**Worship Plan for Sunday, December 1, 2024** **\* First Sunday of Advent**

**Introduction to the day**

Advent is about the “coming days.” God’s people have always lived in great expectation, but that expectation finds specific, repeated enunciation in the texts appointed for these four weeks. The ancients anticipated a “righteous Branch to spring up for David.” The Thessalonians awaited “the coming of our Lord Jesus with all the saints.” Jesus’ contemporaries hoped for the time “to stand before the Son of Man.” With them we eagerly await the coming days: another Christmas celebration, a second coming, and the advent of Christ in word and supper.

**GOSPEL MESSAGE: Real Worries, Real Hope**

“Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.” With these words, often invoked at the table of holy communion, the church proclaims “the mystery of faith” (ELW, p. 110). At communion, we remember the good story of Jesus’ death and resurrection. But there is more! We also look forward to a time yet to be.

Thoughts of the future can inspire hopefulness for the promise of good things to come. Yet looking ahead can also conjure worries about what we do not know, or a sense of foreboding about what is out of our control. It’s hard not to hear in Jesus’ references to nature a warning about the dramatic effects of climate change. We inhabit a world in which ordinary signs that used to reliably mark the change of seasons are shifting. So when he talks about the trees sprouting leaves as a sure sign that summer is near, the image may leave us unsettled. In recent times, trees in some places have started budding when meteorological spring and summer are still months away. How will the trees respond when frost comes again? How is the church to respond in times such as these? Will the fig tree bloom on time this year?

Jesus’ parable of the fig tree comes smack-dab in the middle of some very disturbing news. Jesus offers an image of hope amid circumstances that seem all but hopeless. He talks of new growth even while what is old and familiar is passing away. Much like Jesus’ parable, the season of Advent invites the church to hold together these multiple, seemingly contradictory realities. We are called to rise up with courage and hope as we anticipate Jesus coming to us, without ignoring the weight of the world or neglecting our very real concerns. Jesus gathers us to the table where we remember his death but also his resurrection, where we pray for the world and also anticipate God’s redemption of all things.

**Processional: C*ome All You People* (Uyaimose)**

**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. 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 hope.

**Amen.**

**Advent Wreath Lighting**

**LIGHTING SONG: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257, vs. 1, 2)**

**AM: ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The altar flowers were provided by the Bosingers in gratitude and by Shirley Houghton “in everything.”

Ladies… The Faith Women of the ELCA Christmas Party with a Purpose Luncheon is coming up on 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 264**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Gathering Song: *Prepare the Royal Highway* (ELW 264)**

**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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father 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:** Jeremiah 33:10-16

10Thus says the LORD: In this place of which you say, "It is a waste without human beings or animals," in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are desolate, without inhabitants, human or animal, there shall once more be heard 11the voice of mirth and the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride, the voices of those who sing, as they bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD:  "Give thanks to the LORD of hosts, for the LORD is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!" For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first, says the LORD. 12Thus says the LORD of hosts: In this place that is waste, without human beings or animals, and in all its towns there shall again be pasture for shepherds resting their flocks. 13In the towns of the hill country, of the Shephelah, and of the Negeb, in the land of Benjamin, the places around Jerusalem, and in the towns of Judah, flocks shall again pass under the hands of the one who counts them, says the LORD. 14 The days are surely coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 15 In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 16 In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The Lord is our righteousness.”

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**AM: Psalmody:** Psalm 25:1-10

1 To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

2 **My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.**

3 Let none who look to you be put to shame; rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.

4 **Show me your ways, O Lord, and teach me your paths.**

5 Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.

6 **Remember, O Lord, your compassion and love, for they are from everlasting.**

7 Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions; remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O Lord.

8 **You are gracious and upright, O Lord; therefore you teach sinners in your way.**

9 You lead the lowly in justice and teach the lowly your way.

10 **All your paths, O Lord, are steadfast love and faithfulness to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.**

Amen.

**Lector: Second Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? 10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. 11 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. 12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. 13 And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

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 21:25-38

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] 25 “There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. 26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” 29 Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; 30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. 31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 34 “Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.” 37Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. 38And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon: “The Gift of Hope”**

Please stand as you are willing and able for the Hymn of the Day.

**Hymn of the Day: *Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus* (ELW 254)**

**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.

God of righteousness, your people live in hopeful expectation of your coming. Fill your church with renewed passion for our shared mission, and deepen our relationships with other Christians and other faith traditions in our local community and across the world. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of the cosmos, all creation shows that your presence is near. Help us sense your goodness and love in the sun and moon, in sprouting leaves and bare branches, in the roaring sea and quiet breeze. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of the nations, your reign extends over all principalities and powers. Give leaders and all in authority hearts for justice and peace. Encourage efforts to enact policies that benefit the common good. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of change, you accompany us through life’s transitions. Be near to all who are changing jobs, moving, welcoming children, or facing the loss of loved ones. Sustain those who are ill or suffering, especially Kiki; Lynn Bennett; Arnette Calkins; Vicki Crow; Eleanor Diaz; Reba Dyer; 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. In times of change, remind us of your steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of community, your Spirit holds us together. Sustain our care for one another. Inspire us to seek new ways to live together and to embrace the diversity of thought and identity in our communities. Lord, in your mercy,

**receive our prayer.**

God of memory, we give you thanks for faithful ones who have died. Tend to our grief and sorrow with renewed trust in your promise of abundant and eternal life. 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 feel free to either listen to our musical offering or sing along***

**Musical Offering: *My Lord What a Morning***

**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 249**

Please stand as you are willing and able.

**Sending Song:*On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry* (ELW 249)**

**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 3rd: Worship & Music meets at 10:00

Wednesday, the 4th: Advent Worship & Soup Supper begins at 5:00

Thursday, the 5th: Snip ‘N Stitch meets at 9:00

Friday, the 6th: Al-Anon meets at 10:30

Saturday, the 7th: Christmas Decorating in the Sanctuary begins at 10:00

Sunday, the 8th: Worship begins at 9:30 with Pr. Shane

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