

The Lutheran Church of the Covenant
“Reaching Out, Reflecting Christ, Renewing Lives”

Yearly reminder:
there is no
resolution that, if
kept, will make you
more worthy of love.

You, as your actual
self and not as some
made up ideal, are
already worthy.

-Nadia Bolz-Weber

Second Sunday of Christmas
January 2, 2022



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



We welcome you to worship here at the Lutheran Church of the Covenant! Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise this God of new life together!

- Bulletins and Communion (wheat or gluten-free wafers, wine or grape juice options) are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.
- Portions marked with * are when we invite you to stand as you are able to do so.
- We encourage you to participate throughout the worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns!
- There will not be a separate time for an offering, so a basket is placed in the back for those who wish to support our local ministry as well as the wider church.
- We will commune from our respective seats, where the presiding minister will invite you to open your respective cups with the Communion elements. We believe this meal is for everyone who wishes to partake, regardless of church affiliation or lack thereof. This tangible gift of God's love is meant for the world to enjoy!
- Following the recommendation of the Cuyahoga County Board of Health regarding COVID-19, we ask that you wear a mask for the duration of your time in the building.

Our Worship Leaders & Staff

Ministers
Presiding Minister
Organist
Lector
Parish Administrator
Custodian

All People
The Rev. Bradley Ross
Robin Crawford
Ted Lockmiller
Jennifer Lasher-Dobush
Vince Besednjak

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Second Sunday of Christmas

Within the gospel reading's profound words lies the simple message that God is revealed in a human person. Though we may try to understand how the Word existed with God from the beginning of time, the wonder we celebrate at Christmas is that the Word continues to dwell among us. Christ comes among us in the gathered assembly, the scriptures, the waters of new birth, and the bread and the wine. Through these ordinary gifts we receive the fullness of God's grace and truth.

Prelude *Cold December Flies Away* (BUSAROW)

Welcome & Announcements

*Call to Worship

We give thanks to God for the new life given to the whole world in Jesus Christ (based on Psalm 98).

Sing to God something brand new!

For God has done wonderful things!

God has not forgotten to love us all!

Even the ends of the earth have heard!

Make a joyful noise!

Break forth in song!

With strings and horns,

sing praise to the Holy One!

With the roaring sea and everything in it!

With all the land and everything in it!

The floods clap their hands.

The hills sing for joy.

Praise to you, O God! God has come to set everything right:

Justice for everyone, compassion for all.

Sing to God something brand new!

For God has done wonderful things!

*Gathering Hymn *Angels We Have Heard on High*

ELW #289

*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.**

Hymn of Praise *What Child Is This*

ELW #295

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen!**

First Lesson

Jeremiah 31:7-14

God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.

⁷Thus says the LORD:

Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
“Save, O LORD, your people,
the remnant of Israel.”

⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
those with child and those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

⁹With weeping they shall come,
and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,

praise your | God, O Zion,
¹³**who has strengthened the bars | of your gates
and has blessed your chil- | dren within you.**
¹⁴God has established peace | on your borders
and satisfies you with the | finest wheat.
¹⁵**God sends out a command | to the earth,
a word that runs | very swiftly.** Antiphon
¹⁶God gives | snow like wool,
scattering | frost like ashes.
¹⁷**God scatters | hail like bread crumbs.
Who can stand a- | gainst God's cold?**
¹⁸The LORD sends forth the | word and melts them;
the wind blows, and the | waters flow.
¹⁹**God declares the | word to Jacob,
statutes and judg- | ments to Israel.**
²⁰The LORD has not done so to any | other nation;
they do not know God's judgments. | Hallelujah! Antiphon

Second Lesson

Ephesians 1:3-14

In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the

promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

Word of God, word of life!

Thanks be to God!

*Gospel Acclamation

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

*Gospel

John 1:18

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

The Gospel according to John, the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord!

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

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. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And 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. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!

Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *Of The Father's Love Begotten*

ELW# 295

*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,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**
**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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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

Joining our voices with the heavenly host and Christians throughout time and space, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your whole church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Creating God, the sun greets us anew each morning. Thank you for waking us up today to witness and share your abundance. Awaken us always to your wisdom and deepen our care for your natural world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Emmanuel, in your name we are assured that you are with us. Train nations and peoples to honor and respect one another, especially those whose names and identities have been mistreated, neglected, or oppressed. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You adopt us as your beloved ones. Accompany parents and children navigating the adoption process, especially those in the foster system. Sustain those struggling with infertility or pregnancy loss. Tenderly embrace all in need. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

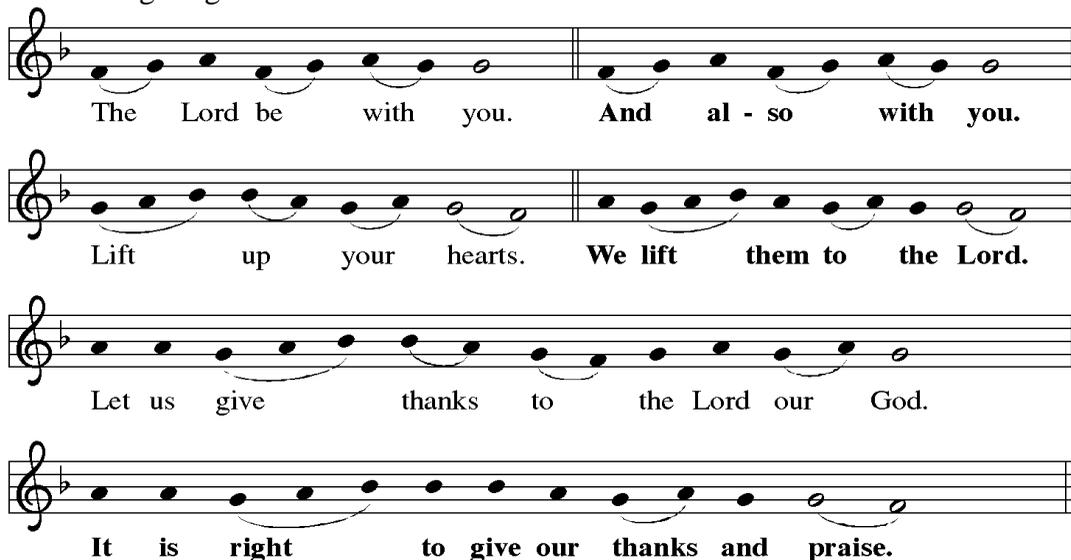
You journey with us through change. Guide those making transitions in their families, workplaces, or communities. As the seasons and the calendar change, equip us for

unexpected challenges. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We give you thanks for all who modeled lives of loving service. Lead us in your grace until, with all your saints, we enter the fullness of your glory. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Rejoicing in your Word made flesh among us, we commend these prayers to you, confident of your grace and love made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen!**

* Great Thanksgiving



The Lord be with you. **And al - so with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

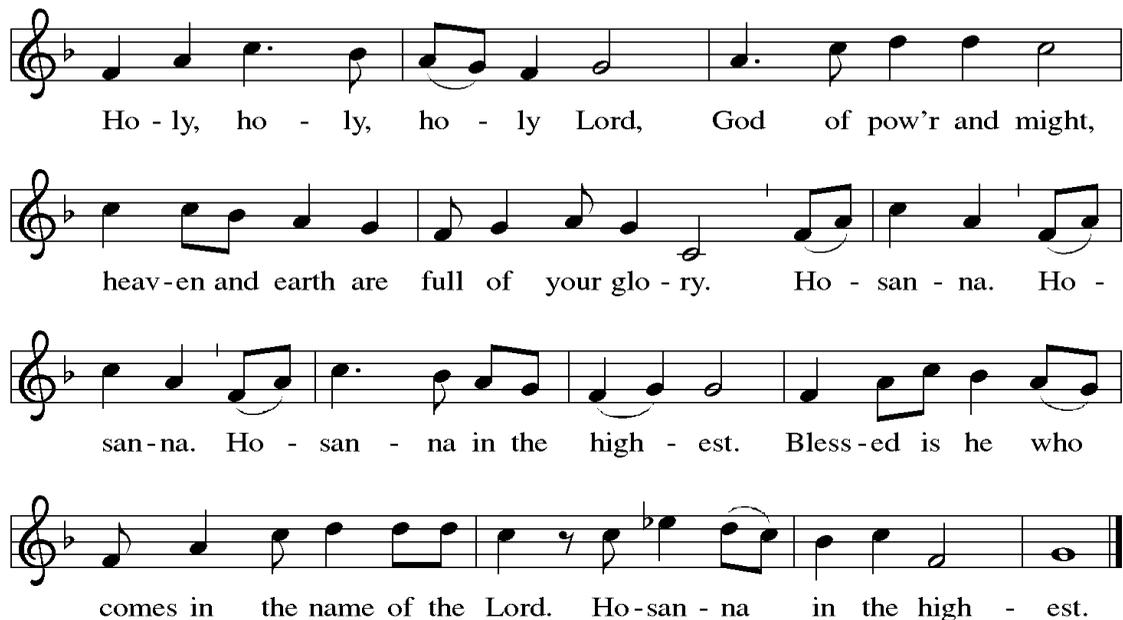
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

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.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh
you have opened the eyes of faith
to a new and radiant vision of your glory,
that, beholding the God made visible,
we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

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, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. 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.

*Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy God, Creator of all and Source of life,
at the birth of time
your word brought light into the world.

In the fullness of time,
you sent your Word, born of Mary,
to shine in our humanity,
making us your precious children forever.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
his birth and life among us,
his death and resurrection,
we await his coming again
when all things will be restored to wholeness.

Holy Spirit, bless us and this bread and cup,
that, held and nourished by you,
we may live as disciples proclaiming hope and new life,
shining with the light of the Messiah.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
both now and forever. **Amen!**

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,**

now and forever. Amen.

Communion

Music Interlude “*Of the Father’s Love Begotten*” (MARTIN)

*Prayer after Communion

Emmanuel, God with us,
you grace us with life and breath
and give us bread for the journey.
Send us out in service to this world that you love,
telling the amazing news of your coming
as Savior and Lord.

Amen!

*Blessing

Grace from God’s own heart,
peace from the † Child in the manger,
and strength from the Spirit of life,
be blessings for you today and forever.

Amen!

*Sending Hymn *Cold December Flies Away*

ELW #299

*Dismissal

Christ is born! So, go in peace! Rejoice in our Savior!

Thanks be to God!

Postlude *Angels Let All Together Praise Our God* (WALTHER)

Praying Together

... for those who are homebound, ill, hospitalized or recuperating: Gayle Agg, Vince Besednjak, Bob Buettner, Joan Clarke, John Crawford, Nicole Crawford, Barbara Fossa, Carolyn Frajter, Ken Frajter, Donna Franz, Nealie Gage, Barb Gaglione, Michelle Garnett, Rosa Garnett, Alex Hohenstein, Judy Jones, Dylan King, Jason Lanese, Sara Mendes, Phyllis Nemeth, Don Rusher Jr, Arlene Stoltz, Marie Storms, Tom Susaneck, Phyllis Treichel, Phyllis Welker, Linda

Wright, Wilma Dancy, Bill Helmick, Nancy Helmick, Robert Lambrecht, Kim (Novak) Leonhardt, Laura Mele, Judy Morgan, Kris Sandor, Bill Wilkens, Eugene Winfrey, the Copeland/Lane Family

LAST WEEK

General Fund receipts for week ending 12/26/2021: \$



For our latest video recordings of worship, bulletins, newsletters, as well as links to daily devotions and other resources, please visit: covenantmaplehts.org.

Check us out on Facebook for the latest updates for community activities and a dose of Good News on your news feed!



Lectionary Blog: In Christ, We Have Known God

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:16-17).

A possibly apocryphal story comes out of the 1960s war between Malaysia, a part of the British Commonwealth, and Indonesia. A group of Gurkha tribesmen from Nepal were asked if they would be willing to jump from transport planes into combat against the Indonesians.

The Gurkhas usually agreed to anything, but this time they originally rejected the plan. The next day one of their officers went to see the British officer who made the request and said they had thought about it and discussed it and would make the jump

under certain conditions.

- 1) The land has to be soft or marshy with no rocks.
- 2) The plane had to fly as slowly as possible and only 100 feet above the ground.

The British officer said the soft landing would be no problem, and they always flew as slowly as possible when troops were jumping, but that 100 feet was too low. The parachute wouldn't have time to open. The Gurkha officer smiled and said, "Oh, that's all right then. We'll jump with parachutes anywhere. You never said anything about parachutes."

Many of us seem to be trying to live our Christian lives without parachutes. We are trying to live up to God's will and way without using the gifts God has given us. We're trying to go it alone. We're trying to lower the standards so that we can meet them; we're trying to be good enough for God on our own – and it is simply not possible. And, like the Gurkhas, we have not realized that we do not have to.

The last few Sundays have been a celebration of the gifts of God's grace. Throughout Advent we heard the promise of the coming Messiah. On Christmas Day the promise was fulfilled – Christ came, the Prince of Peace is here. "Joy to the world, the Lord is come." "Go tell it on the mountain."

And then, in a few weeks, or a few days, or even a few minutes – we forget about the gifts, and our lives return to the same old, same old, as if nothing of any consequence had happened, as if nothing had changed. But if the story the Bible tells is true, everything is different, everything has changed, something of truly monumental importance has happened.

John 1:18 says clearly and simply, "*No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.*"

Some years ago I heard a story about a Sunday school teacher who put her first graders to work drawing pictures of their favorite Bible story. There were lots of pictures of arks and animals. There were quite a few of David with a slingshot and a Goliath who greatly resembled either King Kong or a Macy's parade float. There was even a picture of Mary and Joseph and a donkey in front of what was quite definitely a Holiday Inn.

One little girl had drawn a sweet-faced person wearing long robes, seated on cushions and eating grapes and drinking from a goblet. The teacher asked, “Who is that?” The girl answered “That’s God.” The teacher hesitated a moment and then said, “Well dear, it’s very nice, but you know no one knows what God looks like.” The little girl put down her coloring pencil, crossed her arms and said firmly, “They do now.”

In Christ we have seen God. No, we have not just seen God, we have known God. Knowing is more than seeing; knowing is comprehending, understanding, being intimate with. To know God is to know the riches of God’s grace that have been lavished upon us (Ephesians 1:7-8). To know God is to know that God’s loving generosity has bestowed upon us not only the gift of being loved, but also the gift of being able to love others in the name and way of Christ.

We are invited as those “who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:12) We are invited to show the world what God looks like. We are invited to receive the gift and in turn to share the gift with others, in the name of Christ. Amen and amen.

Originally published December 28, 2015, on LivingLutheran.org.

Delmer Chilton is originally from North Carolina and received his education at the University of North Carolina, Duke Divinity School and the Graduate Theological Foundation. He received his Lutheran training at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia, S.C. Ordained in 1977, Delmer has served parishes in North Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee.