

2ND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 10, 2023



CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH -- ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO

140 Russell Avenue
St. Catharines, Ontario L2R 1W1
Church: 905-685-8294
www.christlutheransc.ca

Office Hours: Thursday to Friday—9 a.m. – 12 noon
Bulletin Announcements: Please send to secretary@christlutheransc.ca.
Deadline for submission is Thursday at 9 a.m.

Pastor: Pastor Todd Hoeffs (289-362-0113) sr.pastor@christlutheransc.ca
Parish Assistant: Louise Gondosch (905-329-8579) parish.assistant@christlutheransc.ca
Business Manager: Karen McCumber business.manager@christlutheransc.ca
Secretary: Pat Kimpel secretary@christlutheransc.ca
Facebook: Lisa Gall www.facebook.com/ChristLutheranChurchSC
Bulletin by email: chairman.outreach@christlutheransc.ca

A recording of Sunday's service will be uploaded to YouTube at:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCpING_TKT19c_OIBbMqGwLw

Prayer: Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son that at His second coming we may worship Him in purity; who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

DAILY SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS:

Monday: Luke 12: 35-40 Wed.: Rev. 2: 1-5, 7 Friday: Luke 17: 20-25
Tuesday: 11 Thess. 3: 1-5 Thurs: Mark 13: 5-13 Saturday: Rev. 3: 14-22

Musicians: The Praise Band

Reader: Don Fretz

DECEMBER 2023 WORSHIP SCHEDULE:

Dec. 10 Advent 2 Creative Communion – The Band
Dec. 17 Advent 3 Special Children's Christmas Program
Dec. 24 Advent 4 10 AM LSB Setting 4 Communion
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve 7 PM Lessons and Carols
Dec. 24 Christmas Eve 10 PM Lessons and Carols
Dec 25 Christmas Carol Festive Communion Service 10am
Dec. 31 New Years' Eve Carol Service 10 AM

EVENTS THIS WEEK:

Today: 9:00 - 9:50 a.m.: Coffee Hour, Sunday School, CHAT Bible Study
Monday: 10:00 - 11:00 a.m. – Luther Manor Bible Study
 7:30 p.m. – Choir Practice
Tuesday: 9:30 – 11:00 am. – Precious Moments
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m. – Church Council
Thursday: 10:00 - 11:30 a.m. – SOUL
Saturday: **9:00 a.m.-Sunday School Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal**
 6:30 p.m. – Christmas Carol Sing-a-Long/Fellowship/All Welcome!!
Next Sunday: **10:00 a.m. – Children's Christmas Programme**



CHRIST'S CAFÉ

**Hope to see you downstairs
9:00 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.
for Coffee, Tea & Treats!!**

Anyone willing to help serve or bring treats, please contact:
Judy Mason 905-641-7546

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sunday morning from 9:00 - 9:50 a.m. Preschool in the nursery and Grades 1-6 together. Bring your children, stay for Coffee Hour!

TODAY: In this week's Sunday School lesson Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem where a simple stable serves as the birthplace for the promised Christ Child. Angelic hosts announce the birth of the Saviour to ordinary Shepherds, who rush to worship the child. Having seen the Saviour in the flesh they quickly spread the news of His birth. Ask one another, *"How can we share the message of the birth of the Saviour today?"*

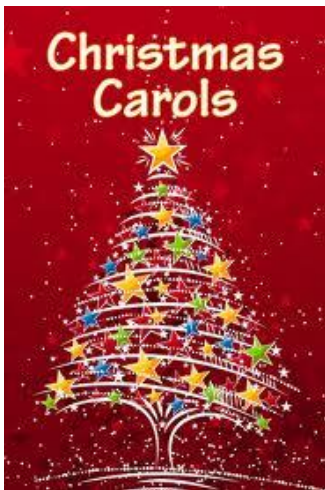
YOUTH & CONFIRMAND CHAT: 9:00 - 9:50 all Youth & Confirmands are invited to a **CHAT/Bible Study**. One of our youth leaders Dan Figueroa will be leading. Grab a coffee, tea or juice and meet in the youth room. If you have some future topic ideas let us know!

SOUL: December 14th 10-11:30 AM. "CHRISTMAS NATIVITY THEMED BINGO CELEBRATION" SOUL members are encouraged to attend in their favourite holiday clothing or "ugly Christmas sweaters".

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM - DRESS REHEARSAL PRACTICE :

Saturday, December 16, 9:00 – 10:00 am. Parents if you have questions, please contact Louise 905-329-8579.

PLEASE NOTE: Preschoolers do not need to join us for practices but we encourage parents to be singing *"Away in a Manger"* with them. If your preschooler has an animal costume and would like to wear it that morning or you can borrow an angel costume by speaking with Kim Zacharuk or Louise Gondosch.



Christmas Carol Sing-a-Long

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 6:30 PM
Fellowship to follow

Please bring along a favourite dessert or treat to share.
Beverages will be provided.

Everyone Welcome

VOTERS MEETING: Save the Date! Our next congregational voters meeting will be Sunday, February 4, 2024, immediately following Worship Service. Main item for discussion/approval will be the 2024 budget.

MARY MARTHA LWML-C:

Tuesday, December 19, 5:30pm – Advent/Christmas Potluck (blessing) Dinner & Program
Tuesday, January 16, 7- 8 p.m. – “Staying Safe Presentation” Please join us for a presentation by Constable Michael Matwijow and his partner Constable Daryl Landry of the Niagara Regional Police, Community Oriented Response and Engagement unity (CORE). They will be speaking about what they do and the services they provide as well as providing us with information regarding current crime trends in our area and the preventative measures that we can take to reduce the chances of us being victimized. Everyone is welcome to attend!!

<u>Last Sunday Attendance:</u>		<u>Dec. 3rd, 2023</u>		<u>Attn: 10 a.m. – 110</u>		<u>SOUL:</u>	
	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Weekly Need</u>	<u>Last Sunday</u>	<u>Year To Date</u>	<u>+ or – (--)</u>		
Current	297,841.00	5,840.02	3,305.00	264,981.51	(15,676.36)		
LCC Missions	17,000.00	333.33	280.00	16,485.00	465.77)		
Property Improvement:			105.00	6,429.00			

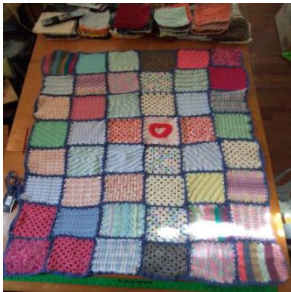
2024 DONATION ENVELOPES: Your 2024 donation envelopes are in your mailbox for pick-up! If you do not have a mailbox, please check the table in the Narthex. If you don't have a mailbox, and you would like one, please contact our secretary Pat at secretary@christlutheransc.ca.

ATTENTION DONORS: If you are using envelope #62 from the 2022 calendar year, please contact Karen McCumber at: business.manager@christlutheransc.ca. This envelope was not assigned which makes it impossible to provide a charitable receipt at the end of the year. We would love to correct our records to make sure that the donor receives an accurate charitable receipt.

A DONATION has been made to Christ Lutheran in loving memory of Nick & Ida Moskaluk and Helen Smith by their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

FLOWERS have been placed on the altar this morning to the Glory of God by Gloria Meyer on the occasion of both hers and Howard Bogusat's Birthdays. Happy Birthday!

WINTER COAT DRIVE: for Niagara Mobile Closet/Start Me Up Niagara. Accepting new or clean gently used winter coats only!!! Please no dirty coats or ones with broken zippers. **All coats will be donated on Dec 18th!!**



Granny Squares still needed: This is an ongoing project we will gratefully accept more completed 6 inch knitted or crocheted Granny Squares in any pattern or colour. We would also appreciate any yarn that you may have, leftover yarn or full balls of yarn. In the narthex there is a white cube with yarn and hooks that you are welcome to take (or donate). There is another basket for completed squares. It has been about 6 months that we have been able to show Christ's love in our Caring Squares blankets. (22 blankets to date!) Thank you for donating yarn or completed squares as we continue with this project! Praise God! If you have any questions, call Lorraine at 905 964 5837)

USED STAMPS: Start saving and collecting your used stamps now! They will be gathered at the LWML-C Convention and donated to a charity who will in turn use them to purchase spiritual resources like Bibles.



Operation Christmas Cheer

To share the joy of Christmas with those in our community who are less fortunate than we are, the Outreach Committee is planning to distribute Christmas turkey dinner packages. We are asking for confidential referrals from our members.

We need your help by:

- Providing us with confidential referrals which can be placed into a box in our church narthex
- Donating the funds required for the purchase of perishable and non-perishable food items which will be purchased just before the packages are distributed
- Letting the Outreach Committee, Judy Mason—905-641-7546 OR Howard Bogusat—905-468-3566 know if you would be willing to help package baskets
- Praying that this project is a success and that those who receive these gifts are touched by the joy and wonder of our Saviour's birth and by His love for each one of us.

(please note that we are collecting "monetary donations" ONLY for this project)

Thank You!

CREATIVE COMMUNION

THE 2ND SUNDAY IN ADVENT
December 10, 2023 + 10 AM Worship

FIRST HYMN:

“The Servant King”

Graham Kendrick © 1983



From Heav'n You came, help - less babe,
en - tered our world, Your glo - ry veiled;
Not to be served but to serve, and give Your life that
we might live. This is our God, the Ser - vant King, He calls us
now to fol - low Him, to bring our lives as a dai - ly off - er -
ing of wor - ship to the Ser - vant King. King.

So let us learn how to serve, and in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer, for it is Christ we're serving

This is our God, The Servant King. He calls us now to follow Him;
To bring our lives as a daily offering: of worship to the Servant King

<https://musescore.com/user/11976356/scores/7867331>

GATHERING IN THE LORD'S NAME:

In the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
Jesus said, 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets:

I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them.'

Amen. Come soon, Lord Jesus!

Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

The light no darkness can ever overcome.

Let your light so shine before all others,

That they see your good work and give glory to your Father in Heaven.

[The 1st & 2nd Advent candles are lighted]

We pray: **God of peace, during this Advent season, keep us from getting caught up in the busyness and chaos of the world around us. Help us to slow down and breathe deeply, so that we may find rest in the Prince of Peace, your son, Jesus Christ. As we prepare for his coming, make us instruments of your peace in our homes, in our schools, in our work and in our world. Amen.**

www.littlewaychapel.com/blog/advent-wreath-prayers

ADVENT WREATH HYMN VERSE:

**Prophet voices loudly crying, making ev'ry pathway clear;
glimpsing glory, self-denying, calling all to stop and hear.
Through their message - challenged, shaken –
hearts awaken: God is near!**

Words: Mark Earey Copyright © 2002 Mark Earey; All the texts may be reproduced for local use without further permission. From Sunday by Sunday (Royal School of Church Music UK): Music: "Angels From The Realms Of Glory."

THE WORD OF GOD

The Old Testament: *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. This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM: ***A Voice Cries Out, "Prepare the Way of The Lord"***

A voice cries out -- 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 made low

A voice cries out -- 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 made low

The glory of the Lord shall be revealed;
All people shall see it together
The mouth of the Lord has spoken it
The glory of the Lord shall be revealed

A voice cries out; 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 made low
Comfort, comfort my people; Proclaim the promise of the Lord
His name shall be called Emmanuel.
The glory of the Lord shall be revealed

A voice cries out -- 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 made low

A voice cries out -- Prepare the way of the Lord
Make straight in the desert -- A highway for our God
Every valley shall be lifted up (Every valley shall be lifted up)
And every mountain made low;

A voice cries out -- 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 made low;

A voice cries out
Prepare the way of the Lord (Prepare the way of the Lord)
Prepare the way of the Lord!

By Lloyd Larson CCLI Song # 1318518 © 1993 Hope Publishing Company
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The Epistle: *2 Peter 3: 8-15a*

Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse; but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing. For ‘Those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.’ Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated, but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SPOKEN GOSPEL VERSE:

Jesus says: “I have come so that you may have life—yes, and have it full to overflowing.”

The Holy Gospel: *St. Mark 1: 1-8*

The Holy Gospel, according to St. Mark, the 1st chapter:

Glory to You, O Lord.

The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,’” John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. Now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey. And he preached, saying, “After me comes he who is mightier than I, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

THE NICENE CREED:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary and was made man. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into Heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, Whose kingdom will have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life + of the world to come. Amen.

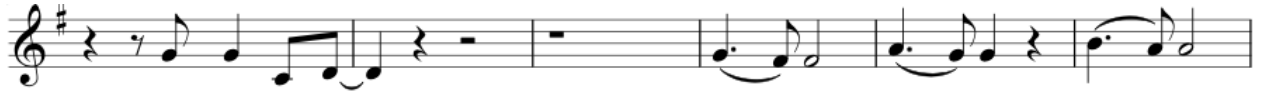
CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

GOSPEL SONG:

“Hosanna” [Praise Is Rising]



1. Praise is ris - ing, eyes are turn - ing to You;
 2. Hear the sound of hearts re - turn - ing to You;



We turn to You; Hope is stir - ing hearts are
 We turn to You; In Your King - dom bro - ken



yearn - ing for You; We long for You; 'Cause when we see
 lives are made new, You make us new;



You, we find strength to face the day; In Your pres -



ence all our fears are washed a - way, washed a - way. Ho - san -



na, ho - san - na, You are the God who saves us, wor - thy of all



our prais - es; Ho - san - - na, ho - san - - na,



come have Your way a - mong us; We wel - come You here, Lord Je - sus.



'Cause when we see You, we find strength to face the day;



In Your pres - ence all our fears are washed a - way.

'Cause when we see washed a - way. Ho - san -

na, ho - san - na, You are the God who saves us, wor - thy of all

our prais - es; Ho - san - - na, ho - san - - na,

come have Your way a - mong us; We wel - come You here, Lord Je - sus.

Ho Ho -

san - na, ho - san - na. Ho na.

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MESSAGE

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS:

Our Lord Jesus says in Matthew's Gospel: so, when you are offering your gift at the altar,
and if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you,
 leave your gift there before the altar and go;

first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

Let us then be reconciled to God and to one another:

Most Gracious Father, we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in our thoughts, words and deeds. We have committed sins against our neighbour and against You, O Father. Have mercy upon us. In Your compassion forgive us our sins. Those sins which are known to us, and those which are unknown. Give us Your Holy Spirit that by faith we may be sorry for our sins, repent of them and serve You in newness of life to the honour and glory of Your Holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all of your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

THE OFFERINGS *are gathered.*

THE PRAYERS

Jesus Christ is the light of the world. Let us pray that His light may shine into the darkness of our world today. Heavenly Father: thank You for Jesus Christ Who brings sight to the blindness of human hearts and minds, and that when he illuminates our sin he also shines on us with his righteousness;

Hear us, O God: **Your mercy is great.**

Where people are in despair for whatever reason we ask You, dear Father, to bring peace. Relieve the pressure on those who suffer persecution for Your name.

Hear us, O God: **Your mercy is great.**

For the One Holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith and encouraging them to our doors for a life of worship,

Hear us, O God: **Your mercy is great.**

Bless the church and her mission work of Word and Sacrament ministry. Watch over all services where your people service You in their varied gifts and vocations. Uphold marriage and all who enter it and give all Lutheran Christian parents the determination and ability to bring up their children in their baptismal faith.

Hear us, O God: **Your mercy is great.**

For this nation, for His Gracious Majesty our King, for our Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, our federal and provincial government, for our cities and communities, for all Ministers of Parliament, for all industry and business, and for the common welfare of us all,

Hear us, O God: **Your mercy is great.**

For seasonable weather and for the fruitfulness of the earth, for protection from severe weather conditions, for aid and relief to those suffering from natural disaster;

Hear us, O God: **Your mercy is great.**

Give courage to those who are chronically ill and support those who help them. Give faith and strength to the sick and those who care for them. Provide for all in need, especially remembering before You*[names added]* and bring resolution according to Your good and blessed will.

Hear us, O God: **Your mercy is great.**

We lift our eyes to You, O Lord God, merciful Father. Restore us and the world in which we live through the death and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray.

Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come....

WORDS OF OUR LORD:

Our Lord, Jesus Christ, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying: "Take, eat; This is My + Body which is given for you, this do, in remembrance of Me. In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying "Drink of it all of you, this cup is the New Testament in My + Blood, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins . This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." The peace of the Lord be with you always. And also with you.

LAMB OF GOD:

1 The Lamb, the Lamb, O Fa - ther, where's the sac - ri - fice?
2 The Lamb, the Lamb, One per - fect fi - nal of - fer - ing.

Faith | sees, be - lieves God will pro - vide the Lamb of price!
The Lamb, the Lamb, Let earth join heav'n His praise to sing.

Refrain

Wor - thy is the Lamb whose death makes me His

own! The Lamb is reign - ing on His throne!

Text and tune: © 1987 and 1997 MorningStar Music Publishers. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110005782

<https://www.gracelutheranracine.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/547-The-Lamb.pdf>

HOLY COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION:

For those who have need, please feel free to stand at the rail if kneeling is difficult. The common cup and trays of individual glasses are available. Gluten-free wafers are also available. Light purple glasses of Communion wine mixed with water are in the centre ring of the silver trays.

COMMUNION HYMNS:

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

Tune # 344

**On Jordan's bank the Bap-tist's cry, an-ounces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake, and heark-en, for He brings glad tid-ings from the King of kings.**

**Then cleansed by 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.**

**We hail You as our Saviour, Lord, our Refuge, and our great Reward.
Without Your grace we waste away, like flow'rs that wither and decay.**

**All praise to You, eternal Son, Whose Advent has our freedom won;
Whom with the Father we adore and Holy Spirit evermore.**

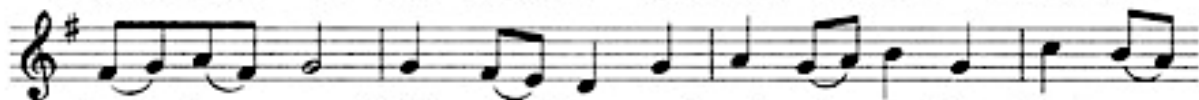
Words: C. Coffin, 1676-1749; Music: "Puer nobis nascitur" public Domain

“Crashing Waters At Creation”

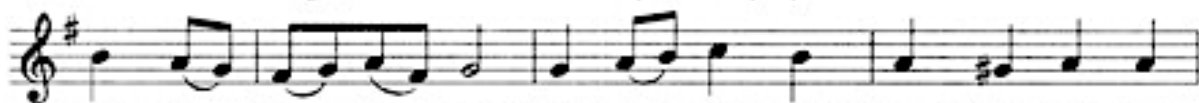
[Tune: Son Of God Eternal Saviour]



Crash --ing wat - ers at Cre - a -- tion, or - dered by the



Spi - rit's breath. First to wit-ness days be-gin-ning, from the



Bright - ness of night's death. Part - ing wa - ter stood and tremb-led



As the capt - ives passed on through; wash-ing off the



Chains of bond-age, chan - nel to a life made new.

**Cleansing water once at Jordan, closed around the Lord foretold
Opened to reveal the glory, ever new and ever old.**

**Living water, never ending, quench the thirst and flood the soul--
Well-spring, source of life eternal, drench our dryness, make us whole.**

Words: Sylvia G. Dunstan,attr. Christian F. Witt; © 2005 Evangelical Lutheran Worship
<https://www.musixmatch.com/> Music: In Babilone https://hymnary.org/tune/in_babilone

“Jesus Christ Is Waiting” [Tune: Sing We Now Of Christmas]

**Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets;
no-one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too.
Make me, friend or stranger, fit to wait on you.**

**Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets;
curing those who suffer, touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too.
Let my care be active, healing just like you.**

**Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets,
‘Who will join my journey? I will guide their feet.’
Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few.
Walk one step before me; I will follow you.**

*John L. Bell and Graham Maule © 1988 Wild Goose Resource Group, The Iona Community, Glasgow G51 3UU
<https://hymnary.org/hymn/RH2011/page/232> French Folk Song Melody*

“Jesus’ Hands Were Kind Hands” [Glory Be To Jesus Tune]

**Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all,
healing pain and sickness, blessing children small.**

**Washing tired feet, and --saving those who fall;
Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all.**

**Take my hands, Lord Jesus, let them work for you;
make them strong and gentle, kind in all I do;**

**Let me watch you, Jesus, till I'm gentle too,
till my hands are kind hands, blest to work for you.**

*Margaret Cooper, b. 1926 Music: Glory Be To Jesus
© 1979, Stainer & Bell, Ltd. (Admin Hope Publishing Company)*

“Lord of the Dance”



1. I danced in the morn - ing when the world was be - gun, and I
 2. I danced for the scribe and the Phar - i - see, but they
 3. I danced on the sab - bath when I cured the lame, the
 4. I danced on a Fri - day and the sky turned black; it's
 5. They cut me down and I leapt up high,



danced in the moon and the stars and the sun, and I
 would not dance and they would not fol - low me; I
 ho - ly peo - ple said it was a shame; they whipped
 hard to dance with the dev - il on your back; they
 I am the life that - 'll nev - er, nev - er die; I'll



came down from heav - en and I danced on the earth, At
 danced for the fish - er - men, for James and John; they came
 and they stripped and they hung me high; and they left
 bur - ied my bod - y and they thought I'd gone, but
 live in you if you'll live in me;



Beth - le - hem I had my birth.
 to me and the dance went on.
 me there on a cross to die. Dance, then, wher - ev - er you may be;
 I am the dance and I still go on.
 I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.



I am the Lord of the Dance, said he. And I'll lead you all wher - ev - er you may be, And I'll



lead you all in the dance, said he.

19th Century Shaker tune, adapted by Sydney Carter, 1963

© 1963, Stainer & Bell Ltd. (administered by Hope Publishing Company, Carol Stream IL 6018)

<https://musescore.com/>

user/33012693/scores/5727764



1. How beau - teous are their feet Who stand on Zi - on's hill;
2. How charm - ing is their voice, So sweet the ti - dings are:
3. How hap - py are our ears, That hear the joy - ful sound
4. How bless - ed are our eyes, That see this heaven - ly light;
5. The watch - men join their voice, And tune - ful notes em - ploy;



Who bring sal - va - tion on their tongues, And words of peace re - veal!
"Zi - on, be - hold thy Sav - ior King; He reigns and tri - umphs here!"
Which kings and proph - ets wait - ed for, And sought, but nev - er found!
Proph - ets and kings de - sired it long, But died with - out the sight!
Je - ru - sa - lem breaks forth in songs, And des - erts learn the joy.

Isa. 52:7-9
Isaac Watts, 1719 (1674-1748)

ST. THOMAS S.M.
From Williams' Psalmody, 1770

<https://hymnary.org/hymn/SDAH1985/page/362>

POST COMMUNION PRAYER:

Let us pray: Lord God, in this Sacrament you have placed into our open hands the body and blood of Christ. Open not only our hands, but our hearts also, so that we recognise your goodness, count all things loss in comparison with you, and desire to be renewed in Your image until we see You face to face in Glory; We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Go in peace. Rejoice in the Lord and serve Him with the blessing and power He freely lives.

Thanks be to God.

May the Almighty God, the Father, Son + and Holy Spirit, bless and keep you now and always.
Amen.

CLOSING HYMN:

“O, Come, Emmanuel”

357 VS 2,3,5

**O come, O Wis-dom fro-m on high, who orders all things might-ily;
To us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go.**

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man-uel, shall come to you, O Is-ra-el.

**O come, O Rod of Jes-se free Your own from Satan’s tyr-anny;
From depths of hell Tour people save, and give them vict’ry o-‘er the grave.**

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man-uel, shall come to you, O Is-ra-el.

**O come, O Key of Dav-id, come, and open wide our He-av’nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to mis-ery.**

Re-joice! Re-joice! Em-man-uel, shall come to you, O Is-ra-el.

Medieval Latin Hymn, public domain

REV. TODD HOEFFS

Advent 2

Mark 1:1-8

“Digging Up Bones”

December 10, 2023

While learning about teaching children in schools, I heard an education term: re-direction. Rather than scold “hey, that’s not right”, You lead the child with the incorrection into a path of correction. Over time, kids learn critical thinking for choices they have to make and see wrongs not as failures but growing pains to learn differently. I’ve recently learned hockey has re-direction. When an offense player positions himself in front of the other team’s goalie. Another offensive player, skating farther away from the net, takes a slapshot directly at the goalie. As the puck zooms toward the goal, the redirecting player lifts his stick and tries to deflect it past the goaltender. He does not want to get in the way. He does not want to block the puck. He simply tries to give it a slight touch, just enough to change the course of the shot past the goalie and (hopefully) into the back of the net. When done well, it’s almost impossible to stop.

I’ve also learned that Austin Matthews and Mitch Marner are a couple of the better-known players for re-direction on the Maple Leafs. [Of course, good old Wayne Gretzky too!] Re-direction is a lot like repentance. This is John the Baptizer’s message in Mark’s Gospel. The important work of readying the hard dry soil of humanity to see Jesus Christ, Son of God as the embodiment of the Gospel. John is the prophetic forerunner. After nearly 400 years of silence from God through any voice, He cries out from the wilderness. John is like a military scout leading a squad into combat. He’s like an asphalt melting machine, crushing the crooked turns in the road, making the path wide and open for the Saviour to walk.

Mark’s first sentence takes us immediately into Jesus’ earthly ministry. The good news about Jesus Christ, the Son of God” says a lot. “Jesus” is “Joshua” in Hebrew. Common and yet holy, meaning The LORD GOD IS Salvation”. Jesus’ name ties Him to the world -- He is a person --And gives the reason He’s here -- to bring God’s Kingdom to earth. Christ identifies Him as the long-promised Messiah”, the Anointed One”. As the anointed prophets and kings of old. Christ shows He is The One set apart Who rescues His people from their enemies. Not always physical enemies, but THE enemy, Satan and death, results from Sin.

The title “Son of God” beautifully unites the religious and political expectations destined for the Prince of Peace. A war waged -- not fought with sword but in suffering. An unexpected re-direction. Prophetic writing Isaiah and Malachi are highlighted in John’s job resume.

He has purpose tied to salvation history. God is deeply involved with this plan. He sinks His only Son into it. Beginning not at the top, with Temple, Kings or Pharisees, but with a single voice from the wilderness speaking simply and directly. The Hebrew religious leaders had long forgotten the common man. John speaks against the dead legalism, the empty worship, the endless rules. John is from the wilderness and is baptizing people in the wilderness.

The Biblical understanding of wilderness isn’t scary. It’s more like a weight room for training. *God sends His people* to meet Him there as a temporary stop-over. A place of testing, learning, and refining. The wilderness is not a place to stay. It’s desolate, uncultivated, and unfit for habitation. In the wilderness God has our attention. This is why John’s baptism is there and not the like the ritual washing in the Temple. John’s washing is a preparation.

Ending the need for ritual washing of sacrifices and offerings. Repentance comes with a bath because it carries over into our Baptism. Where our washing brings faith, forgiveness and the grace to live repentantly. In Mark's Gospel, repentance is *metanoia* in Greek [like our English word metamorphosis.] It's literally a mental stretching exercise.

A change of preconceived notions in the mind. A basic transformation of a person's outlook; Not only of ourselves, but our world and how we fit into it. Totally, it's a conversion to a life lived not for self alone but for everyone. Repentance in this way is NOT Getting your act together before God will love you; Feeling guilt, saying sorry and forgetting all about it; Convincing yourself you keep the commands of God and are A OK.

As the Greek view has a change of mind, the Hebrew view includes being moved by God to remain closer and closer to Him and His Son. It's not like a diet where you never eat sugar again. Repenting is not a giving up as much God moving us closer to Himself.

It's confessing your wrong as wrong, receiving forgiveness and in that forgiving grace you look to Christ and not to the thing that grabbed your attention. It's not a one and done.

It's an hourly, moment to moment, regular awareness Of who you are as a sinner and who you are as a forgiven saint in Jesus. This is how John expected God's people to repent.

You see, John lives at a time when God's people are in desperate need for renewal. Non-Jews had long given up on religion, excusing away most religious beliefs as superstition and foolish tales. Both groups need John's message. Our times are not so different.

So many churches have succumbed to fear and apathy. There are people searching and craving and longing for love and a listening ear. We Lutherans have often misunderstood repentance by either teaching it wrongly or ignoring it altogether. Repenting must never be separated from the Gospel. It calls us into a life growing good fruit – from faith -- love.

Kindness

Peace

Joy

Patience.

Gentleness

Truth.

Mercy.

These are hard when we get caught up in cycles of despair and depression, where we're unable to imagine a time when our trials will never be solved, where we hope to feel whole, a life without stress and worries; In the midst of our trouble, there is the waiting: Waiting as hoping. Hoping with trusting. Walking by faith and not by sight. One of the best parts I enjoy when I work with clay and ceramic art, Is the anticipation of unloading a fired kiln oven. Seeing what unexpected imperfections are etched into the pottery, hoping nothing is broken. This is our Advent season. The anticipation that the world *can* be different – we *can* live into the promise of the Holy One. The Holy Spirit does blow through our tired souls with wind and fire. Just like the 1st Advent– full of anticipation and uncertainty and dreams. Because we know that Christ IS coming [again] – John the Baptizer's community did not know that for sure. And yet he says "the Kingdom of heaven has come near!" Repent. Believe. Repentance, like accountability, is not easy. Letting go of old patterns, releasing control of coping skills that no longer work, Re-writing and re-living of dominant narratives that harm – letting go of these things feels like a loss, and like fire. The sinful heart burns with sentimental jealousies. But repentance is rooted in God, who gives the growth, with faith in Christ. Faith and grace embrace us so closely to God's heart That we can and do trust

that the fire of transformation will not burn us up, that baptismal waters of mercy will not drown us to death because through it all our Lord is holding us. Jesus has already burned in the fire of judgement and got washed in a bloody baptism on the cross. He's made the way into the Heavenly Kingdom as one of abundance and transformation and joy. The good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and His kingdom Help us grow as we assess our methods. Praying that we love Go and love our neighbour. Praying for those who wish us harm. Faith actively lives out God's kingdom of peace and justice as our faith lights Shines like little cities of God set on hills for all to see. Through it all, Jesus helps us die with Him to our selfish ways so that we may have freedom and peace now, and in the Heaven awaiting us. While we anticipate, we are fed. While we wait, we are hugged and welcomed by Jesus. Bread and Wine carry Him into our mouth to remain in our hearts and lives. His life in our life is seen as we are seen. This past week, I had 2 encounters with non-Christian people. Both Muslim. The 1st, Abdul, at a hospital waiting room. Wearing a medium blue clergy shirt provoked him to ask about my church. Soon a faith discussion took off. "We are truly Abrahamic religion. We believe the prophets. We believe Jesus. We have Mohamed but Jesus Christ is better. He is life!" I just listened and validated the connections he made. He asked for prayer for himself and family sitting with him. "We [Muslims] love to talk faith and find common ground". I sat and thought: wow. I just witnessed a miracle. A few days passed, I'm at Walmart checkout. A young female cashier asks me "can I ask you a question"? Sure. Seeing my clergy collar, asks "you are working in a church?" Yes. "If I wanted to come to your church, what do I need to do? Are there rules?" "When you come, you only come with faith in Jesus to believe. His way is simple. Love God. Love your neighbour" [all in the course of 30 seconds]. She lit up like a Christmas tree smiling ear to ear. What good news. This tells us that there is hope. In the daily world there are people searching

Needing

Love, hope, peace, joy.

Answers.

God is using their faith

And re-directing them to His Son

Through our voice.

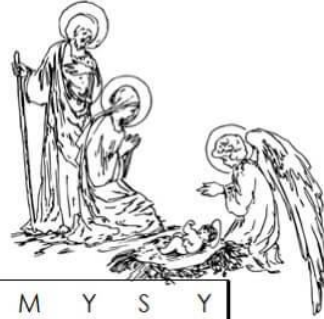
Crying out from our own wildernesses.

Preparing the way for the Lord's great return.

Amen.

Name: _____

Christian Christmas Word Search



S K U V G P M H R Y W H N M Y S Y
J J S I R D A O F S D J G I I H N
Y K Z X D N N L D K V I N R Y R F
G Q A N R A G Y M V A A U A W B E
I P V V W Z E S Y U Q V D C Z P G
H L Z B D A R P B M S F X L K O O
C M F W I R R I X K Q Y H E S D V
A Y R W V E D R L G H L X O D Y O
S U A Y R T H I S H E P H E R D E
Y N N X A H N T Q N V J A I D E T
F A K U E D U J O S E P H H S N I
A T I F Q Q J J S W C J T J M V B
V I N N K O M Y Q O R P T B C G G
L V C X I X F S A V I O R O R B W
R I E H Y A D V E N T Y X A N J N
V T N J B V W R R E J O I C E N Z
O Y S Y Q O B L H C A G X Q J D L
W C E D T T H R E E K I N G S C V
V I C B E T H L E H E M U R A Z F
Q C Y W B L E S S I N G C V C N H
M Q O X F P S B Y W I S E M E N T
U Y Z R U M D H W D V D F Y U G H



FRANKINCENSE	BLESSING	REJOICE
WISE MEN	NATIVITY	ADVENT
HOLY SPIRIT	NAZARETH	JOSEPH
THREE KINGS	SHEPHERD	MANGER
BETHLEHEM	MIRACLE	SAVIOR

