



Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

1187 C.R. 128 & U.S. Rt. 20

Fremont, Ohio 43420

Pastor Tim Miller

93.1FM

Church: 419-332-6820

faithchurch@amplex.net

www.faithfremont.org

First Sunday of Advent

December 1, 2024

Setting 3 with Holy Communion

*Congregation please stand as you are able.

Introduction

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.

Prelude: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* **Peter Christian Lutkin**

Welcome & Announcements: Joys and Concerns
Signing of the Pew Register by all present.

***Opening Hymn:** *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers* **ELW 244**

GATHERING

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

***Greeting**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,
Let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

Advent's Holy Light Candle Lighting – Congregational Singing Part

Lighting of Advent Candle

P: Our Advent journey begins today with the lighting of the first candle, the candle of Hope. Like the flame of a candle, may hope be ignited in our hearts, reminding us that brighter days are ahead.

P: For those of us facing difficult challenges

C: Ignite our hearts with hope.

P: For the end of wars wreaking havoc and pain in our world

C: Ignite our hearts with hope.

P: For safety for those fleeing the tyranny of oppression

C: Ignite our hearts with hope.

P: For the light of forgiveness to shine in our hearts

C: Ignite our hearts with hope.

P: Gracious Creator, in moments of uncertainty, we turn to you with hearts heavy but hopeful. Grant us the strength to navigate challenges, the wisdom to see possibilities, and the courage to embrace the journey ahead. May hope be our guiding light, leading us to a future filled with grace, love, and possibilities beyond our imagining. Amen.

Advent's Holy Light – Congregational Singing Part

Repeat from previous page

*Confession and Forgiveness

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,
alive in the world,
reviving creation,
arriving soon.

C: Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God of mercy,

C: we confess that we have sinned.

We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.

We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

P: God of might,

C: we confess that we have sinned.

We have turned away from our neighbors.

We have trusted false promises.

P: God in our midst,

C: we confess that we have sinned.

We plead: come to us.

Bring your mercy to birth in us.

P: A righteous branch springs forth:

it is Christ the Lord, our Savior,

in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,

receive the grace and forgiveness of God

through † Christ Jesus,

whose day draws near.

C: Amen.

Glory to God – sung to the tune of *Angels From the Realms of Glory*

Glory be to God the Father and to Christ His Only Son.

Praises to the Holy Spirit, may our voices sing as one.

Come and worship, come and worship.

Glory be to God on high.

***Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray.

C: 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.

WORD

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

First Reading: Jeremiah 33:14-16

In the Old Testament, “righteousness” often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today’s reading, Jerusalem’s future name—“The LORD is our righteousness”—proclaims that God is even now working salvation for Israel.

R: A reading from Jeremiah, the 33rd chapter.

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.

C: Thanks be to God.

Responsive Reading: Psalms 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.**

Second Reading:

1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

Upon Timothy's report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessings for the people of this growing church.

R: A reading from 1 Thessalonians, the third chapter.

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.

The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Alleluia – sung to the tune of *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Amen

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Amen

Sing we praises to our Father, to Christ Jesus, to the Spirit.

Alleluia, Amen. Alleluia, Amen.

God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 21st chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

P: [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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children's Sermon

Sermon

***Sermon Hymn:**

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

ELW 254

***Apostles' 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.**

***Prayers of Intercession**

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

A brief silence.

R: 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,

C: receive our prayer.

R: 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,

C: receive our prayer.

R: 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,

C: receive our prayer.

R: 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 those we name at this time (Pause for people to be named)*. In times of change, remind us of your steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy,

C: receive our prayer.

R: 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,

C: receive our prayer.

R: 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,

C: receive our prayer.

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

C: Amen.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

*Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

(10:30) Sr. Choir:

The Advent of Our God

B. Price

Offering

Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;

Praise him, all creatures here below;

Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;

Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

*Offering Prayer

P: Creator God, you made the whole world,
even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us.

We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine.

Strengthen us with this food, that we may live in expectation
for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

***The Great Thanksgiving**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

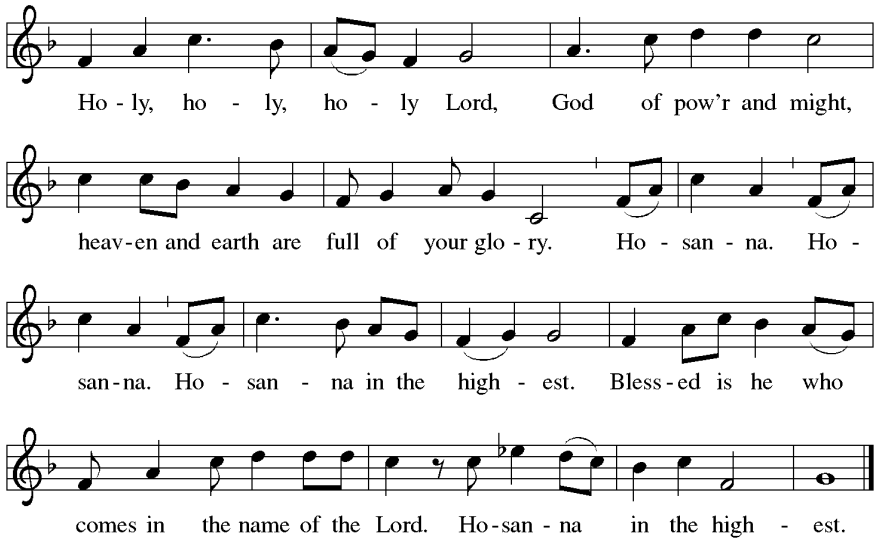
C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: 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:



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**

P: 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.

P: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

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

P: 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.

C: Come, Lord Jesus.

P: 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.

C: Come, Holy Spirit.

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

C: Amen.

***Lord's Prayer**

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

C: **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

P: God feeds us with tender mercy.

Come to the table.

Lamb of God – sung to the tune of *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

O Lamb of God you take away our sins. Have mercy on us, Lamb of God.

O Lamb of God you take away our sins. Have mercy on us, Lamb of God.

Amen, Amen. Thy name we praise. Have mercy on us. Amen.

Distribution of Communion

Communion will be continuous. The ushers will invite you to come forward by the center aisle. You will be handed the bread with the words, "The Body of Christ given for you." You may respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God!". Step to the Communion Assistant and take the cup. They will speak the words, "The Blood of Christ shed for you." You may respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God!" Empty cups may be placed in the basket as you return to your seat by the side aisle.

If you prefer gluten-free bread, please let the Pastor know. If you prefer grape juice, please let the Communion Assistant know. If you prefer not to receive or

have children who have not yet received, please let the Pastor know and he will offer a blessing.

Communion Hymn:

ELW 715 *Christ, Be Our Light*

ELW 241 *O Lord, How Shall I Meet You*

***Post Communion Blessing**

P: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

***Prayer After Communion**

P: Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life,
for the bread of salvation.

We thank you for coming among us,
for leading us into peace.

We thank you for showering us with mercy,
for sending us into the world.

Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us
as we feed the hungry in your name.

C: Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

***Blessing**

P: God of endings and beginnings,
God in the darkness and the light,
God, our hope for the journey,
✠ bless and keep you now and forever.

C: Amen.

***Closing Hymn:**

Hark, the Glad Sound

ELW 239

***Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

C: Thanks be to God.

***Postlude:**

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

David Christensen

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“MAKE ME TO KNOW YOUR WAYS, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation” (Psalm 25:4-5, NRSV).

2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES are available in the narthex. If you have not picked yours up yet, please do so.

CHURCH TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES AND THE F.L.C.W. PROGRAM BOOKLETS for 2025 are available in the narthex for you as well.

ANNUAL REPORTS DEADLINE – In order to put the Annual Report into your hands a week earlier than the January 26th meeting, the deadline to have all committee reports submitted to the office is January 5, 2025. Please plan accordingly. Thank you.

AIR CONDITIONING FUND – The Air Conditioning Fund is being closed. Please direct your funds to another of our needed areas. Thank you.

FUNDS YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO ON THE “SPECIAL” LINE OF YOUR OFFERING ENVELOPES:

Food Pantry	Habitat for Humanity	Prayer Shawl Ministry
Share ‘N Care	Initial	Pastor’s Helping Hand
Memorials	Liberty Center	Tanzania Scholarships
Faith Youth	Sunday School	Music Enhancement Fund
Endowment	Community Outreach	Thanksgiving Offering
Card Ministry	New Housing Ohio	Ash Wednesday
Sound System	Christmas Offerings	Lenten
Christ Care	Maundy Thursday	Faith Fellowship Club
FLCW Fellowship & Service (sewing ladies)		
Handicap Accessibility Updates		

THE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS will begin studying the season of Advent on December 1st. All kids grades 9 – 12 are welcome. We meet in Room 8 on Sundays, and start around 9:30 a.m., giving you plenty of time to have some breakfast!.

FAITH WOMEN'S GROUP are excited for their upcoming program on **Tues, Dec 10th at 7:00 p.m.** in the Fellowship Hall. Trinity Lutheran Church and School from Toledo has a special program that interacts at various settings such as hospitals, nursing homes, and schools to name a few. Nancy is the special handler of two golden retrievers, Claudia and Lorenzo, who have had special training to be comfort dogs. **ALL are welcome** to come and hear how this program came about and enjoy the love from two beautiful dogs. The women will meet in the lounge at **6:30 p.m. for their December General Meeting** prior to the program. Please join us.

TERRA COMMUNITY CHOIR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT:

Faith Lutheran Church Women's Group are honored and blessed to Welcome back the Terra Choral Choir on **Tuesday, December 3rd, at 7:00 p.m.** **All are welcome** to come and enjoy beautiful voices as well as light refreshments to prepare us for the upcoming Christmas Season. The women would welcome your help in providing cookies and brownies for this event. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board.

THE TOLEDO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS

CONCERT will be held at Grace Lutheran Church, 705 W. State St., Fremont, on **Friday, December 6, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.** in the church sanctuary. Tickets can be purchased at Grace Lutheran Church Office Monday-Thursday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. or Fridays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Adults \$10; Seniors (65 & Over) \$8; Students (18 & Under) \$5. Cash or Check only.

REMINDER... *When Sandusky County is under a Level 3 Snow Advisory the church will be closed. This includes Sunday services as well as all weekday events, meetings and activities for that day. If we are under a level 1 or 2 snow emergency, the church will be open and if it's on a day of worship, we will have worship.*

GIBSONBURG AREA CHURCHES PRESENT THE 2024 DRIVE-THRU

NATIVITY – Come view this FREE presentation of the Biblical Christmas Story as it “*comes to life*” in 9 scenes portrayed by individuals from the community. Drive past slowly in the **safety and comfort of your own vehicle** to view each scene as you listen to a recording from the Gospels of Matthew, Luke and John reminding us of the Good News that Jesus was born for everyone! (Narration is available in a **sanitized** cassette, CD or flash drive to accommodate all vehicles.) Dates are **Saturday and Sunday, December 7 and 8 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.** Location is the Parking lot at Zion Lutheran Church, 500 S. Brentwood Ave., Gibsonburg, Ohio.

TASTE OF THE SEASON DINNER AND ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CONCERT

featuring the music of the Fremont Ross Choir along with other seasonal musical talents will be held at **Trinity United Methodist Church**, 204 N. Wayne Street, Fremont on **Sunday, December 8th**. Concert begins at 7:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public (a good-will offering is taken and donated). Dinner begins at 5:30 pm and will feature: Appetizers, Homemade Soup, Veal Cutlet Parmesan, Baked Pasta, Vegetable, Cheesecake Toll-house Dessert, and Beverage. Dinner tickets are \$16.00 and you may call Terri at 419-332-8167 for dinner reservations/tickets. Deadline for reservations is December 1st, 2024.

NEW ADDRESS – Millie Fetterman is now living at Elmwood Assisted Living. Her new address is 1545 Fangboner Rd., Room 102, Fremont, OH 43420. Phone number remains the same.

PRAYER SISTERS FOR 2025 – You have the opportunity to be matched up with a prayer sister for 2025. Prayer sisters keep in touch with each other throughout the year. This can mean meeting for lunch or dinner, sending greeting cards, praying for each other regularly and anything else fun that you can think of to do together. **It really is quite rewarding!** If you would like to have a prayer sister please let Barb Kocsis know (567-219-2603). Thank you.

Fremont, Ohio

ADVENT TOUR OF CHURCHES



Tour the inside of
**CHURCHES
IN FREMONT**
Historical Buildings
Stained Glass
Music & More

SUNDAY AFTERNOON
1-4 pm

DEC

15th

2024

You drive past them and wonder, now come and see.
More info at LIFTCHURCHES.ORG



ASSISTING TODAY

Pastor: Rev. Tim Miller **Organist:** Parm Boyer

Sr. Choir Director: Darla Brown

8:00 a.m.

10:30 a.m.

Greeter: Robert Fought Randy & Peggy Koch

Lector: Robert Fought Julia Norris

Acolyte: Greyson Tooman Julia Norris

Communion: B. Fox/M. Fought Ginger Walker & Randy Koch

Counters: Cheryl Durnwald* & Randy Koch

Fellowship Time Host: Adult II Sunday School Class

Altar Guild: Annie, Allison and Lauren Gazdecki

ASSISTING NEXT WEEK

Pastor: Rev. Tim Miller **Organist:** Parm Boyer **Pianist:** Becky Fox

Sr. Choir Director: Darla Brown **Praise Choir Dir.:** Becky Fox

Flautist: Marilyn Ring

8:00 a.m.

10:30 a.m.

Greeter: Easton Root Alta Olmstead & Ruth Gerber

Lector: Greyson Tooman Rachel Wasserman

Acolyte: Greyson Tooman Rachel Wasserman

Communion: C. Paeth/K. Paeth Carol Trick & Randy Brown

Counters: Niki Wasserman* & Nicole Weiker

Fellowship Time Host: Schneider Family

Altar Guild: Annie, Allison and Lauren Gazdecki

PRAYING DAILY



For healing and hope: Pat Copley, Connie Diekman, Della Humbarger, Denny Krumnow, Bill Leutenegger, Stan Moyer, Nancy Mylander, Letty Rusch, Bob Schneider, Dorothy Swedersky, Janet Tressler, Carnetta Weber, Linda Woessner, Cameron Druyor, Al & Judi Krumnow, Gayle Maves, LuAnn Sharp, Rose Wensinger.

For the Family of: Nancy Roach

For our Military: Noah Egbert, Troy Halfhill, Jade Kayser, Daniel Linder, Tony Rozzi, Christopher Templeton, & Joshua Tooman.

For our Bishops: Bishop Christian Ndossa, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and NWOS Bishop Daniel Beaudoin and Staff

For our partner congregation in Bumila, Tanzania

And its pastor: Pastor Peter Magasi

FAITH ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK OF – Dec. 1 to Dec. 8

Sunday

Dec. 1----- 8 & 10:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
 9:15 a.m. Sunday School & Fellowship Time

Monday OFFICE OPEN

Dec. 2-----8 a.m. Prayer & Conversation at Wendy's
 10 a.m. Valley View Worship & Holy Communion
 7:30 p.m. Dartball – Away vs. Clyde

Tuesday

Dec. 3-----7:00 p.m. Terra Choir Christmas Concert

Wednesday OFFICE CLOSED

Dec. 4-----6:30 p.m. Bell Choir
 7:30 p.m. Praise Choir
 7:30 p.m. Senior Choir

Thursday

Dec. 5-----9-3 p.m. Fellowship & Sew Day
 3 p.m. Christ Care

Friday

Dec. 6-----

Saturday

Dec. 7-----9:15 a.m. Christ Care

Sunday

Dec. 8----- 8 & 10:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion
 9:15 a.m. Sunday School & Fellowship Time
 1-6 p.m. Hall Reserved – Bill Seibert

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 2024: ATTENDANCE: 156 – OFFERING: \$4,346.99

GOSPEL MESSAGE

December 1, 2024
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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.