



Advent

OUR SAVIOR
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Third Sunday of Advent
Sunday, December 13, 2020



OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
745 Front Street S., Issaquah, WA 98027
425-392-4169

SERVICE OF THE WORD—THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

GATHERING: THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

CALL TO WORSHIP *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* — French processional, 15th century Cantor
O come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

WELCOME

Pastor Jim Kruse

THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM

PM: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

PM: When the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, the Word made flesh, a burst of love and light shining in a world of darkness. Gathered in a season of lengthening shadows, we look to our God who calls us by name.

For we are God's beloved. We are children of the light. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.

Therefore, let us live as children of the light. Mindful of our baptism, let us clothe ourselves in the love of Christ and put on the hope revealed to us.

C: Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Light Three Candles to Watch for Messiah — Yiddish folk tune Cantor

Light three candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the King of glory.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

PM: Let us pray. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God,

C: and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

WORD: GOD SPEAKS TO US IN SCRIPTURE READING, PREACHING AND SONG.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the

mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

AM: Word of God, word of life. C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

AM: Word of God, word of life. C: Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Come Now, O Prince of Peace — Geoyong Lee, b. 1947 Cantor

Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

THE GOSPEL

John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' " as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

PM: The Gospel of the Lord. C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

The One Unknown

Pastor Jim Kruse

Last year at this time, I told the story about how our family would use this Saturday, the second Saturday in December, to travel deep into the snowy Rocky Mountains around our home to cut our family Christmas tree. No matter how cold it was, no matter how deep the snow was, my two brothers, my sister, and I, would always pile into the car with my father and make the trek. I talked about how we would spend several of hours looking for, arguing over, cutting down, and dragging out, the perfect Christmas tree. This tree was then carefully tied to the top of the car and hauled down out of the mountains, back to the house. Then sometime, usually just before supper, we would get out the tree stand, and the four of us kids would argue about how many branches should be cut off of the bottom and which side should go against the wall. The day could only officially end when we had properly placed the tree in the corner of the living room. Today I want to talk about the rest of the story.

On Sunday, the next day, after church, we would pick up the arguing where it had left off of the day before. Sunday afternoon was always spent decorating the Christmas tree. There were arguments about what color lights should be used and where they should be placed. There were arguments about who could hang which ornaments and where they could be hung. There were arguments about the proper way to hang the tinsel and how much looked good. And when we ran out of those kinds of arguments, we would find something else to argue about. On these days, my mother served as more of a referee than anything else. And yet, now as an adult, I remember these decorating days with fondness, and consider them good family time.

I am not sure why this ritual of decorating the Christmas tree was so important to us. Why was it so laden with emotion? Why did we insist on carrying it out with such precision, even at the cost of straining important relationships? My guess today, several decades later, is that it had something to do with a deep-seated thought whatever it was that made this time of year special, whatever gave Christmas its magic, was somehow tied to getting everything just right. Somehow, as the “doers” of Christmas, it was our job to get everything in order, so that whatever it is that makes Christmas “good” will happen as it should.

This is actually not as strange a thought as it may sound at first. Human beings have always believed that, at some level, it is part of our job on this earth, to create the proper conditions for God to be seen and heard. It is as though God does not have the wherewithal to be revealed without our help. And in fact, something like that is going on in the Gospel lesson I just read.

By the time John the Baptist arrives on the scene, arguing among the leaders of Jesus’ day about the various Messianic expectations had reached a fever pitch. This Gospel for the Third Sunday in Advent represents an attempt to carry out an official sanctioning of the life and work of John the Baptist. They want to be sure that John is acting as a proper agent for God. Is John really the one that the people who come back to Jerusalem from trips to the Jordan River say he is? And if so, is he carrying out his work properly?

The reading for today says that the priests and Levites were “sent out” from Jerusalem, the very heart and center of the Jewish nation, to the edge of the nation, the Jordan River. The place where John set up his ministry was the exact same spot along the Jordan that God

had led their ancestors under Moses. It was the gateway into the Land of Promise. Any true Messiah was expected to begin his work here at the Jordan. And the questions they asked John were from their common, prepared list. “Who are you?” “Are you the Messiah? Are you Elijah? Are you the prophet (meaning a new Moses)?”

To each suggestion John simply says, “No!” John makes no claim to divine presence for himself. They have misunderstood his intentions. They have wasted their trip.

Whenever we put so much meaning, so much emotional energy into getting things just right, making our world perfect, deep down we are doing the same thing that the leaders from Jerusalem were doing. We have set our minds on how God will enter our hearts and lives. The way my brothers and sister and I argued our way through our Christmas checklist is similar to the way each one of us works through an inner checklist each time a person or event enters our lives with the possibility making things better, making us healthy and whole once again. If it looks like something that will lift us up out of the troubles we are in, if they sound like they have something to offer, if we feel like maybe this time, this event, or this person will be the answer to our prayers, we perk up. We give the situation a thorough going over. “Who are you, really? And what is your real motive for doing what you are doing? Do you really care as much about me as you seem, or are you just trying to pull one over one me?”

The surprise to the examination committee that comes out from Jerusalem is that John tells them that he is none of the people on their list. He is no more than a voice. He is a witness. At best, he is a mirror who will help reflect the fact that the rescuer they are looking for is already standing disguised among them. The one they think will enter through the gate on the outskirts of things, has already infiltrated, undetected, to the heart and center of things. It is too late. They are not only wasting their time looking at him for Messiah. They are wasting their time looking for the Messiah along the banks of the Jordan River at all.

This is the surprise that comes with Advent. And it seems to catch us off guard every time. We do not find the presence of God in our lives by examining the daily encounter with people and events against a list of what we think the Christ of God will be like. The Christ of God is not found in feeling that we believe. The Christ of God is not found in doing the things we think we are supposed to do. The Christ of God is not found in creating the proper attitude or devotional life for him to enter. In fact, the Christ of God is not found by us at all. But the Christ of God finds us. Disguised as one of us, he infiltrates our lives unnoticed. The Christ of God cries in our cribs. The Christ of God grows up in our houses. He wears our shirts, he drives our cars, he does our chores.

When John the Baptist told the priests and Levites, “Among you stands one whom you do not know. . . I am not worthy to untie his shoes,” he is saying the same thing to you and to me. Among you stands the Christ, the one whom God has sent to quiet your fears, the one whom God has sent to mend your broken hearts, the one whom God has sent to heal your wounds. Among you stand the one you are seeking, and he has already begun his work. You are wasting your time trying to make the conditions right. There is no way you can do that. In fact, all of our efforts taken together would not make you worthy to even take off his shoes.

The baptism of John was just that: “John’s Baptism.” It was a symbolic washing with water to show that one had heard the message and been changed by it. But the baptism that you and I received was not my baptism, nor was it your baptism. It was not an Our Savior Lutheran Church’s baptism, or even a John the Baptist’s baptism. It was the baptism of Christ. It was not just a washing with water. It was a deep infiltration, a deep intertwining of our life with his, our death with his, our fate with his. In baptism, the one who is unknown to us gets into the very center of our being and begins to make himself known in the surprising and unexpected events of life.

As much as we want and need to examine the things that look like they are from God, or to make things just right for God’s coming, our efforts to do so will always fall short. As hard as we work to make the experience of Christmas be the inspiring, love-filled event we need it to be, it will surely be less than that. There is always at least one unknown. Fortunately, the Christmas we have this year will not come from what we do or do not do, or what we feel or fail to feel. The Christmas we have will come from the moments that we quit our “doing” altogether and let “the one who stands among us” come forward, filling our hearts with what we need the most.

HYMN OF THE DAY

On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry

Cantor

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; Tune: adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings glad tidings of the King of kings!

Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin; make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare for Christ to come and enter there.

Stretch forth your hand, our health restore, and make us rise to fall no more;
Oh, let your face upon us shine and fill the world with love divine.

All praise to you, eternal Son, whose advent has our freedom won,
Whom with the Father we adore, and Holy Spirit, evermore.

OFFERING

As you consider how your life has been sustained emotionally, physically and financially, during the challenging events of 2020, please take this opportunity to give your gratitude to God through your generous financial support of the ongoing ministries of Our Savior Lutheran Church.

OFFERING PRAYER

PM: 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.

C: Amen.

OFFERING SONG

In the Lord — Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994; Taizé Community

Cantor

In the Lord I'll be ever thankful, in the Lord I will rejoice!
Look to God, do not be afraid; lift up your voices, the Lord is near.

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 THE PEOPLE

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

God of preachers and messengers, you have entrusted your church with the work of proclaiming good news. Strengthen the witness of bishops, pastors, deacons, church musicians, lay leaders, and all people who contribute their prayers and talents to public worship. Embed your word in their hearts. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of every living creature, you announce the year of your favor for all of creation. Extend your kindness and relief to endangered animals and plants. Strengthen the human beings who rely on the rhythms of nature to make their living. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of all peoples and nations, you plant us as your oaks of righteousness and ask us to care for one another. Be present with the leaders of every nation as they govern. Give them a spirit of righteousness, that your goodness and mercy is revealed through their actions. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of exiles and wanderers, you repair what was once destroyed. We pray for people who have been displaced from their homes by fire, flood, earthquake, or storm. Support the work of Lutheran World Relief, Lutheran Disaster Response, and all disaster relief organizations in their recovery efforts. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. Bestow your spirit upon this congregation and empower us to comfort the people who turn to us in times of need. Make your church a place of refuge and healing. We pray for: Les, Mayah, Gail, Judy, Jerry, Mary, Ron, Carol, JD, Marlene, Nancy, communities across the country, Dave, Guests of the Community Meals Program, Sonja, Nicole, Josee and Jeannie. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For what and for whom else do the people of God pray this morning?

[Here other intercessions may be offered.]

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of sinners and saints, you offer joy even in the midst of our grief. We are grateful for the beloved, imperfect people whose lives testified to your radiant love. Anoint all who mourn with the oil of gladness. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

SENDING SONG *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* — French processional, 15th century Cantor

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

BLESSING

PM: Having been justified by God's grace, you are now heirs of hope – a hope born in a manger. And with this hope, you have been blessed – a hope for all people. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

POSTLUDE

Rhosymedre — R.Vaughan Williams

Jiyoung Lee

Commemorations for the Week

Lucy, martyr, died 304, Sunday, December 13

Lucy was a young Christian of Sicily who was martyred during the persecutions under Emperor Diocletian. Her celebration became particularly important in Sweden and Norway, perhaps because the feast of Lucia (whose name means "light") originally fell on the shortest day of the year.

John of the Cross, renewer of the church, died 1591, Monday, December 14

John was a member of the Carmelite monastic order, and worked to reform it. His writings reflect a deep interest in mystical thought and meditation.

Las Posadas (LLC), Wednesday, December 16

This celebration, long popular in Mexico, takes its name from the "posadas," or lodgings, sought by Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem. Their search is reenacted in a neighborhood, unsuccessfully, until finally they are welcomed in, and a party commences.

Serving in Worship:

Worship Leader:	Pastor Jim Kruse
Assisting Minister:	Jen Winslow
Cantors:	Marc Montague, Lori Downey
Videographer:	Leslie Waltzer
Video Editor:	Dave Carlson
Banner:	Elaine Stamm
Bulletin Cover:	Brad Marx

Readings for Next Sunday: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

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Our Savior Lutheran Church Staff

Rev. James R. Kruse, *Transition Pastor*
Shari Lundberg, *Parish Administrator*
Dr. Jiyoung Lee, *Parish Organist*

Scott Hafso *Director of Worship & Music*
Kate Gagnon, *Lay Visitation Minister*



Additional worship resources:

Reading: Psalm 126

Suggested Hymn for Listening: *Christ, Be Our Light*
Text & Music: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

Prayer is putting our faith into action. We invite you to include these people in your daily prayers. You can make prayer requests via email at office@oslcissaquah.org. All written requests will remain on this list for 4 weeks.

Les Gagnon peace and healing. (Kate Gagnon)

Mayah healing. (Connie Fletcher)

Gail comfort and peace following cancer diagnosis. (sister of Sandy Aldworth)

Judy Shaffer comfort and peace of mind. (Sandy Aldworth)

Jerry Nack preparing for upcoming surgery for spinal stenosis. (Kate Gagnon)

Mary healing, wholeness, comfort and a clear sense that God is in control. (Marilyn Carlson)

Ron Gerde healing for recent medical issues. (Brother to Bob Gerde)

Carol Johnson ongoing medical issues, and mourning the recent loss of her husband & her brothers. (Mary Fricke)

JD Golick diagnosed with stage 3 stomach cancer, completed one cycle of chemotherapy. (nephew to Patty Gerde)

Marlene Pickering discernment in medical decisions to alleviate pain. (Mary Fricke)

Nancy Cumming peace as she awaits an opportunity to move into Timber Ridge. (Mary Fricke)

Nancy Anderson comfort and healing. (Cheryl Neeb)

Washington, Oregon and California Wildfires peace for those affected. (Marilyn Carlson)

Safety and peace for communities being torn apart during these difficult times. (Karen Hansen)

Dave Carlson continued healing and following kidney transplant surgery.

Guests of the Community Meals Program safety, health and peace of mind. (Connie Fletcher)

Sonja 3 years old undergoing treatment for cancer. (granddaughter of Henrik & Patty Christopherson)

Nicole DeCamp healing and strength. (Ken DeCamp and Cheryl Leiter)

Josee Jordan peace of mind as she faces health challenges. (Dianne Tanner)

Jeannie Lindquist continued healing and strength.

Healing and peace of mind: Henrik & Patty Christopherson (Dianne Tanner); **Vern Lindquist; Mike Golick** (Patty Gerde); **Marian James; Gregory** (nephew of Joanne Suttmeier); **Doug Patur; Katie Moeller; Margot Inman; Ken Acker** (son of Lucy Acker); **Marilyn Carlson; Taufik Hidayut** (Ken Konigsmark); **Don Wilkinson** (husband of

Gwynn Wilkinson); **Rebecca Thomas; Tanisha Foote** (Marilyn Carlson); **Dorothy Soland; Randi Strom; Jeanne Kuipers; John Pass; Florence Kinnune; Carol Harbolt; Sandy Aldworth; Jen Winslow; Larry Pruitt.**

Undergoing cancer treatment: Les Carlson (father of Dave Carlson); **Harold Mandt** (brother of Mary Ann Hult and Lorna Robertson); **Chris Howe** (brother of Mark Howe); **Peggy Scalise** (cousin of Mark Howe); **Eileen Letts** (cousin of Mark Howe); **Keith DeCamp** (brother of Ken DeCamp); **Barbara Jones** (mother of Ron Sordahl); **Doug McVety** (Helen Nychay); **Al Batt** (Connie Fletcher); **Larry Harbolt** (Ray Harbolt); **Gerald Welch** (Vern and Jeannie Lindquist); **Christy Williams** (Bill Bergsma); **Dana Mancini** (Jan Setterlund); **Greg Petersen** (Wes Collum); **Barry Donker** (Joan Parish); **Germaine Korum** (Lyle and Alice Lewis); **Kathryn Aitcheson** (Gerrie Hendrickson); **Yuko Takiguchi** (Teiko Soland); **Barb** (Janette Singley)

Living with cancer: Liz Kidd (Bob Beck); **Duane Jacobson; Mary Lewis** (sister-in-law of Lyle and Alice Lewis); **Mark Becker** (uncle of Paula Seeger); **Barbara Krogh Jarvis** (sister of Steve Krogh); **Suzanne Lewis** (daughter-in-law of Lyle & Alice Lewis); **Mira Bergsma**

Expectant Mothers: Alyssa Saavedra (Cheryl Neeb); **Shawna McIntyre** (Cheryl Neeb)

Mourning the death of loved ones: For peace and comfort during this time of grieving for the family and friends of: **Ray Kruckenberg** (uncle of Dianne Tanner); **Tom Wiese** (Sandy Aldworth); **Talton Johnson** (husband of Carol Johnson); **Jean Stanley** (sister-in-law to Alice Lewis); **Delores "Dee" Bakamus** (Dar Boni); **Marlene Braun** (sister to Cheryl Neeb); **Nikki** (niece to Doug & Dianne Tanner); **Richard "Dick" Birdsall** (Dianne Tanner); **Germaine Korum** (Lyle & Alice Lewis)

Members and friends serving in the military; fire & police departments, & emergency rooms: Mike special ops, unexpectedly called up. (nephew of Dave and Marilyn Carlson)

Global Missions and Missionaries: Alexandra, Miriam, and Kati, recipients of our Global Missions Peru Scholarships. Congregations in Chiclayo, Peru: **Pepe** at Las Brisas, **Merci** in San Antonio and **Harold** at Las Lomas. **MaaSae Girls Lutheran Secondary School** in Tanzania.

