela Weiser, Faye Sausser, Kim O'Donnell, Leslie Wagner, Mateo Thomas, Barry Heffner, Charlotte Moyer, Phyllis Trinca Czech, Ed Sirianni, Stephen Edwards

Those with Long-term health issues:

Bonnie Jean Foose, Michelle Ochenrider, Rich & Sandy Moyer, Ethan Yost, Elizabeth Taylor, Carol Landes, Maureen Moyer, Karen Cockill, Janice Barr, Donna Dierenzo, Jim Musico, John Krater, Fawn Goodman, Bob Yanek, Rebecca Marshall, Sapphire Schaeffer, Mark Wyllie, Krysta Kolbe, Shirley Emrich, Kathrine Smiley, Mark Noecker, Anna Heffner, David Wise, Joan Steficheck, Bill Everly, Donna Leashefski, Florence Clemens, Sara Berger, Chuck Copley, Jeff Kamar, Mary Sewalt, Pat Thomas, Nathan Resch, Casey Watson, Jerry Stoutland, Linda Bonfiglio-Boyer, Gemma Geary

Those serving in the Armed Forces:

Major Michael Shay, Staff Sgt. Joseph Moyer, Senior Airman Matthew Nettles, Airman Jackie Nettles, 2nd LT Heather Strouse, Sgt. Travis D. Miller, Sgt. Anthony Cooper, Private 3rd Class Caleb Levan

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WE WELCOME THE REV. JAMES COVERT as our preacher today. Pastor Covert served several area congregations before his retirement. Now as a member of Jerusalem, he and his wife Linda enrich our congregation with their gifts in music, preaching and social ministry.

THANK YOU TODAY'S CANTORS: PHILIP AND BEVERLY KRINER

A MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOP ELECT: Dear Friends in Christ - The Seasons of Christmas and Epiphany proclaim the good news: "Christ with us" and "Christ revealed to us!" I cling to these words. I long to hold tight, loved ones who must stay apart for a time: my parents, siblings, nephews and nieces. And I grieve for those we have lost, cry out for an end to this present suffering. But I also hear this great promise with new ears and insights: "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in deep darkness a light has dawned" (Isaiah 9:2 NIV). Let us trust that the Light of the World is here already, and yet his coming is on the cusp, ready to start making all things new. In the coming days, I so look forward to sharing the vision that God is ready to reveal, for new life and renewed purpose across our Synod. More to come: keep watch! - Chris deForest, Bishop Elect

AFTER PRAYERFULLY CONSIDERING CHURCH AND HEALTH GUIDELINES, but most importantly the well-being of both our siblings in Christ at Jerusalem as well as that of our neighbors, our Church Council, together with our Coronavirus Task Force, has made the difficult decision to cancel all in-person worship from now through January 10. We hope to resume our worship gatherings on January 17, of course still masked and at a distance.

YOUR SPECIAL CHRISTMAS GIFTS AND END-OF-YEAR GIVING helps us to end 2020, and begin 2021 in a stronger position. Because we will NOT be having services the last Sunday of the year, please give your Christmas and year-end giving by mailing or dropping it off through the mail so that it arrives in the office no later than December 28. Thank you!

CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK

SUNDAY Worship Resources Available on Jerusalem's website, Facebook page, & YouTube Channel

MONDAY Church Office closed through Friday, January 1st, 2021. Counters will be contacted to report in as needed.

STAFF AND LEADERS

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Deborah Reed, *President of Church Council* dreed1955@comcast.net

AN ADVENT-CHRISTMAS MESSAGE from Guy Erwin, a former bishop of the Los Angeles area, and now the new president of the United Lutheran Seminary with campuses in Philadelphia and Gettysburg.



Dear ULS Community:

Advent is often described as a season of preparation and of waiting. All our Sunday readings are anticipatory, and point us toward the One who is to come. It's delightful to both know the good news in

advance and to be able joyfully to anticipate what is to come.

At least that's the way I used to see it. This year it feels a little different: we know there is good ahead, but instead of enjoying a contented anticipation, the waiting grows harder and harder. It never occurred to me before to see Advent as representing frustration and the slowness of change, or calling forth impatience and irritation instead of joyful calm. But maybe these have always been just below the surface: why doesn't God act, already? Why do we have to wait so long for justice and peace and the healing of all?

I suppose I have always been aware of the dissonance between the happy anticipation of another Christmas and the impatient longing for a better world, but somehow 2020 has really tested me, as I know it has many of you. There are so many gifts to come: vaccines to protect us from the virus; political change (depending on one's perspective) offers new directions and for many, new hope. And a reduction of the pandemic's danger brings with it new opportunities to be together, to live more normal lives and enjoy community again in the familiar ways. There is so much to look forward to, and by the end of 2021 I hope we will be in a different and better place.

But that's still months away, and there aren't enough candles on our wreath to count the weeks before we can actually move freely and safely in society again. We don't fully know how having a partially-protected, incompletely-vaccinated population will be different than now—and in some ways it will be different—but we can certainly guess that it will not mean some kind of sudden lifting of social distancing restrictions and it will not “reopen” society all at once. And there will—our being human—be confusion and misunderstanding and anger and pain, even as we move toward an end to the pandemic.

This, I think—Christmas through the first half of the new year—will be the hardest season we have yet faced: one in which we continue to wait while things gradually change. “Almost, but not yet,” I think, is more difficult to bear than “one of these days.” But I think we can take solace from two important things the last nine months have taught us: fortitude and resilience.

When early last March, as bishop, I asked my congregations to suspend in-person worship, I received criticism from some pastors for implying they were putting their people at risk if they did not. It was asking too much to upset all the well-planned Lenten preparations—and even I still thought then we might be worshiping together again by Easter. I smile now at the very thought.

But now, nine months in, we all know what we can do if we have to—we can fundamentally change our ways of being community and adapt to new circumstances if needs must. Not

everybody, not everywhere, and not always easily, but we did adapt—and the lives of our communities were transformed but they—for the most part—have survived. I think we can be proud of the ways many of our congregations and communities have responded, and we have found strength we didn't know we had. I find that encouraging, and in some cases inspiring. ULS has done better than most institutions in this regard, hard as it has been and as much pain as we have endured in the last two semesters.

Now we need a little more of that fortitude to see us through the home stretch. We need to stay flexible and resilient as circumstances continue to change. Strength is only half the struggle; flexibility the other—and patience (especially with each other) will make the work—and the waiting—much easier. We have lost a lot in the last nine months: the lives of loved ones; precious time together to grow love and build community; and the comfort of familiar social patterns. But we have grown and learned that we had resources we didn't know we had, and strength we had never used before.

I am excited about the year ahead, and what it will bring. But I am also realistic that it will not come on my terms or at my speed, and perhaps will not be predictable at all. So I will wait, and hope, and practice patience. I hope you will be able to do that too. I hope we will not tire of helping one another and looking out for each other's welfare. I hope we will also take care of ourselves. And I hope we will continue to pray. We await what we hope for but cannot yet see fully.

The mysterious but compelling figure of John the Baptist is described in this coming Sunday's gospel lesson as one who "was not the light, but...came to testify to the light." John was a herald of things yet unseen, speaking to a people who didn't know quite what they were waiting for, but only that it was coming for sure. There are powerful ways we can understand that feeling right now, in this season of our lives and our history. Dear friends, keep testifying to that light, and don't let it out of your sight—for it is the light of Christ.

May God bless you and keep you in these days of waiting!

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a plus sign followed by the word "Gruy" in a cursive, stylized script.