



Saint James Lutheran Church



A Parish of the North Carolina Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

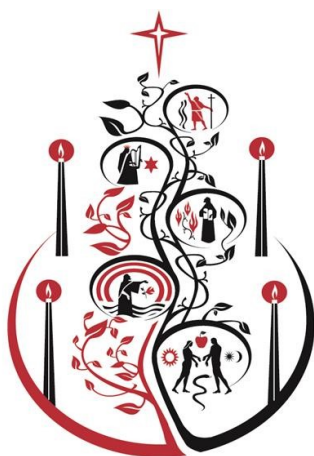


"Growing in Christ Through Worship, Learning, Fellowship, and Service"

104 Union Street South
Concord, North Carolina 28025

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SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 6, 2020



John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

WELCOME

CHORAL PRELUDE

Let the Christ Child In

Do not be afraid, for God will send forth a Son. A tiny Child will comfort and love ev'ry one. A virgin will give birth; God's Son will come to earth. So, open up your heart: Let the Christ Child in.

Do not be afraid, prepare ye the way of the Lord. Turn from your sin; make room for the one who is adored. The angels sing with joy to greet the baby boy. So, open up your heart: Let the Christ Child in.

Those who are walking in darkness will see a wondrous light. For unto us a Child will come, a Prince of Peace and Might. Do not be afraid, for God will send forth a son.

A tiny Child will come to comfort and love ev'ry one. A tiny Child will come to love ev'ry one. A virgin will give birth; God's Son will come to earth. So, open up your heart: Let the Christ Child in. Let the Christ Child in. Let the Christ Child in. Let the Christ Child in!

LIGHTING ADVENT WREATH

~ Kenny & Annette Propst

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness.

Enlighten us with your grace, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father, and of the ☩ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence is held for reflection and self-examination

Most merciful God,

We confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 40:1-11*

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

A reading from Isaiah, the fortieth chapter.

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: *Psalms 85:1-2, 8-13*

A reading from Psalm eighty-five.

¹ LORD, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

² You forgave the iniquity of your people; you pardoned all their sin.

⁸ Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

⁹ Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

continued...

- ¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
¹¹ Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
¹² The LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.
¹³ Righteousness will go before him, and will make a path for his steps.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

A reading from 2nd Peter, the third chapter.

Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed. ¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. ¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL Mark 1: 1-8

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.

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Mark, the first chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,'" ⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN

Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus

- 1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
Born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us;
Let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.

- 2 Born thy people to deliver,
Born a child, and yet a king;
Born to reign in us forever,
Now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all-sufficient merit
Raise us to thy glorious throne.



APOSTLES' CREED

God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we profess our faith.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary,

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again 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 THE PEOPLE

God of power and might, comfort your people and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work. Make their generous lives an example for all. 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.

LORD'S PRAYER

And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to pray,

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.

BLESSING

As we await the coming of Christ, Almighty God, Father, ✚ Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you peace and joy, hope and gladness.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, remember the poor!

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

Reprise on "Even So Lord Jesus Quickly Come"

Paul Manz

The Liturgy Has Ended; The Service Begins!

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WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please e-mail all information to the church office at keith@sjnc.net

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PRAYER LIST

Barbara Merrell
Neta Helms, aunt of Elizabeth Hurley
Ray Faggart in Hospice care at St. Andrews
All health care professionals and first responders including:
Deb Bradshaw
Lauri Fowler
DeeDee Gilbert
Annette Propst
Meagan Lambert
Alison Monk
Jason and Stephanie Matthews
Dr Bradley Propst, son of *Kenny and Annette Propst*
Sam Hurley, son of *Elizabeth Hurley*
Julie Greathouse, friend of *Lois Marlow*
Betsy Waselovich, sister of *Golda Jay*
Lauren, daughter of *Angie Buchanan*
Dr. Stephanie Garrison, daughter-in-law of Margaret Garrison
Dr. Kevin Burns, son-in-law of Margaret Garrison.

If you have someone you would like to add to the prayer list, please contact Keith. 704-786-0166 and leave a message or email at keith@sjnc.net

BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

06-Dec. Marshall Cromer
06-Dec. Carole Grady
08-Dec. Lauren Yoos
10-Dec. Jason Urso
11-Dec. C J Harward III

ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

Lector/Intercessor:
Chris Miller
Vocalist:
Choir Ensemble

OUR STEWARDSHIP

Contributions and Receipts for November 29, 2020
\$5,126.00
(\$8,414.00 needed for weekly)

CUDDLE UP COAT DRIVE

The Cabarrus Partnership for Children kicked off its 14th annual Cuddle Up Coat Drive on October 1st. This winter, more than ever, we need your help to ensure all of our community's children are warm. In an effort to keep our families, children, and staff safe, we will not be accepting coats, socks, underwear, mittens or hats this year. Instead we are asking for checks (written to St. James Lutheran Church, note Coat Drive in the memo line), so that the Partnership staff can purchase the coats and winter items that local children need.

ONLINE GIVING

Giving online is easy and allows you to set up automatic recurring contributions or make a one time contribution and view your complete online giving history from anywhere you have access to the Internet. In a few short minutes, you can make a one-time gift or set up a donation that will process automatically on a recurring basis. Recurring donations are convenient and provide our church with much needed consistent support throughout the year.



BETHLEHEM AT THE FARM

Journey back in time to Bethlehem on Sunday evening, **December 13** from 4:00 – 7:00 pm at Jeff and Nita Jones' farm. You and your family will be welcomed to Bethlehem by the Census Taker and introduced to your guide who will lead you through the experience. See the Ring Out or webpage to register. We ask that you register to control numbers due to the pandemic.

DIRECTORY

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The Rev. Dr. Timothy M. Smith.....Bishop

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OFFICE HOURS

M-Th 8:30-4:00, F 8:30-1:00
Closed for lunch 12:30 - 1:00

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