

Sunday, December 13, 2020 – Third 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 Third Sunday of Advent, December 13 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 Third Sunday of Advent

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer for Health Care Providers

Merciful God, your healing power is everywhere about us. Strengthen those who work among the sick; give them courage and confidence in all they do. Encourage them when their efforts seem futile or when death prevails. Increase their trust in your power even to overcome death and pain and crying. May they be thankful for every sign of health you give, and humble before the mystery of your healing grace; through Jesus Christ our 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 Bliet, Bev Block, Bonnie Brandstadt and family, Pat Bruin, Barb Crossman and family, 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, Carol Huttenga, Austin, Meredith and Theodore Johnson, Christopher Keller, Susan Knoll, Jen Knowles, Chris and Joanna Kutchinski, Roy Lamprich, Allison Landon, Logan Landon, Marilyn Leese, Jane Legualt, Bob and Cathy Luders, Judy Mallen, Roger Marks, Brian Mazurek and family, 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 and family, Jacqueline Riegling, Mark and Gayle Rohde and family, Lynn Rose, Tiago Saline, Marian Schaible, Chas Schaner, Chris Schomberg, Ilene Seadal, Joan Sellman, Jim Searfoss, Neil and Sue Sandler and family, 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.

Third Sunday of Advent

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"Rejoice always," begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. "All God's children got a robe," go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God's party.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

- ¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,
to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives,
and release to the prisoners;
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—
to give them a garland instead of ashes,
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.
⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins,
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
- ⁸For I the LORD love justice,
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;
I will faithfully give them their recompense,
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.
⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations,
and their offspring among the peoples;
all who see them shall acknowledge
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.
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.

SECOND READING: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

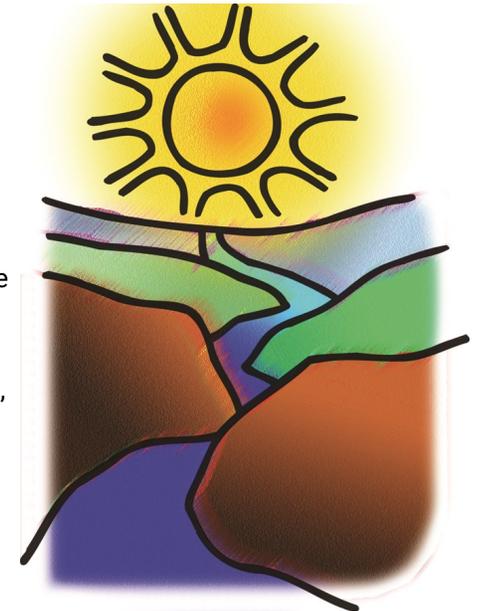
Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

- ¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.
²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28

The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

- ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.
- ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said,
"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.
²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.





Children's Christmas Program,
Sunday, December 13 during the
live streaming of worship at 9:15 a.m.



During our virtual service on the Third Sunday of Advent, experience the story of Jesus' birth shared by our preschool and elementary children. The program is a delightful compilation of video clips, photographs, and music.



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.

*In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
He was in the beginning with God.
All things came into being through him,
and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not overcome it.*

*And the Word became flesh and lived among us,
and we have seen his glory,
the glory as of a father's only son,
full of grace and truth*

John 1:1-5, 14

DECEMBER 13, 2020
THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



Jesus brings good news.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

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

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Sunday | John 1:6-8, 19-28 | John's witness to the light |
| Monday | Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 | Good news of deliverance |
| Tuesday | 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 | A call to rejoice |
| Wednesday | Romans 10:14-17 | Those who bring good news |
| Thursday | 1 Thessalonians 3:6-13 | Timothy's encouraging report |
| Friday | Genesis 18:1-18 | A son for Abraham and Sarah |
| Saturday | Psalms 126 | A people who dream |
| Sunday | Luke 1:26-38 | The birth of Jesus foretold |

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners. Isaiah 61:1 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

God of power and might, help us to be aware of the needs of people and be prepared to bring joy and good news to people through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Mealtimes Prayer:

May this gift of food fill our hearts with laughter and make us shout with joy. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of peace make you holy in spirit and soul and body. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)



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DECEMBER 13, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Joy to the World



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:

- Think or talk about a time when you felt sad or brokenhearted.
- When you feel discouraged, who do you talk to or what do you do to feel better?
- Jesus comes to change our lives. How does Jesus make a difference for your life and the lives of others?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11.

An American emailed his friend in Zimbabwe and asked if he was well. The response was "I am well if you are well." That response comes with a communal understanding of wellness. We can't be well on our own. Neither can we truly feel okay about ourselves if we feel safe and protected while our neighbor does not feel okay. Isaiah 61:1-2 brings good news for all, including—and especially—the oppressed, the brokenhearted, captives, prisoners, those who mourn and those who owe debts (The year of the Lord's favor was a time to forgive debts). God's work of justice and mercy that brings joy will be seen in all the nations (v. 11) and is for all, not just a select and privileged few. How do you see the wellbeing of others as important to your own wellbeing?

Pray: **God of justice, we give you thanks that your goodness and mercy is for us and for all the world through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Isaiah 61:11)**

SERVICE



There is a theme of joy in our readings this week. This joy includes God's promise to overcome pain, disappointment, and fear. Think of someone currently experiencing difficulties. How can you be the hands and voice of God's good news to that person this week?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



Place the wise men further away from the nativity set for now. Wait to place Jesus in the manger until Christmas Eve. On your Advent wreath, light the first candle of hope, the second one of peace, and the third one of joy. Pause for a moment to sit in silence and look upon the nativity set and think about the good news and joy the coming of Jesus brings us.

Say this Bible verse: **Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)**

Pray: **Lord God, thank you for being with us in times of sadness and times of joy. Give us hope, peace and joy as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Amen.**



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