

**LIVING FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
DECEMBER 6, 2020
ADVENT 2**

Musical Prelude: Musical Accompaniment today-Val Rutter and Mitch Lazer

Welcome and Announcements

Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13 (unison)

**Lord, you were favourable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin.**

**Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.
Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.**

**Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.
Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.
The Lord will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.**

Gathering Hymn #264 prepare the Royal Highway

**Prepare the royal highway;
the King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley
a level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory,
foretold in sacred story:**

Refrain

**Hosanna to the Lord,
for he fulfills God's word!**

**God's people, see him coming:
your own eternal king!
Palm branches strew before him!
Spread garments! Shout and sing!**

**God's promise will not fail you!
No more shall doubt assail you! *Refrain***

**Then fling the gates wide open
to greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation
its tribute too may bring.
All lands will bow before him;
their voices join your singing: *Refrain***

**His is no earthly kingdom;
it comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom
and justice, truth, and love.
So let your praise be sounding
for kindness so abounding: *Refrain***

Greeting and Prayer of the Day

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

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Word

Isaiah 40: 1-11

Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries out:
'In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'

A voice says, 'Cry out!'
And I said, 'What shall I cry?'
All people are grass,
their constancy is like the flower of the field.
The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;
surely the people are grass.
The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand for ever.
Get you up to a high mountain,
O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength,
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear;
say to the cities of Judah,
'Here is your God!'
See, the Lord God comes with might,
and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him,
and his recompense before him.
He will feed his flock like a shepherd;
he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom,
and gently lead the mother sheep. **Thanks be to God.**

The Advent Wreath – The Candle of Peace

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light
that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.
As we light the candles on this wreath,
kindle within us the fire of your Spirit,
that we may be light shining in the darkness.
Enlighten us with your grace,
that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us.
Grant this through Christ our Lord,
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.
Amen.

The Gospel According to St. Mark 1:1-8
Glory to you, O Lord

The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,
‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;
the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:
“Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight” ’,

John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel’s hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. He proclaimed, ‘The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day #252 Each Winter As The Year Grows Older

Each winter as the year grows older,
we each grow older, too.
The chill sets in a little colder;
the verities we knew
seem shaken and untrue.

When race and class cry out for treason,
when sirens call for war,
they overshout the voice of reason
and scream till we ignore
all we held dear before.

Yet I believe beyond believing
that life can spring from death,
that growth can flower from our grieving,
that we can catch our breath
and turn transfixed by faith.

So even as the sun is turning
to journey to the north,
the living flame, in secret burning,
can kindle on the earth
and bring God's love to birth.

O Child of ecstasy and sorrows,
O Prince of peace and pain,
brighten today's world by tomorrow's,
renew our lives again;
Lord Jesus, come and reign!

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

A brief silence.

Faithful God, you teach us to wait for you with faithfulness and patience. Sustain and support us in our doubts and questions. Nurture our faith as we discern and enact your mission. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Loving God, you set the stars in the sky and breathe life into the earth. Renew the face of creation where it is in need of your healing touch. Mend the wounds of environmental damage and restore balance to ecosystems so that all creation can declare your praise. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Steadfast God, you never tire of seeking justice. Where people suffer from discrimination, judgment, and injustice, speak words of truth and comfort. We pray especially for the people of Ethiopia that conflict may cease and peace emerge. We pray for refugees and migrants: the Rohingya peoples, Syrians and Palestinians throughout the Middle East, and Africans massed on the shores of Libya. Grant that your love may guide our response. Lead us toward a world where faithfulness will sprout underfoot and righteousness rain down from above. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Leading God, you ask us to make uneven ground smooth. Make even the disparities between your people. Sustain and support people with physical and intellectual disabilities. Accompany disability advocates who work for a world accessible to all. Teach us to celebrate the great diversity in our midst. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Tender God, you know sorrow and joy alike. We pray for those in our families and congregation who are not joyful in this holiday season. Comfort those who grieve, be a companion to all who are lonely, tend those who are sick or struggling with depression, and gather all people in your healing embrace. In silence we name those whose needs weigh heavily upon our hearts . . . Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Eternal God, we give thanks for the saints who have prepared your way in the wilderness and taught us to continue their faithful work. Make their generous lives be an example for all. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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

Sharing the Peace: The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you – **and also with you!**

Musical Offering

Prayer of Thanksgiving

In your Word to us this day, Gracious God, you reveal your desire that we recognize and honour your presence and live lives filled with hope and trust. And on that foundation you urge us to move into your world as agents of truth, justice, love and peace. We thank you for the comfort of your words and pray for the Spirit's strength to meet the challenges before us in these uncertain times.

We thank you for our daily bread and for that Living Bread; for a glass of water and that Living Water; for a glass of wine and that Cup of Grace. In thanksgiving, may we remember that all our blessings are part of your generous joy which overflows and ensures that life will abound. In Jesus' name. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, in heaven; hallowed by 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

Blessing

Follow the light of hope's guiding star. Seek the child.

Listen to the words of the heavenly host. Find the child.

Offer as gifts the best that you have. Serve the child.

Peace be among us. God is with us.

And the blessings of the Triune God, Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, be with you and those you love, this day and forever more. Amen

Sending Hymn #239 – Hark, the Glad Sound!

Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,
the Savior promised long;
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
and ev'ry voice a song.

He comes the pris'ners to release,
in Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,
your welcome shall proclaim,
and heav'n's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.

Dismissal: Go in peace to serve the Lord with gladness!

Postlude

Advent 2 – A traditional theme of Advent 2 is 'Peace'. There are those wonderful lines in Psalm 85 which we will read this morning:

*Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people . . . and
Righteousness and peace will kiss . . .*

*We are all aware of God's desire for Shalom, a word that means peace but also suggests wholeness and integrity. The Angel Chorus will sing of peace upon the earth at Jesus' birth. Peacemakers are the blessed and John tells us that peace is Jesus' great gift to all who believe. And as he faced Jerusalem to face his Passion, Jesus wept over Jerusalem and said, "If you, even you, had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace!"
Peace, a gift of the Spirit, is a particular blessing of this season as we wait for the advent of the Christ. Let us receive, cherish and employ this gift of God.*