

Messiah Lutheran Church

GATHER, EMPOWER, SERVE

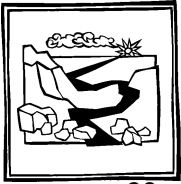


✝ Holy Communion ✝

Second Sunday of Advent

December 8, 2024

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the LORD of hosts. Finally, all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

GATHERING

PRELUDE

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*Prepare the Royal Highway*

1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.

Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
 Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
 Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
 His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.

Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
 God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
 All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
 So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

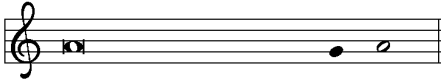
Refrain
 Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

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.



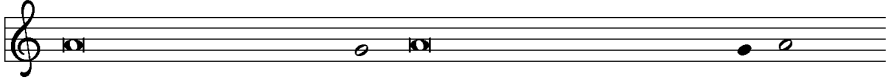
Lord, have mer - cy.



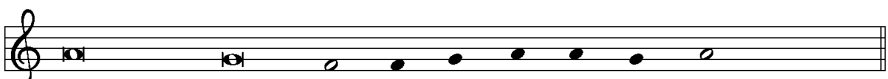
For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



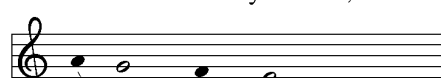
Lord, have mer - cy.



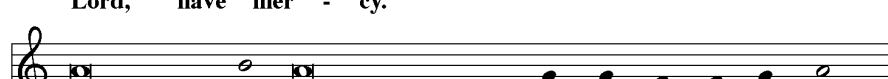
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



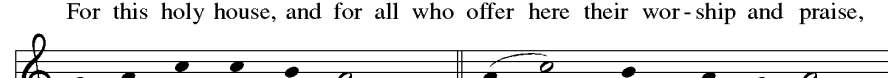
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



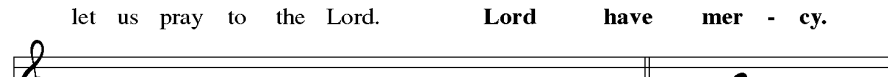
Lord, have mer - cy.



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 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.

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 second 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 second candle is lit, the choir will sing.

WORD

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined.

A: A Reading from Malachi:

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Advent Response: Luke 1:68-79*The cantor sings the refrain; the congregation repeats it.*

In the ten - der com - pas - sion of our God



the dawn from on high will break up - on us.

Sung responsively between the cantor and congregation.

⁶⁸ Blessed are you, Lord, the | God of Israel,
you have come to your people and | set them free.

⁶⁹ **You have raised up for us a | mighty Savior,
born of the house of your | servant David. R**

⁷⁰ Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us | from our
enemies,

⁷¹ from the hands of | all who hate us,

⁷² **to show mercy | to our forebears,
and to remember your | holy covenant.**

⁷³ This was the oath you swore to our | father Abraham:

⁷⁴ to set us free from the hands of our | enemies,

free to worship you | without fear,

⁷⁵ **holy and righteous before you, all the days | of our life. R**

⁷⁶ And you, child, shall be called the prophet of | the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to pre- | pare the way,

⁷⁷ **to give God's people knowledge | of salvation
by the forgiveness | of their sins.**

⁷⁸ In the tender compassion | of our God
the dawn from on high shall | break upon us,

⁷⁹ **to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shad- | ow of
death,**

and to guide our feet into the | way of peace. R

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11

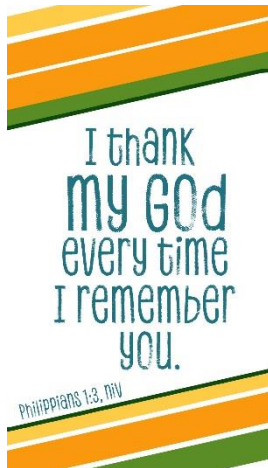
The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

A: A Reading from Philippians:

³ I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴ constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵ because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰ to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹ having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.



2Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

CANTOR: Prepare the way ¹ of the Lord.* All flesh shall see the salva- ¹ tion of God.

C: Repeat the Alleluias

GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the third chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight.

⁵ Every valley shall be filled,
and every mountain and hill shall be made low,
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'

P: The Gospel of the Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sit

SERMON..... Pastor Amme

Stand

HYMN OF THE DAY *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*



1 On Jor - dan's banks the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent

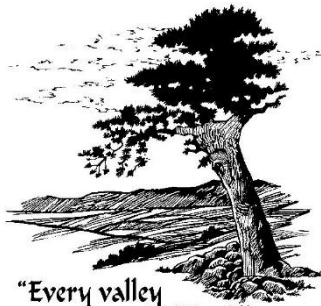


that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and hear - ken,
 way for God with - in, and let us all our
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
 has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. composite
 Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621



“Every valley shall be filled,
 and every mountain and hill shall be made low.”

–Luke 3:5

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

Come, Emmanuel..... Don Besig

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.

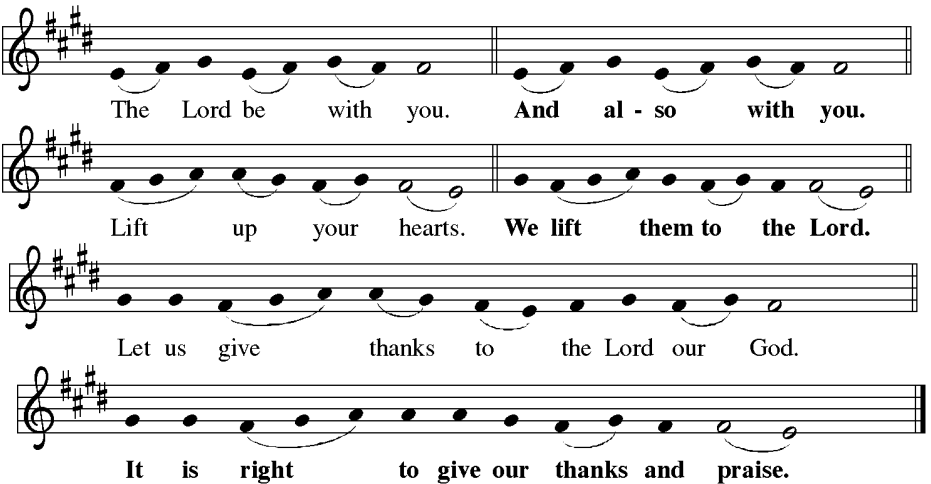
OFFERING PRAYER

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
of the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

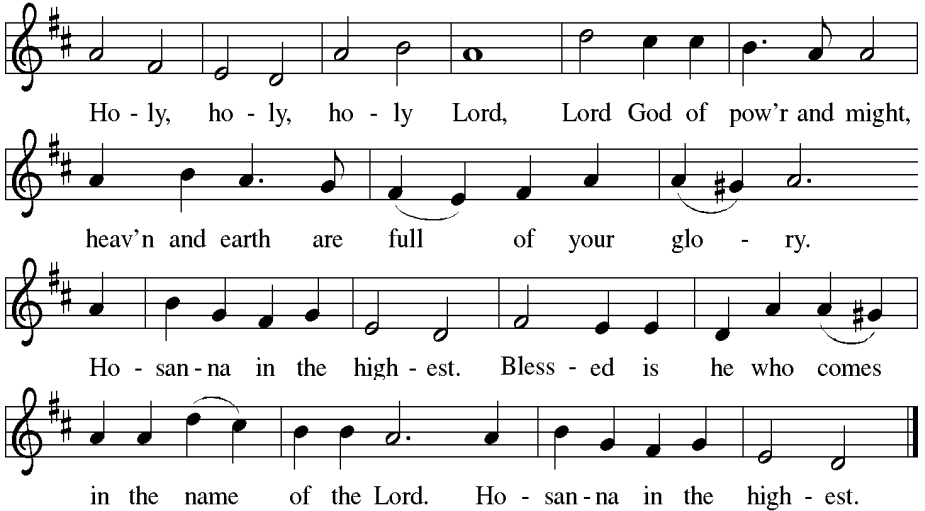
GREAT THANKSGIVING



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.

EUCHARISTIC 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 *Comfort, Comfort Now My People*



1 "Com - fort, com - fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
 2 For the her - ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook-ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain!



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn - ing un - der sor - row's load.
 call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the king - dom now is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be - fits his ho - ly reign!



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way!
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for - ev - er.
 Let the val - leys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him!
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1611–1684; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1829–1878, alt.
 Music: FREU DICH SEHR, *Trente quatre psaumes de David*, Geneva, 1551

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.

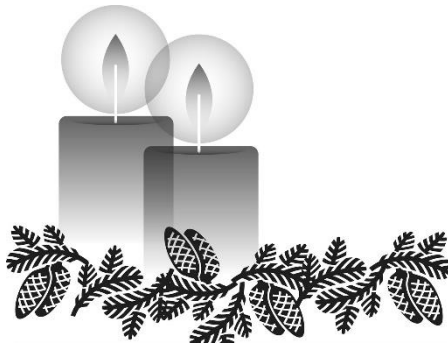
C: Amen

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 *Hark, the Glad Sound!*

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior
 2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's
 3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing
 4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of peace, your wel - come

prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -
 bond - age held. The gates of brass be -
 soul to cure, and with the trea - sures
 shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal

pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.
 fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
 of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
 arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751
 Music: CHESTERFIELD, Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820

Please be seated for the congregational meeting.

SERVICE ASSISTANTS

Ushers: Charles Luppert, Larry & Donna Britton, Gail O'Brien, Sylvia McCarty, Larry Solomon; **Lay Assistant:** Carol Waltz; **Communion Asst.:** Rhonda Koch; **Acolyte:** Weston Sherman; **Altar Guild:** Marie Welter, April Gardner
Greeters/Communion Presenters: Carol and Marilyn Winter
Cantor: Bob Schweppenheiser; **Flower Delivery:** Charles Luppert

IN BLESSED MEMORY

The Altar Flowers are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Sam Hessert, with love by his wife Carol and children.

The Bud Vase is given to the Glory of God and in honor of Autumn Rudio's 6th birthday, with love from Grammy and Pappy Bausinger.

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.*

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be held immediately following worship this morning.

Please remember to turn in your Estimate of Giving Pledge Cards and Time and Talent forms. You may place them in the offering plate this morning or at the church office. There are still Envelopes in the back of the Sanctuary to be picked up.

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.

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

We will decorate the church on Sunday, December 22. **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.

ALL white gifts and Christmas basket donations are due December 15. White Gifts and food baskets will be picked up Saturday, December 21 from 9 am- noon. If you have any questions, please contact Candy Watkins (570)998-4037. *Thank you for your support.*

Volunteers needed. We need 6 readers for the Lessons and Carols Service on Sunday, December 29. If you would be interested in reading one of the lessons, please sign up on the sheet in the Narthex. *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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