

From your Council President – December 14, 2021

Are you prepared for the holidays? Your church sure has undergone a bit of transformation and the pace of the activities has increased as Christmas draws near. People are in and out of the building almost every day of the week and many tasks related to the Advent services, Christmas Eve, and Year End are all being worked on to make preparations for the coming of infant Jesus. This past Sunday we celebrated the third Sunday of Advent at Holy Cross with a service of the Word and Sacrament lead by our Interim, Pastor Curtis Zieske. We spoke the liturgy, listen to the readings along with Pastor's sermon and lit the third advent candle (Peace). After service, several people assisted in the decorating of the Christmas Tree, that now has many ornaments on it topped by a lighted star. Recordings of these activities may be viewed on YouTube at; <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiHbmFBDWLG1W-jcI8jRhOO>

This week we will celebrate the fourth and final Sunday of Advent by lighting the last advent candle (Joy) during our Service of the Word and Sacrament. The choir will be present to sing the "Everlasting Light" liturgy along with a special hymn. Pastor Curtis will lead us in Holy Communion, so please plan to join us if you are able at **10:00 AM on Sunday, December 19, 2021**. We continue to follow CDC and OHA guidelines and wear masks while inside, sit socially distant, and are not singing from the pews.

Also, on the 19th we start our next rotation with the Family Promise/Interfaith families. We plan to do some Christmas meals for them this time around so please contact Doug Odell for details.

Through your generosity the gifts for our adoptive Christmas families have been collected and the Faith in Action team of volunteers were busy wrapping them on Monday. Your Finance team met on Tuesday, working to finalize some of the budget numbers for presentation to and approval by the Congregation at our Annual Meeting coming in late January. If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Steve Tweet, Lorraine Odell, or me. We have received word from her daughter that Jeanette Burwell passed away on December 9th. No service is planned. Please remember Jeanette and her family in your prayers this holiday season.

Please plan on joining us at Holy Cross on Friday, December 24 at 6:00 PM for a Christmas Eve worship service with Choir anthems, readings and the handbells playing a few carols. More details to follow in next week's mailing. Your leadership thanks you for your continued prayers and comments. We have gone through many changes in the past year and 2022 will have yet more for Holy Cross. We are in this together, and with God's guidance we will find our path to whatever future mission we undertake in Christ's name. – Bryan

**Worshipping at Home with Holy Cross Lutheran Church
December 19, 2021 – Fourth 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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
who alone does wonders,
who lifts up the lowly,
who fills the hungry with good things.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God for whom we wait,

**in the presence of one another,
we confess our sin before you.**

We fail in believing that your good news is for us.

We falter in our call to tend your creation.

We find our sense of self in material wealth.

We fear those different from ourselves.

**We forget that we are your children
and turn away from your love.**

**Forgive us, Blessed One,
and assure us again of your saving grace.**

Amen.

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you!

Through the power of the Holy Spirit,

† your sins are forgiven.

You are children of the Most High,
inheritors of the eternal promise,
and recipients of divine mercy.

God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

READINGS AND PSALM

Micah 5:2-5a

From Bethlehem comes a ruler

Luke 1:46b-55

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (*Lk. 1:52*)

Psalm 80:1-7 (alternate)

Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (*Ps. 80:7*)

Hebrews 10:5-10

I have come to do your will

Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

Blessed are you among women / My soul magnifies the Lord

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. Here I am, the servant of the Lord;* let it be with me according to your word. *Alleluia.* (Luke 1:38)

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 723 “Canticle Of The Turning”

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 our waiting and watching,
we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives
to the service of all your people.
Prepare the way before us
as we meet you in this simple meal,
through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.
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

Most High God,

you have come among us at this table.

By the Spirit’s power, form us to be bearers of your word,

sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all,

through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.

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. Christ is near.

Thanks be to God.

Prayers of Intercession

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

A brief silence.

Nurturing God, you give us life and care for our every need. Use the church's gifts and ministries for your service, bringing your word to all who seek your transforming grace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creator God, you proclaim your boundless love for all that you have made. Renew barren lands, polluted waters, and melting ice caps. Make us servants of your creation that brings forth abundant life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Righteous God, you bring down the mighty and lift up the lowly. Strengthen those who seek justice. Bless the work of community organizers, activists, journalists, and all who call our attention to imbalances of power. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Compassionate God, you proclaim your love and mercy. Show your lovingkindness to teen parents and those who are pregnant. Comfort any struggling with infertility and those who await test results, are in treatment and hospice care, and others in need (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Gracious God, you fill the hungry with good things. Bless the feeding ministries of this congregation and community. Guide us to share your bounty with those who hunger or live in poverty. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Faithful God, you stir up the hearts of those who love you. We give you thanks for those who, like Mary, were courageous in their witness (*especially*). Give us such courage until that day when you fulfill all things. 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.