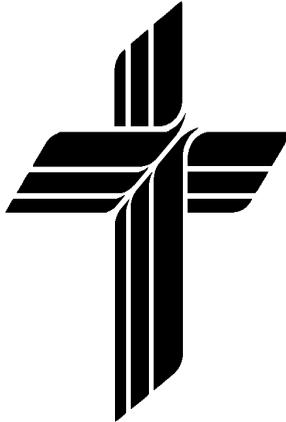


FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH

La Crosse, Wisconsin
The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

Third Sunday in Advent
December 13th, 2020



Our purpose: Faith Lutheran Church exists to share with all, God's love through Christ and His promise of salvation!

As We Gather... "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18). This is something hard to do! How can we rejoice in such hard times? What is there to give thanks about? Rejoicing, praying, and thanksgiving are three things that come together. In prayer, the Lord opens our eyes to what He is already doing all around us. God works through His Word and prayer to make us more thankful and to fill us with joy. Even if your situation may be bleak, and the headlines even bleaker, we know that we have the joy that nobody can take away, the joy of sins forgiven, peace with God, and eternal life.

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563 Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness

sts. 1, 6



1 Je - sus, Thy blood and righ - teous - ness My beau - ty
6 Je - sus, be end - less praise to Thee, Whose bound - less



are, my glo - rious dress; Midst flam - ing worlds, in
mer - cy hath for me, For me, and all Thy



these ar - rayed, With joy shall I lift up my head.
hands have made, An ev - er - last - ing ran - som paid.

Text and tune: Public domain

Baptism (8:00 a.m. Only)

Stand

Advent Versicles

LSB 219

- L** O Lord, open my lips,
- C** and my mouth will declare Your praise.
- L** Make haste, O God, to deliver me;
- C** make haste to help me, O Lord.
- C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
Praise to You, O Christ, King who comes to save us.

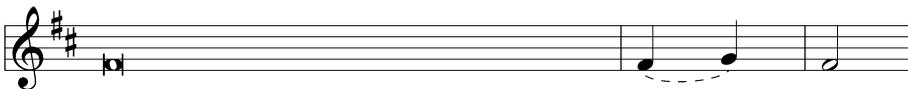
Antiphon (Common)

LSB 220

- L** Blessed be God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- C** O come, let us worship Him.

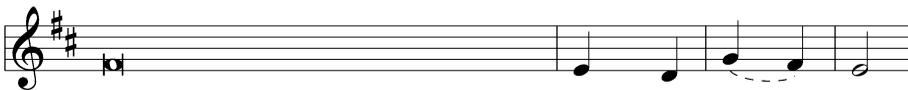
Venite

LSB 220



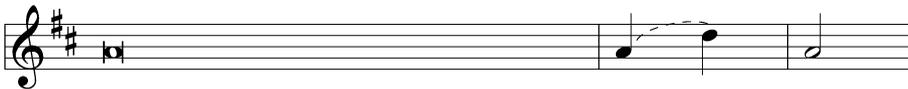
- 1 O come, let us sing to the Lord,
- 2 For the Lord is a great God
- 3 The sea is His, for He made it,

5 Glory be to the Father and to the Son



- 1 let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our sal - va - tion.
- 2 and a great king a - bove all gods.
- 3 and His hand formed the dry land.

5 and to the Ho - ly Spir - it;



- 1 Let us come into His presence with thanks - giv - ing,
- 2 The deep places of the earth are in His hand;
- 3 O come, let us worship and bow down,
- 4 For He is our God,
- 5 as it was in the be - gin - ning,



- 1 let us make a joyful noise to Him with songs of praise.
- 2 the strength of the hills is His al - so.
- 3 let us kneel before the Lord, our mak - er.
- 4 and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.
- 5 is now, and will be for - ev - er. A - men.

Antiphon (Common)

LSB 221

L Blessed be God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

C O come, let us worship Him.

Introit

Advent 3B Psalm 85:8–9, 12–13; antiphon: v. 7

- P** Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.
- C** **Let me hear what God the Lord will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints; but let them not turn back to folly.**
- P** Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land.
- C** **Yes, the Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.**
- P** Righteousness will go before him and make his footsteps a way.
- C** **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning is now, and will be forever. Amen.**
- P** Show us your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us your salvation.

Luther's Small Catechism

- P** Holy Baptism - First
- P** What is Baptism?
- C** **Baptism is not just plain water, but it is the water included in God's command and combined with God's word.**
- P** Which is that word of God?
- C** **Christ our Lord says in the last chapter of Matthew: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (Matthew 28:19)**

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. 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 wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul 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 like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown

in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

L O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

Epistle 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 prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil. ²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

L O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading

John 1:6–8, 19–28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. . . . ¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ²²So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to 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.” ²⁴(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” ²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” ²⁸These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

L O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

769 Eternal Spirit of the Living Christ

sts. 1, 3

1 E - ter - nal Spir - it of the liv - ing Christ,
3 Come with the strength I lack, bring vi - sion clear

I know not how to ask or what to say;
Of hu - man need; O give me eyes to see

I on - ly know my need, as deep as life,
Ful - fill - ment of my life in love out-poured,

And on - ly You can teach me how to pray.
My life in You, O Christ; Your love in me.

Tune: Public domain

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Sermon

Apostles' Creed

**☩ I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life ☩ everlasting. Amen.**



C Lord, have mer-cy; Christ, have mer-cy; Lord, have mer-cy.

Lord's Prayer

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.

Introduction to Collects

LSB 227

L O Lord, hear my prayer.
C And let my cry come to You.

Prayer of the Church

P Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

[Various petitions are offered, when the Pastor says, "Lord in your mercy" The congregation replies "Hear our Prayer."]

P ... who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

Collect of the Day

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Collect for the Word

L Blessed Lord, You have caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning. Grant that we may so hear them, read, mark, learn, and take them to heart that, by the patience and comfort of Your holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Collect for Grace

L O Lord, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlasting God, You have safely brought us to the beginning of this day. Defend us in the same with Your mighty power and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger, but that all our doings, being ordered by Your governance, may be righteous in Your sight; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Benedicamus

LSB 228

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Benediction

228

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

C Amen.

921 On What Has Now Been Sown

sts. 1, 3



1 On what has now been sown Thy bless - ing, Lord, be - stow;
3 O grant that each of us, Now met be - fore Thee here,



The pow'r is Thine a - lone To make it sprout and grow. Do Thou
May meet to - geth - er thus When Thou and Thine ap - pear And fol -



in grace the har - vest raise, And Thou a - lone shalt have the praise!
low Thee to heav'n, our home. E'en so, a - men, Lord Je - sus, come!

Text and tune: Public domain

Verse to Ponder

Matthew 1:21

²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Acknowledgments

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Semper Gaudete—Always Rejoice! (1 Thess. 5:16)

The third Sunday in Advent is known as “rejoice” Sunday. Thus, we light the rose candle in the Advent wreath symbolizing the joy that Jesus the Messiah is near. Various branches of the U.S. armed forces have “Semper” mottos. The Marines: Semper Fidelis (Always Faithful), The Navy: Semper Fortis (Always Courageous), The Space Force: Semper Supra (Always Above), The Coast Guard: Semper Paratus (Always Ready).

The Christ’s Church on Earth is called the Church Militant, and indeed we as Christians spiritually fight the forces of evil. As God’s “army,” we too have a “Semper” motto. Semper Gaudete. Always rejoice! 2020 has brought many hardships, but we can *semper gaudete* through our Savior who brings us joy.

One thing that many members have lamented is the inability to have the same fellowship that we once had. Before COVID, one service where everyone is in the same place allowed for everyone to be “in the loop.” Now we’re spread out online and through multiple in-person services. There are probably some fellow Faith Lutheran members you haven’t seen since March!

My usual practice is to have a new member ceremony to help introduce new members to our congregation. With COVID precautions in place, that has not been able to happen especially in the second half of this year. In place of this, I am working with volunteers and our secretary to assemble a display of new members’ photos in the shadow box in the narthex. Until then, I also want us to take a moment—a *semper gaudete* moment—to reflect on how good the Lord has been to us this year.

We know that the Father works through the Word and Sacrament delivered by the Holy Spirit to grow Christ's Church. Any joys we experience we can simply say, to God alone be the glory! We also know that Church growth is not all about numbers. Even in a church that might have not changed numerically in a year, the Lord can work to increase and strengthen the members' faithfulness which is not so easily measured but is just as important.

Church membership isn't about having your name in the right electronic database. It's not about being part of the right club. Church membership is your public confession of who Jesus is and what He has done in your life. At Faith Lutheran Church, membership is your way of saying that you agree with the teachings of the Bible and you believe in the Triune God who comes to us in Word and Sacrament.

Dear members of Faith Lutheran Church, on this "rejoice" Sunday let us then always rejoice (*semper gaudete!*) in the Lord's blessings. In particular, let us rejoice that **20 souls** have confessed that our God is their God, and that our Lord is their Lord and have joined us officially as members of Faith Lutheran. Introductory information for each new member will be included in a future bulletin pending the new members' input.

Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

Title: Rejoice Always!

CHRISTIANS REJOICE ALWAYS BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS _____, _____, AND WILL _____ FOR THEM.

I. Christians rejoice because of what Jesus _____ for them.

And the Gospel is this: that although you were born in sin, God had a plan to rescue you.

II. Christians rejoice because of what Jesus _____ for them.

But _____ is the one serving you in the church service.

III. Christians rejoice because of what Jesus _____ do for them.

Paul is able to be joyful in difficult circumstances because He keeps the _____
_____ in mind

