

Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE



✠ Holy Communion ✠

First Sunday of Advent

December 1, 2024

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Advent is about the “coming days.” God’s people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a “righteous Branch to spring up for David.” The Thessalonians awaited “the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.” Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for the time “to stand before the Son of Man.” With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

***Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding!*..... Benjamin McCalli**

Stand

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.

Kneel

P: God of mercy,

C: **we confess that we have sinned.**
We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.
We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

P: God of might,

C: **we confess that we have sinned.**
We have turned away from our neighbors.
We have trusted false promises.

P: God in our midst,

C: **we confess that we have sinned.**
We plead: come to us.
Bring your mercy to birth in us.

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.

Stand

GATHERING HYMN *Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding!*

1 Hark! a thrill-ing voice is sound-ing! "Christ is near," we hear it say.
 2 Wak-ened by the sol- emn warn - ing, from earth's bond-age let us rise;
 3 See the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, come with par - don down from heav'n.
 4 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the world is wrapped in fear,
 5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless-ing to the Fa - ther and the Son

"Cast a - way the works of dark-ness, all you chil-dren of the day!"
 Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling, shines up - on the morn-ing skies.
 Let us haste, with tears of sor - row, one and all, to be for - giv'n;
 he will shield us with his mer - cy and with words of love draw near.
 with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it while un - end - ing a - ges run!

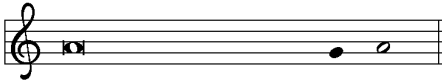
Text: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814-1878
 Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823-1889

APOSTOLIC GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
 and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: **And also with you.**

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



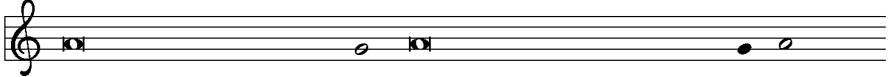
Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



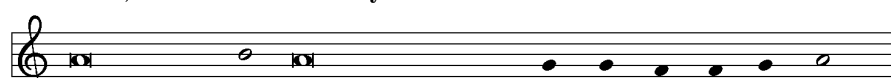
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



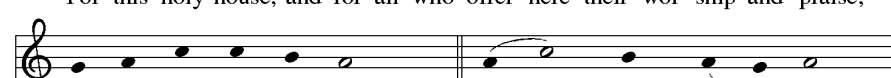
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen

Sit

LIGHTING OF THE WREATH

A: We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

C: Amen

ADVENT CHORAL VERSE

As the first candle is lit, the choir recites the first verse.

WORD

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 33:14-16

In the Old Testament, "righteousness" often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today's reading, Jerusalem's future name—"The LORD is our righteousness"—proclaims that God is even now working salvation for Israel.

A: A Reading from Jeremiah:

¹⁴ The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵ In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶ In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 25:1-10*The cantor sings the refrain; the congregation repeats it.**Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.*

- ¹ To | you, O LORD,
I lift | up my soul.
- ² **My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be | put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph | over me.**
- ³ Let none who look to you be | put to shame;
rather let those be put to shame | who are treacherous.
- ⁴ **Show me your | ways, O LORD,
and teach | me your paths. R**
- ⁵ Lead me in your | truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all | the day
long.
- ⁶ **Remember, O LORD, your compas- | sion and love,
for they are from | everlasting. R**
- ⁷ Remember not the sins of my youth and | my transgressions;
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your
good- | ness, O LORD.
- ⁸ **You are gracious and up- | right, O LORD;
therefore you teach sinners | in your way.**
- ⁹ You lead the low- | ly in justice
and teach the low- | ly your way.
- ¹⁰ **All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast | love and faithfulness
to those who keep your covenant and your | testimonies. R**

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Upon Timothy's report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessings for the people of this growing church.

A: A Reading from First Thessalonians:

⁹ How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? ¹⁰ Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

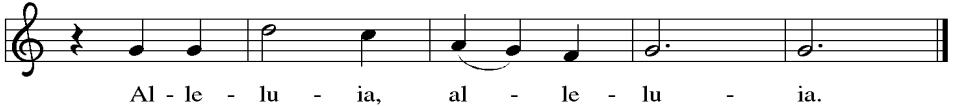
¹¹ Now may our God and Father himself ¹¹ and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. ¹² And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. ¹³ And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.



Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

CANTOR: Stand up and | raise your heads—your redemption is | drawing near.

C: Repeat the Alleluias

GOSPEL: Luke 21:25-36

God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the twenty-first chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said: ²⁵ "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶ People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷ Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. ²⁸ Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

²⁹ Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰ as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹ So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³² Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³ Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴ "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵ like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

P: The Gospel of the Lord

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sit

SERMON.....Janet Stroble, ALWL

Stand

HYMN OF THE DAY *Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying*



1 Wake, a - wake, for night is fly - ing, the watch-men
 2 Zi - on hears the watch-men sing - ing, and in her
 3 Now let all the heav'ns a - dore you, and saints and



on the heights are cry - ing; a - wake, Je - ru - sa - lem, at last.
 heart new joy is spring - ing. She wakes, she ris - es from her gloom,
 an - gels sing be - fore you. The harps and cym-bals all u - nite.



Mid - night hears the wel - come voic - es, and at the
 for her Lord comes down all glo - rious, the strong in
 Of one pearl each shin - ing por - tal, where, dwell - ing



thrill - ing cry re - joic - es: "Come forth, you maid - ens! Night is past.
 grace, in truth vic - to - rious. Her star is ris'n; her light is come.
 with the choir im - mor - tal, we gath - er round your daz - zling light.



The bride - groom comes! A - wake; your lamps with glad - ness take!"
 Oh, come, you Bless - ed One, Lord Je - sus, God's own Son.
 No eye has seen, no ear has yet been trained to hear,



Al - le - lu - ia! Pre - pare your - selves to meet the
 Sing ho - san - na! We go un - til the halls we
 what joy is ours! Cre - scen - dos rise; your halls re -



Lord, whose light has stirred the wait - ing guard.
 view where you have bid us dine with you.
 sound; ho - san - nas blend in cos - mic sound.

NICENE CREED

**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**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A brief silence is held after the introduction.

P: As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God’s presence.

After each petition:

P: Lord, in your mercy,

C: **receive our prayer.**

The prayers conclude:

P: Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

C: **Amen**

PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: **And also with you.**

*The pastor and congregation greet one another in the name of the Lord.
Peace be with you. **R:** Peace be with you.*

Sit

MEAL

OFFERING

The Offering is received as the Lord’s table is prepared.

ANTHEM

Shine, Advent Candle.....Jean Ann Shafferman

Stand

OFFERTORY

As the gifts are presented, the Offertory is sung

C Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
 bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
 fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u -



nite them with the prayers we of - fer. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

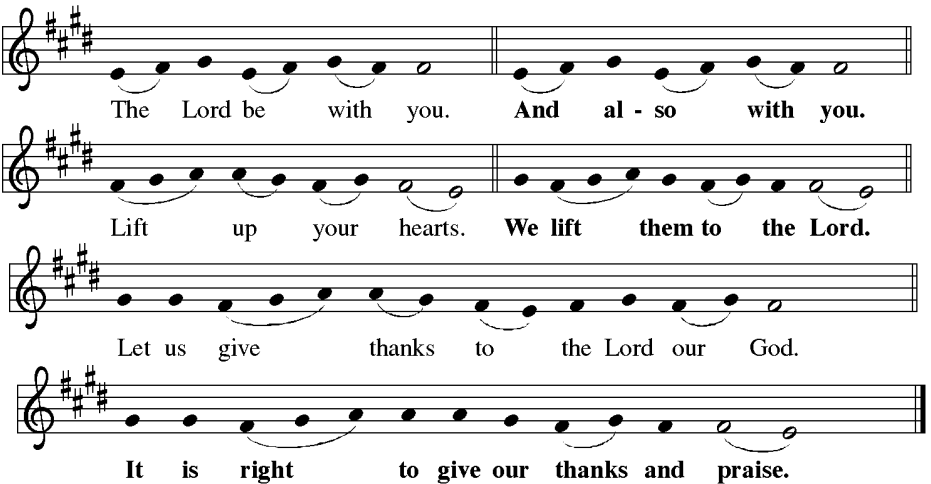
OFFERING PRAYER

A: Let us pray:

C: Creator God,
you made the whole world,
even the farthest stars,
and you draw near to feed us.
We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine.
Strengthen us with this food
that we may live in expectation
for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

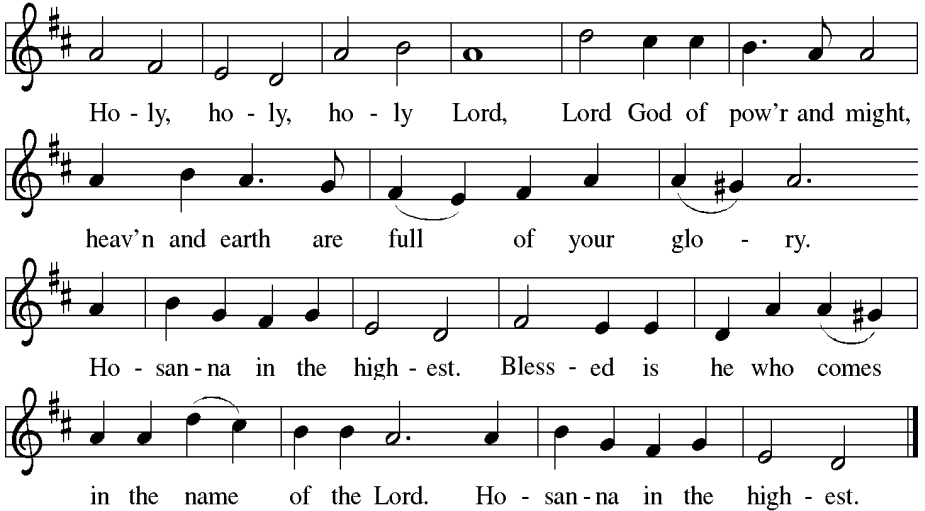
GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.
Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,
 heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.
 Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes
 in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

[P]: Holy One, the beginning and the end,
 the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,
 the Word made flesh.

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 is 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 for all people
for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

P: With this bread and cup we remember your Word
dwelling among us, full of grace and truth.
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.
We look with hope for his coming.

C: **Come, Lord Jesus.**

P: Holy God,
we long for your Spirit.
Come among us.
Bless this meal.
May your Word take flesh in us.
Awaken your people.
Fill us with your light.
Bring the gift of peace on earth.

C: **Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: All praise and glory are yours,
Holy One of Israel,
Word of God incarnate,
Power of the Most High,
One God, now and forever.

C: **Amen**

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

- P:** God feeds us with tender mercy.
 Come to the table.
- C:** Thanks be to God.

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
 us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
 mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
 sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Sit

COMMUNION

All baptized believers are invited to this holy meal. Those not communing are invited for a blessing. Please follow the instructions of the ushers to gather at the altar table.

As the ministers give the bread and wine, they say these words to each communicant:

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

The communicant may say: Amen

COMMUNION HYMN *Christ be our Light*



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
 2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
 3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
 4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
 has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
 to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.

Refrain



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell

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Stand

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

A: Let us pray.

Generous God,

we thank you for the gift of life,

for the bread of salvation.

We thank you for coming among us,

for leading us into peace.

We thank you for showering us with mercy,

for sending us into the world.

Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us

as we feed the hungry in your name.

C: Amen

SENDING

BLESSING

P: God of endings and beginnings,

God in the darkness and the light,

God, our hope for the journey,

‡ bless and keep you now and forever.

C: Amen

SENDING HYMN *Fling Wide the door*



1 Fling wide the door, un - bar the gate; the King of glo - ry
 2 He is the rock of our be - lief, the heart of mer - cy's
 3 Oh, hap - py towns and bless - ed lands that live by their true
 4 Come, Lord, our Sav - ior, Je - sus Christ; our hearts are o - pen



comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the
 gen - tle self. His king - ly crown is ho - li - ness; his
 king's com - mands. And bless - ed be the hearts he rules, the
 wide in trust. Oh, show us now your love - ly grace, up -



Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion
 scep - ter is his love - li - ness; he brings our sor - rows
 hum - ble plac - es where he dwells. He is the right - ful
 on our sor - rows shine your face, and let your Ho - ly



to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and
 to an end. Now glad - ly praise our king and friend, and
 Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, cre -
 Spir - it guide our jour - ney in your grace so wide. We



praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word.
 wor - ship him with song for sav - ing us from wrong.
 a - tor of the world, our on - ly strength for good.
 praise your ho - ly name, from age to age the same!

Text: Georg Weiszel, 1590–1635; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943
 Music: MACHT HOCH DIE TÜR, J. A. Freylinghausen, *Geistreiches Gesangbuch*, 1704
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POSTLUDE

***Wake for Night is Flying*..... Johann Gottfried Walther**

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Charles Luppert, Larry & Donna Britton, Gail O'Brien, Sylvia McCarty, Larry Solomon; **Lay Assistant:** Dave Bausinger; **Comm. Asst.:** Mandy Feinberg **Acolyte:** Dylan Sherman; **Altar Guild:** Rita Strickler, Carol Winter; **Greeters/Communion Presenters:** Paul Weaver, Jean Weaver **Cantor:** Virginia Amme; **Flower Delivery:** Paul Weaver **Guest Organist:** David Reier

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of loved ones.

The Basket of Flowers is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Nita and Eugene Hamm by their daughter and son-in-law, Debra and James Walton.

The Basket of Flowers is given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Andrea's father, William H. Dennis and David's mother, Geraldine C. Turner by David and Andrea Turner and children.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Messiah Church! It is our joy to have you worship with us. If you are visiting, please make yourself known and leave your name & information to a congregation member. *We hope to see you again.*

This morning we welcome Janet Stroble, an Authorized Lay Worship Leader (ALWL) of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Sandy has received extensive training so as to provide worship leadership and preaching, and has been authorized by the bishop of the synod to preside at the Eucharist.

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held immediately following Worship next Sunday, December 8. Please plan on attending this important meeting.

Kids in Mission is this Saturday, December 7, 9:00-12:00.

Please pick-up your annual reports in the back of the Sanctuary along with your envelopes. Please let the office know if yours is not there.

Please hand in your Poinsettia order forms by December 9.

Advent Devotionals published by the Lutheran Hour Ministries are on a table in the Narthex.

December 15 is our Christmas Dinner, immediately following worship. Please sign-up by Sunday, December 8. Sign-up sheets are in the Narthex or contact church office. Please give number of attendees.

(continued)

We will decorate the church on Sunday, December 22nd immediately following worship. **VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED!** Please sign-up on the sheet in the Narthex. Decorating needs are: lights on the tree in the Chancel; lights and Crismons on the tree in the East Portico; wreaths, garland & other lights hung in the church. Poinsettias will also be put out at the same time.

Please support the White Gifts/Christmas Basket Project. Please take an angel from one of the two trees in the narthex, purchase the gifts, and return them to Messiah by December 8th. We hand out the White Gifts with our Christmas Food Basket. You can help by contributing any of the following items and placing in the marked bin in the Narthex. Green beans, canned pumpkin, turkey stuffing mix, sugar (5 lb. bag), flour (5 lb. bag). **Monetary contributions are also needed.** Mark envelopes "Christmas Baskets" or "White Gifts" and place it in the offering plate or send to the church office. Make checks payable to "*Messiah Lutheran Church.*" **All donations should be received by December 15th. Thank you.**



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH
REV. A. BRUCE AMME, PRESIDING AND PREACHING
JARED GIST, ORGANIST

324 South Howard Street | South Williamsport, PA 17702
(570) 326-9171 | www.messiahsouth.org

Real Worries, Real Hope

“Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.” With these words, often invoked at the table of holy communion, the church proclaims “the mystery of faith” (*ELW*, p. 110). At communion, we remember the good story of Jesus’ death and resurrection. But there is more! We also look forward to a time yet to be.

Thoughts of the future can inspire hopefulness for the promise of good things to come. Yet looking ahead can also conjure worries about what we do not know, or a sense of foreboding about what is out of our control. It’s hard not to hear in Jesus’ references to nature a warning about the dramatic effects of climate change. We inhabit a world in which ordinary signs that used to reliably mark the change of seasons are shifting. So when he talks about the trees sprouting leaves as a sure sign that summer is near, the image may leave us unsettled. In recent times, trees in some places have started budding when meteorological spring and summer are still months away. How will the trees respond when frost comes again? How is the church to respond in times such as these? Will the fig tree bloom on time this year?

Jesus’ parable of the fig tree comes smack-dab in the middle of some very disturbing news. Jesus offers an image of hope amid circumstances that seem all but hopeless. He talks of new growth even while what is old and familiar is passing away. Much like Jesus’ parable, the season of Advent invites the church to hold together these multiple, seemingly contradictory realities. We are called to rise up with courage and hope as we anticipate Jesus coming to us, without ignoring the weight of the world or neglecting our very real concerns. Jesus gathers us to the table where we remember his death but also his resurrection, where we pray for the world and also anticipate God’s redemption of all things.

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