

Sunday, November 29, 2020 – First Sunday of Advent

Trinity's Weekly Connection

You are welcome to join us for live streaming of our "Virtual Worship" service from Centennial Hall on the First Sunday of Advent, November 29 at 9:15 a.m. If you are unable to join us at that time, be welcome to access the service at your convenience via Trinity's YouTube channel. Instructions for access to the live stream and the recorded video are below.

Trinity is live streaming worship – how do I find it?

We are streaming our 9:15 a.m. "Virtual Worship" service on YouTube. To find it, do the following:

- Follow the home page link to "Virtual Worship" on Trinity's website, select "video" and you will be connected to the stream.
OR
- Go to YouTube, either by opening the app on your phone or by visiting the webpage on your computer.
- Search for 'Trinity Lutheran Church Grand Rapids.' The first option should be one with a picture of our cross tower (that is our channel).
- When you click on it you will be brought to our channel. If the service is live (from about 9:10 to 10:20 a.m. on Sunday morning) there will be a video with 'Live Now' on it.
- Simply click on the video and you will be connected to the stream.
- We also save past services in a play list called 'Rejoice Worship,' so you can view a past worship service at any time. It takes a couple of hours for the video to download on YouTube after worship ends.

If you have a YouTube account please subscribe to the channel. This will allow our videos to show up in your video feed and when we reach enough subscriptions allow us to change our YouTube url.

Prayer of the Day for the First Sunday of Advent

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer for our Nation

Eternal God, amid all the turmoil and changes of the world your love is steadfast and your strength never fails. In this time of national transition and political division, be to us a sure guardian and rock of defense. Guide the leaders of our nation with your wisdom, comfort those in distress, and grant us courage and hope to face the future; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Trinity Members in Our Prayers

We pray for Trinity members Fran Anderson, Dan Babin, George Bauer, Krysta Billock, Sherry Blair and family, Loretta Bliek, Bev Block, Bonnie Brandstadt and family, Pat Bruin, Jack Danielson, Angela Davis, Riley Day, John Derbin, Awilda Diaz, Scott Dukecki and family, Lois Engel, Beth Engstrom, Joe Fisher, Renee Fisk and family, Mari Franz and family, Mary Frick, Richard Gehl and family, Jack Greiner, Elena Griewahn, Adam Guigue, Craig Gunderson, Carol Welz-Gustafson, David, Sue and Daniel Gutierrez, Alexander Hahn, Mark Hahn, Bob and Linda Heine and family, Ruth Helzer, Jerry Hendricks, Bev Heyne and family, Carrie Hoeksema, Callan Hughes, Christopher Humphrey, Austin, Meredith and Theodore Johnson, Christopher Keller, Susan Knoll, Jen Knowles, Roy Lamprich, Allison Landon, Logan Landon, Marilyn Leese, Jane Legault, Bob and Cathy Luders, Judy Mallen, Roger Marks, Joyce McKenzie, Marcia McClimans and family, Jill McKinney, Marilyn Mellema, Richard Mencarelli, Johnny Mielock, Moglia family, Michael Mulligan, Tim Neilson, Maddie Nojos, Beth Olson, Joan Perham and family, Dan Pollert, Valeriano Ramirez, Jacqueline Riegling, Mark and Gayle Rohde and family, Lynn Rose, Tiago Saline, Marian Schaible, Chas Schaner, Chris Schomberg, Ilene Seadal, Joan Sellman, Jim Searfoss, Kris Shannon and family, Michael Smith, David and Mary Smoes, Courtney Steketee and family, Linda Taffs, Shirley Tedford, Jeremiah (JD) Thamban, Dale Volkerding, Chris and Joanna Waite and family, John Walls, Eric Wollen, Peyton Wollen, Rick and Michelle Wolner, Dave and Kathy Young, Susan Youngren, and Kathryn Zielinski.

First Sunday of Advent

November 29, 2020

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 64:1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40-55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

¹O that you would tear open the heavens and come down,
 so that the mountains would quake at your presence—
²as when fire kindles brushwood
 and the fire causes water to boil—
to make your name known to your adversaries,
 so that the nations might tremble at your presence!
³When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,
 you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence.
⁴From ages past no one has heard,
 no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
 who works for those who wait for him.
⁵You meet those who gladly do right,
 those who remember you in your ways.
But you were angry, and we sinned;
 because you hid yourself we transgressed.
⁶We have all become like one who is unclean,
 and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth.
We all fade like a leaf,
 and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.
⁷There is no one who calls on your name,
 or attempts to take hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us,
 and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity.
⁸Yet, O LORD, you are our Father;
 we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
⁹Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD,
 and do not remember iniquity forever.
Now consider, we are all your people.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

³Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

⁴I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus,⁵for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—⁶just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—⁷so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁸He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.⁹God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

GOSPEL: Mark 13:24-37

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] ²⁴In those days, after that suffering,
 the sun will be darkened,
 and the moon will not give its light,
²⁵and the stars will be falling from heaven,
 and the powers in the heavens will be shaken.
²⁶Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory.
²⁷Then he will send out the angels, and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven.

²⁸From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near.
²⁹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates.
³⁰Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place.
³¹Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³²But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.
³³Beware, keep alert; for you do not know when the time will come.
³⁴It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch.
³⁵Therefore, keep awake—for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening, or at midnight, or at cockcrow, or at dawn,
³⁶or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly.
³⁷And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

We pray for the ministry we share in Christ's name. Open our hearts to your call for justice, peace, and healing. Attune us to the needs of the world as you draw near. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for those who share in our ministry, including Pastor Rebecca Ebb-Speese and the people of Zion Lutheran Church in Woodland, synod partners with us in mission and ministry. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for a spirit of unity and harmony so that we may come to cherish our commonalities with people of other faiths. Bless our three "Standing Together" partner congregations here in Grand Rapids, Masjid At-Tawheed, Westminster Presbyterian Church and Temple Emanuel. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for this planet in need of restoration: for devastated habitats, polluted waters, thawing ice, blazing fires, swelling floods, and long-lasting droughts. Renew the face of the earth and our relationship to it. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for all people who care for others in our community and around the world, especially in this time of surging pandemic. Fill them with compassion and the power to respond with justice for those who are oppressed, with welcome for those who are excluded, and with relief for those who suffer. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for people who are in crisis as the seasons change: for those without homes facing severe weather, for those who are unemployed or underemployed, and for those in poverty or facing food insecurity. Relieve their burdens, sustain their bodies, and ease their minds. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the people in our families and congregation who live with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, addiction, and other invisible illnesses as we continue to struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic, including those we name now in our hearts (*a brief silence*). Ease their suffering and support them when they struggle. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Prayer for this time of pandemic and social upheaval

O God, where hearts are fearful and constricted, grant courage and hope. Where anxiety is infectious and widening, grant peace and reassurance. Where impossibilities close every door and window, grant imagination and resistance. Where distrust twists our thinking, grant healing and illumination. Where spirits are daunted and weakened, grant soaring wings and strengthened dreams. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

A Prayer for the Power of the Spirit among the People of God

God of all power and love, we give thanks for your unfailing presence and the hope you provide in times of uncertainty and loss. Send your Holy Spirit to enkindle in us your holy fire.

Revive us to live as Christ's body in the world: a people who pray, worship, learn, break bread, share life, heal neighbors, bear good news, seek justice, rest and grow in the Spirit. Wherever and however we gather, unite us in common prayer and send us in common mission, that we and the whole creation might be restored and renewed, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



NOVEMBER 29, 2020
FIRST SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

taking⁺ faith home

Stay awake, for God is coming with power.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Mark 13:24-37	The day and hour unknown
Monday	Isaiah 64:1-9	A communal prayer for help
Tuesday	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	God is faithful
Wednesday	Revelation 22:12-21	Jesus is coming soon
Thursday	Micah 4:1-5	Peace and prosperity
Friday	1 Thessalonians 5:1-11	Children of light
Saturday	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	Prayer for Israel's restoration
Sunday	Mark 1:1-8	The beginning of the good news

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in clouds’ with great power and glory. Mark 13:26 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Deliver us from harm, O Lord God of hosts; let your face shine on us, that we may be saved through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Psalm 80:3, 7, and 19)

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, we thank you for this food; may it strengthen us that we may await your coming with power and glory through Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May you be blessed with hope and peace through our Lord Jesus Christ.



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NOVEMBER 29, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

*Awake, Awake, and Greet
the Morn*



WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When have you had a challenging or scary experience?
- What are some dangerous or alarming situations we face in our world today?
- Sometimes it seems easier to deny the dangers we face and pretend they are not really a problem. How does faith in Jesus give us hope and help us to face scary times?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Mark 13:24-37.

Advent begins with an awareness of the frailty of life. We may come up with short-term fixes like finding shelter, warmth, and food. There is always the challenge of the unforeseen storm that can flood our lives with devastation, when the whole world seems to be falling down around us (vv. 24-25). No generation escapes these trials and sufferings (vv. 29-30). It happened to the people who returned from Babylonian captivity (Isaiah 64); it happened to the first Christians as noted by Mark in chapter 13; and, it happens all around the world today. What we need is the God who promises to show up and be the difference-maker. This Advent we are reminded to be alert to this God who shows up in Jesus of Nazareth. In Jesus we have hope because we have the one in whom the truth of his words will never pass away, never end, never fail (v. 31). So live life with gusto, with courage, with hope, and stay awake, keep alert, don't give up (vv. 33, 35, and 37). How does public worship, reading the Bible and prayer help you stay awake to Jesus' coming into our lives?

Pray: Almighty and living God, give us hope and confidence to await your coming into our lives with faith in your healing and renewing power through Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERVICE



Advent is a time to recall the basic needs of life: a loving and gracious God and justice and mercy that all may have enough to live. In what ways can you “stay awake” this Advent season by caring for the needs of others and providing needed resources for the homeless?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



The church year begins on the first Sunday in Advent. This coming year, the Gospel readings will be from Mark. To launch the new church year, gather together all the Bibles in your home. If you have an Advent wreath, place the Bibles near the wreath. As you light the first candle, the candle of hope, use this prayer of blessing: **Almighty God, we thank for you for the Bible, and especially for the good news about Jesus our Savior. Give us hope as we read, listen to, and think about what the Bible says to us in this new church year. Make us into people who are strong in our faith and full of love. Amen.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org