**Worship Plan for Sunday, December 8, 2024** **\* Second Sunday of Advent**

**Introduction to the day**

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.”

**GOSPEL MESSAGE: Road Maintenance**

When John the baptizer arrives on the scene, it must mean Jesus is just around the next bend. Yet the path ahead that the prophet Isaiah describes has no bends or curves. It is a way made straight, one on which the rough spots have been smoothed out and the stumbling blocks removed. Our daily lives are rarely, if ever, made straight and smooth, though. The stressors we encounter at work, the difficulties of parenting or caring for family, the challenges that come as we get older fill our paths with twists and turns. Little is plain and simple, in life or in scripture. The point of the gospel is not that everything will be smooth for us if we just have faith. But neither are we hopelessly lost along the way. The good news is that God provides a way forward. Amid the obstacles are also openings.

Preparing our hearts to follow the way of Jesus involves work. Just as maintaining a roadway demands ongoing inspection and service, our spiritual lives and the lives of our faith communities require consistent, long-term attention, care, and commitment. During Advent, we in the church together recommit to the “roadwork” necessary for preparing the way. We open ourselves to receiving the gift of God’s creative presence in the world.

Faith is the opening through which God begins this work. We do not baptize ourselves. We are not called to do the work alone. Rather, we are baptized into a community of faith, as members of Christ’s body in the world. God’s grace given to us in word and sacrament transforms and empowers us to work collectively, to care for one another and God’s creation, to work for justice and peace. Life together won’t always be smooth or straightforward. There will be obstacles. But by the grace of God, there are also open roads ahead.

**Processional**

**AM: Welcome**

Welcome to Faith Lutheran Church where grace and love abound. A special welcome to those of you here for the first time, or joining us online, and to our guest pastor, Shane Freiberg. It's a joy to worship with all of you! We're in the season of Advent - the season of expectation and preparation not only for the birth of the Christ child, but for the coming of the permanent pastor God has in mind for us. While this is a time for prayer and discernment, it's also a time for action. So, let’s all tune into where the Holy Spirit is leading us and then jump in. Multiple blessings await as we work together to experience and share the love of Jesus Christ here at Faith and beyond our doors.

**P: Gathering**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**P: 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.**

This is the day that the Lord has made,

**let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

**Advent Litany**

**P:** At every beginning there is a yearning for the one who is coming. O Emmanuel,

**A: Wake us up to your coming.**

**AM:** We gather together to expect the unexpected and imagine the unimaginable. O Emmanuel,

**A: Wake us up to your coming.**

**P:** We wait for the day when God will recycle tanks into tractors and transform minefields into soccer fields. O Emmanuel,

**A: Wake us up to your coming.**

**AM:** We stay awake by telling stories that offer a glimmer of a future and agitate dormant hope within us. O Emmanuel,

**A: Wake us up to your coming.**

**P:** Jesus, we welcome your presence now with the lighting of this candle, whose flame brings warmth to winter and fills this place with the glow of peace.

**Amen.**

**Advent Wreath Lighting**

**LIGHTING SONG: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257, v. 3, 4)**

**AM: ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The altar flowers were provided by Eleanor Diaz in memory of her husband, and by Diane Molina celebrating her birthday.

The Burial Service for Ruth will be held at Riverside National Cemetery tomorrow, Monday, December 9, at 10:30am. You must be there 30 minutes prior to the service.

Ladies… The Faith Women of the ELCA Christmas Party with a Purpose Luncheon is this Saturday, December 14th at 10:00 a.m. here at church. As you leave this morning, please stop at the table in the narthex to sign up, and pick up a flyer, which will tell you all about the party. ALL women are invited! Come, and invite your friends!

Don't forget that The Giving Tree will be up from Nov. 25th – Dec. 22nd! All gift cards will be donated to the Menifee Valley Community Cupboard again this year for Christmas!

New Assistive Listening Devices are now available for those who need/want extra help hearing the worship service.  See the Sound Tech at the back table or an Usher for help.

For the month of December, we are collecting canned soup and chili, grocery bags, and empty egg cartons for the Community Cupboard. Please place donations in the wire basket in the foyer.

For more information and a complete monthly calendar, contact the church office.

**P: Silence**

Let us take a moment of silence to quiet our hearts and minds and prepare for worship.

**AM: Please turn to hymn**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Gathering Song:  *Comfort, Comfort, All My People* (The Ignatian Schola)**

**P: Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

**Amen.**

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we are captive 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.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God 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.**

**P: Prayer of the Day**

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.**

**Amen.**

**Children's Chat**

**P: Word**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**Lector: First Reading:** Malachi 3:1-4

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.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**AM: Psalmody:** Luke 1:68-79

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.**

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.**

76 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare 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 shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

Amen.

**Lector: Second Reading:** Philippians 1:3-11

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.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation (ELW p. 151)**

**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

***Please stand for the gospel***

**P: Gospel:** Luke 3:1-6

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**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 Ituraea 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.’ ”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon**

**AM: Please turn to hymn 264**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Hymn of the Day:*Prepare the Royal Highway* (ELW 264)**

**AM: Apostle's Creed**

We continue as we confess our faith using the words of the Apostle's Creed.

**Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come 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.**

**Pastor and Assisting Minister: Prayers of Intercession**

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God’s presence.

Refining God, move through your church. Root out practices that harm your people, and kindle a fire for sharing the gospel among bishops, pastors, deacons, and all the baptized. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

Renewing God, transform your creation. Steer us from habits that harm what you have made, and guide us in practices that preserve and restore creatures and habitats. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

Ruling God, teach the nations your ways. Strengthen organizations and communities that broker peace and care for refugees, immigrants, and all caught in the center of conflict. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

Rescuing God, restore your people who are in any need. Heal all who are suffering, especially Kiki; Lynn Bennett; Arnette Calkins; Vicki Crow; Eleanor Diaz; Reba Dyer; the family and friends of Ruth Ditsch; Yvonne Fields; Doris Hays; Sarge Hunter; Patricia Lee; Pat Loughboro; Patsy Loughboro; Donna McCain; Jean Miles; Sandra Miller; Thordis Moe; Carol Morris; Michael Myers; Esther Neumen; Marilyn Rieti; Dee Seel; Amy Sinclair; Joyce Stromberg; Diana Ward; Harold Whitford; the homebound; the emergency responders; and those grieving and anticipating surgery or tests. At this time, we also pray for those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. Provide comfort and strength, and nurture sustained wholeness for the future. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

Reforming God, fill this congregation with your presence. Enrich our seasonal preparations, and bless the efforts by worship committees, music ensembles, staff, clergy, and lay leaders as they work in the weeks ahead. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

Reassuring God, we remember those who have died and rest in you. Guide us in deep gratitude for their life, and allow us to learn from their faithful witness. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

**P: Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**P: Offering**

This week we highlight the Finance Ministry and Team consisting of the Church Treasurer/Finance Committee Chair and five committee members, a Bookkeeper (an outside salaried position), and the Office Administrator.  This group oversees the finances of the church which includes Member Contributions, Deposits, Payables (paying our bills), and Payroll.

* They manage our financial resources to maximize our ministry here at Faith, making recommendations for Council action.
* They produce monthly Financial Statements accountable to the Council and Congregation.
* Additionally, they take on special projects, such as the Park Project (land sale to the City), Security System replacement, Copier replacement, Verizon Cell Tower negotiations and Contracts Administration (ensuring we remain compliant with all contract terms).

**AM: Offering Prayer**

Let us pray.

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

***Please enjoy listening to our musical offering***

**Musical Offering:*Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers***

**P: Great Thanksgiving**

**Dialogue (ELW p. 152)**

The Lord be with you.

**And also 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.**

**P: Preface (ELW p. 153)**

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:

**Holy, Holy, Holy (all sing) (ELW p. 153)**

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow’r and might: Heav’n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

**P: Thanksgiving at the Table**

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

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.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

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.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**P: INSTRUCTION FOR COMMUNION**

As you are comfortable, you are invited to come forward to receive communion. All of God’s children are welcome to Christ’s table.

Gather at the altar rail to receive the communion elements or if you wish to receive a blessing, please cross your arms over your chest. You may commune yourself once you’ve received the communion elements. Please commune the bread first, turn over the vessel and then carefully open the grape juice. A gluten-free option is available upon request. Please deposit empty cups in the provided baskets on your way back to your seat.

If you would like communion brought to you at your seat, indicate by raising your hand for the Assisting Minister to see and they will bring communion to you.

**P: Invitation to Communion**

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

**During Distribution: *Christ, Be Our Light* (ELW 715)**

***Eat This Bread: Jesus Christ, Bread of Life* (ELW 472)**

**P: Communion**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

**AM: Prayer after Communion**

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

**P: Blessing**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

**Amen.**

**P: Please turn to hymn 631**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Sending Song:*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling* (ELW 631)**

**AM: Dismissal**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**AM: Invitation**

The Church Council Members invite guests and visitors to come and meet us in the narthex as you exit so that we can meet and welcome you. All are welcome to join us in the Fellowship Hall for cookies, coffee and conversation.

**THIS WEEK AT FAITH**

Tuesday, the 10th: Hymn Planners meet at 10:00; WELCA Board meets at 12:30; Outreach Team meets at 3:30

Wednesday, the 11th: Mary Circle Bible Study meets at 10:00; Remembering & Honoring meets at 2:00; Advent Worship & Soup Supper begins at 5:00

Thursday, the 12th: the Cheer/Eucharistic Team meets at 4:00; Pr. Ken's Zoom Bible Study begins at 7:00 (to join, email Pr. Ken at hopegiver@aol.com)

Friday, the 13th: Al-Anon meets at 10:30; the Transition Team meets at 1:00

Saturday, the 14th: the WELCA General Meeting & Christmas Party with a Purpose begins at 10:00

Sunday, the 15th: Worship begins at 9:30 with Pr. Glen Egertson

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