**Worship Plan for Sunday, December 11, 2022** **\* Third Sunday of Advent**

**Introduction to the day:** A note of joyful expectation marks today’s worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God’s reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ’s advent among us.

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

**Greeting:** Welcome to worship today, we are glad to have you with our Faith Lutheran Church community. I'm Pr. John Barton and I will be leading our service today. This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

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.**

**Advent Wreath Lighting**

**Lighting Song: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257 vs. 5, 6)**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: Announcements**

Monday, the 12th: Executive Board meets at 1:00 in person and Zoom

Tuesday, the 13th: Lydia Circle meets at 10:00 in person

Wednesday, the 14th: Mary Circle meets at 10:00 in person and Zoom; Advent Worship Service begins at 3:00

Thursday, the 15th: Outreach meets at 10:00 in person and Zoom; Game Day begins at 2:00

Friday, the 16th: Al-Anon meets at 10:30 in the library

The Community Cupboard is requesting 16 oz jars of peanut butter for the month of December.

The Church Council would like you to know that if you’d like to contribute to the staff Christmas gifts, the deadline is today, December 11. Please make checks payable to Faith Lutheran Church and write “staff gifts” in the memo line.

The funeral for Loni Knowles will be held January 9th at 11:00 at Rose Hills Memorial Park in Whittier. A memorial service will also be held here at Faith on January 25th at 2:00.

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

**Gathering Song:*Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* (ELW 242)**

**Confession and Forgiveness**

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

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

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ☩ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. **Amen.**

**Prayer of the Day**

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**Childrens Chat**

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

**First Reading:** Isaiah 35:1-10

### 1The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus 2it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. 3Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. 4Say to those who are of a fearful heart, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you.” 5Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; 6then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; 7the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. 8A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God’s people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. 9No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. 10And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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

**Psalmody:** Psalm 146:5-10

5Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help, whose hope is in the Lord their God;

6**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them; who keeps promises forever;**

7who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger. The Lord sets the captive free.

8**The Lord opens the eyes of the blind; the Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.**

9The Lord cares for the stranger; the Lord sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

10**The Lord shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

**Amen.**

**Second Reading:** James 5:7-10

7Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. 8You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. 9Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! 10As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

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

**Gospel:** Matthew 11:2-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

2When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples 3and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” 4Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: 5the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. 6And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.” 7As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? 8What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. 9What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ 11Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Sermon:** Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus the Christ; the Savior of the universe!

An advent riddle for you all, what do the Beatles, Ricky Ricardo, and December 13th have in common? Any guesses?

Don't worry, this one is pretty obscure, they all are involved with someone named Lucy. However, unlike the Beatles song 'Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds' and Ricky's wife and the main character of "I Love Lucy", December 13th involves a real-life Lucy, or as most will know her better- Saint Lucia.

"St. Lucia's Day, festival of lights celebrated in Sweden, Norway, and the Swedish-speaking areas of Finland on December 13 in honor of St. Lucia (St. Lucy). One of the earliest Christian martyrs, St. Lucia was killed by the Romans in 304 AD because of her religious beliefs. St. Lucia's Day is observed on Tuesday, December 13, 2022.

Lucia Day – also called Saint Lucy's day – can be traced back to the 4th century. A Christian feast day, it commemorates the martyr Lucia of Syracuse, who, as legend has it, brought food to Christians hiding in Roman catacombs, lighting her way with a candlelit wreath on her head."

Martyrs, a concept we don't encounter much these days were unfortunately much more common place in the early church.

"From the Greek word for "testimony," as given in a court by an eyewitness to an event, the word martyr was used by early Christians to describe those whose were willing to be put to death rather than take back their WITNESS to Jesus. The martyr's flesh was where the active witness to Jesus Christ met the sword-poking and fire-breathing feedback of the various lords who took offense at this faithful Christian CONFESSION. Martyrs are those who were unwilling to save their own skins and thereby helped to ensure that you got a chance to hear the good news that God is love."

Santa Lucia was a martyr, John the Baptist was a martyr, Jesus was a martyr. They died, tragically and unjustly, but their death had purpose, which I think makes it harder when you run into events where there is equally tragic but pointless and purposeless death. The fact that Saint Lucia day is Tuesday a day where we remember Lucia's martyrdom but also her light that she shared, and the following day will be the 10-year anniversary of the Sandy Hook Elementary Newtown, Connecticut shooting, is hard to swallow, hard to make sense of the proximity and juxtaposition of the two days. As I got in the car this morning, driving in the rain, I did not expect for there to be water on my face as well inside the car. As I drove and the radio announced the upcoming anniversary of that shooting, it struck me differently. 10 years ago I was in the middle of college, now I have a child of my own who will sometime soon go to elementary school.

But more than that, as the story on the radio described the immediate memorialization of the tragedy, gifts and letters and flowers and teddy bears flooding the city of Newtown, street corner memorials popping up all over, the community shattered and then starting to be put back together through shared love and witness to the 26 lives lost senselessly. It described a strange predicament as well, one that we don't necessarily have here in California, that Connecticut in December has snow and what do you do with all these street memorials when the snow is starting to wreck them? The answer was stunning, turn them into "sacred soil," cremate all of the signs and banners and flowers and other things the city had put out as witness of remembrance of the tragedy and the victims, take all of them and make them look around at the new Memorial monument.

Through the tears and tragedy, there was hope. Not a hope that those terrible events could be reversed, but hope in the comforting and coming together of complete strangers, hope in the resistance to let hate or evil win out over the shared love of good people.

We gain hope and guidance from the canticle of the magnificat, or Mary's song of praise after she hears the angel tell her the scary but good news that she would bear the son of God. Mary bears witness to the experience and magnifies God's name in faith, her own faith that God would be faithful to her, to her son, her family and her people in the months and years and times to come.

Mary's words, this young woman's song of Faith and praise to God has shown light in the darkness for so many people over the centuries, and continues to do so today. Her proclamation of what God has done, continues to do, will do in the face of tragedy and evil, combating it just as much as the sorrow in our hearts, lifting up God’s lowly servants in such a way that we will be unreachable to the powers that defy God and seek to harm us. Those words would continue on in Mary's life, once her son had been born, as he grew, and came into his own, starting his own ministry and going places in life and faith that no one else had ever gone, even being the pioneer and shepherd for us all going into new life. God invited Mary into a new thing, God gave her the ember to spark a flame that bathed the generations with light, light in the darkness which the darkness would not overcome.

God reminds us of this light, not so much in light bulbs but more in natural light of sunshine or in the lighting of a candle, like on the Advent wreath, at a Christmas eve candlelight service, or the Saint Lucia crowns adorning faithful young women bringing light in the dark season of winter.

SAINT LUCIA DAY- Meta Harrick Carlson

"We light a candle to remember it doesn't take much. A small flame can make shadows dance and eyes twinkle, casting a warm glow on those we love.

John's Gospel begins with the promise of light that darkness cannot overcome. Though it pulls the sun lower, it does not have the last word!

We cannot always see where we are going, but there is enough light to illumine our bodies, drawn together by both the night and the light.

There is enough to make us wonder - is this a glimpse of heaven's light that is already and not yet on the way?

We grin as the wax drips, giving itself to the light, and for a moment we know why God came down: In the darkness we are so very beautiful."

Hope, Wait, Prepare, Advent is continuing. Amen.

**Hymn of the Day:*Canticle of the Turning* (ELW 723)**

**ASSISTING MINISTER**

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 the fullness of Christ’s presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

Gracious God, we rejoice in the gifts of your Spirit. Equip the global church to magnify your love and peace in every land. We pray for the work of the Lutheran World Federation and ELCA Global Mission. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Abundant God, we rejoice in your creation. Revive lands we have squandered and depleted. Make gardens flourish in cities and neighborhoods. Cleanse polluted air and water so living things may breathe, drink, and praise you. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Righteous God, we rejoice in your justice. End racism and oppression. Deliver all who are unjustly imprisoned or persecuted. Reconcile nations and peoples in conflict. Help us pray for our enemies. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Healing God, we rejoice in your compassion. Comfort any in distress because of worry, illness, or loss especially Nancy Blackmer; JoLynne Buehring; Arnette Calkins; Vicki Crow; Eleanor Diaz and family; Carole Erickson; Kally Homchick; Brian Kniss and family; the family of Loni Knowles; Sandra Miller; Carol Morris; Sheila Neal; Wilma Parker; Andrew Quinn; JoAnne Schriock; Bill and Dee Seel; Amy Sinclair; Joyce Stromberg; Dennis and Carol Sutherland; Diana Ward; the homebound; the Emergency responders; and those grieving and anticipating surgery/tests.  We especially pray for those affected by COVID-19 and those who have lost loved ones. At this time we also pray for those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. At this time we also pray for those we name aloud or silently in our hearts. Strengthen and protect health care workers, rescue teams, crisis counselors, and all who risk themselves to keep others safe. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Abiding God, we rejoice in your company. Give us calm and patient hearts as we gather with family and friends. Keep us mindful of those for whom this season is not happy. Console the grieving and surround them with loving support. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, we rejoice with Mary, Mother of our Lord, and with all the saints, that your mercy endures for all generations. Look with favor on those who have died and lead us to joyfully sing of your everlasting promises. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus’ name we pray.

**Amen.**

**Peace:** The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

**Offering:** At this time, we remember that the giving of our offering is an authentic part of worship. Thank you so much for all the ways you give and help to make the ministries of this church possible!

**ASSISTING MINISTER: 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.**

**Musical Offering: *Amazing Grace (My Chains are Gone)***

**Great Thanksgiving**

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.**

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 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.**

**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.

You may kneel or stand at the altar rail, I will distribute 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. If you are concerned about spillage, place a napkin in your hand, commune the bread first, turn over the vessel and then carefully open the grape juice. There is also a gluten-free option available, ask me at the rail. 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.

**Thanksgiving at the Table (ELW p. 153)**

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.**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us 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.**

**Invitation to Communion:** Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

**Communion**

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.

**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.**

**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.**

**Sending Song:*Good Christian Friends, Rejoice* (ELW 288)**

**Doxology:*Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow* (ELW 884)**

**ASSISTING MINISTER: DISMISSAL**

Go in joy. Rejoice with faithfulness. **Thanks be to God.**

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