

FIRST LESSON. Zephaniah 3:14-20

Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgments against you, he has turned away your enemies. The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall fear disaster no more. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak. The Lord, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory; he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love; he will exult over you with loud singing as on a day of festival. I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it. I will deal with all your oppressors at that time. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the Lord.

SECOND LESSON. Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL. Luke 3:7-18

John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Third Sunday in Advent

God dwells in deep darkness. The darkness that is not dark to God can be terrifying for those who like our deities well lit. When we cannot see – when we are not sure where we are going and all our old landmarks have vanished inside the cloud – then plenty of us can believe we are lost when the exact opposite may be true. Based on the witness of those who have gone before, the dark cloud is where God takes people apart so they can be made new. It is the cloud of unknowing where nothing you thought you knew about God can prepare you to meet the God who is. It is the dark womb where life begins again. Is this good news or bad news? I think that's up to you.

-Barbara Brown Taylor,

Sermon excerpt, Festival of Homiletics



December 13, 2015

Third Sunday in Advent

December 13, 2015

8:30 & 11:00 a.m.

www.firstlutheranchurchff.org

First Lutheran Church
Fergus Falls, Minnesota
(218) 739-3348

EMAIL: firstlc@live.com

Online
Giving
(QR Code)



In the midst of all our talk about waiting and preparing in the darkness, comes a wonderful prophecy: God will rejoice over us with gladness. He'll sing and dance a victory dance when our salvation is won. Can we join in the dance?

Prelude

Gathering Music

*The Heavens Shall Declare
Majesty
Joy to The World*

Bullock
Hayford
Barker

Announcements

*** Confession and Forgiveness**

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who shapes the whole creation, who comes with might and mercy, who fills the hungry with good things. Amen.

L: Let us approach the throne of grace with repentant hearts.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

C: Faithful God, we confess that we have been unfaithful to you. Like dry leaves and withered grass, our lives are blown about by our sins and the powers of evil around us. Restore us, O God; let the light of your face shine on us, and we shall be saved. Amen.

L: God is patient, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. In the name of + Jesus Christ, I bring you this good news: You are free from all that imprisons you; your sins are forgiven; God heals your broken hearts. Live in peace and harmony as you wait for the day of God. **Amen.**

*Opening Hymn

He Came Down

ELW 253

*Apostolic Greeting

*Hymn of Praise

The King of Glory

See insert

*Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray. . . .

C Amen

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

ELW 240 (v. 3)

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

Christmas Cookies for Special Friends – Calling All Cookie Bakers!

On Tuesday, December 15, First Lutheran Church will be delivering plates of holiday cookies to shut-ins and members unable to bake anymore. We need help from those of you who enjoy baking to spread Christmas joy in this way. Cookies should be dropped off in the church kitchen on Tuesday (Dec 15) by 9 am. You can also leave them in the church kitchen on Sunday (Dec. 13) and label them for "Cookie Plates for Special Friends". We are looking for additional drivers to help deliver the cookies later that morning. Previous drivers have found it to be a very rewarding experience. Please call the church office at 218-739-3348 if you can help in this way, or if you have questions. Together we can spread lots of Christmas love and cheer!

OFFERING UPDATE

	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Actual</u> (12/1 to 12/31)	<u>Difference</u>
December as of 12/6/2015	\$ 40,040.00	\$ 9,877.25	-\$ 30,162.75
Year to date	\$480,560.00	\$421,502.47	-\$ 59,057.53

2015 Donations

In order to claim a charitable contribution deduction for 2015, **checks must be mailed to the church by no later than December 31.** Checks must be **written, postmarked, and mailed in 2015** to qualify for a 2015 deduction. All other contributions will not qualify for this year, even if the check was actually written in 2015. Please keep this in mind when making your year-end donations.

- Senior Pastor: Saul Stensvaag
- Associate Pastor: Jennifer Rose
- Visitation Pastor: Stan Satre
- Sunday School Superintendent: Cindy Larson
- Council President: Lisa Wolfe
- Sacristan: 8:30 – Teresa Shannon 11- Mary Johnson
- Organist: Keith Melberg
- Worship Team Director: Anne Taylor
- Lector: 8:30 –Myron Brusven 11- Carmon Jackson
- Communion Assistants: 8:30 –Lisa Wolfe & Morgan Shuck
11 – Rod & Marilyn Berg
- Acolytes: 8:30 – Sydney Batzlaff, Lilly Stumbo 11-Andreya Lockett, Alison Koch
- Ushers: 8:30- Daniel & Carol Roehl, Bob Wynn, Tucker Henkes
11- Roger Neuleib, Steve & Kathy Emerson
- Lighting of Wreath: 8:30- Dan, Abbey, Jaden, Ella, and Kellen Kwapinski
11 – Megan Johnson, Dennis, Andreya, Cyntreya, Darius, & Alizeya Lockett
- Greeters: 8:30 –Carolyn Ellingson
11 – Chad & Kelsey Felstul
- PA Operators: LeAnne Jaenisch

This month, Our Sunday School families will be collecting coats, jackets, mittens, etc. for The United Way Coats for Kids program. If you come across some items that are in good shape, but no longer fit, please bring it to church to help someone else keep warm!

Christmas Giving Tree! Please take an ornament (or more!) from the trees, purchase the item listed on the ornament and return them to church, unwrapped, by Tuesday, December 15. Deliveries will take place between Wednesday, December 16 and Friday, December 18. The wish list we receive from A Place to Belong has more detailed gifts because each person requests what they want. Sometimes, the gifts we bring, is the only gift that person will receive this year for Christmas. This is a chance to help someone feel the joy of Christmas this year!

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH FOUNDATION REQUESTS FOR 2016: The requests should be approved by the Church Council. The written request for funds should be sent to Orrie Leabo, Foundation President, before December 14th, 2015. This will help the Foundation Board to prepare for the Foundation's Annual Meeting. If you have any questions or comments please contact the board members. They are as follows: Chad Felstul, Vicki Hanneman, Leonard Hatzenbuhler, Tim Johnson, Orrie Leabo, Missy Mattson and Linda Mellon.

Attention all Farmers: We need your help! Did you gift the church the profit from your harvest recently? The company that sent us the check does not have a name connected to the money, and we would love to give you a tax receipt for your gift, if you could please contact the church office and ask for Katrina. Thank you so much!

Winter Weather Information: If Fergus Falls school close due to bad weather, the activities at the church that day will be cancelled and the church office will be closed. (If a leader of an evening activity, such as the adult choir, decides they WILL HOLD THEIR EVENT, they should contact the members. Sunday morning worship will never be cancelled, but please use your good judgment when deciding if you should come to worship or not, REMEMBER, you can always listen at home to the 8:30 a.m. worship on KJK AM 1020.

First Lesson

Zephaniah 3:14-20

The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.

(Congregational response after reading: **Thanks be to God**)

Scripture Song

Psalm 25: To You, O God, I Lift Up My Soul

Bob Hurd

(Congregation please join on the refrain)

Verse 1 Make me to know your ways, O God; teach me your paths, guide me. You are my Savior. **Refrain**

Verse 2 Good and upright our gracious God; showing the way, guiding the humble to justice. **Refrain**

Verse 3 Steadfast and kind your ways, O God; all who revere your covenant know your friendship. **Refrain**

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Refrain



Second Lesson

Philippians 4:4-7

Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns, with the hope they will experience God's joy and peace.

(Congregational response after reading: **Thanks be to God**)

***Gospel Acclamation**

Halle, Halle, Halle-lujah

ELW 172

(Congregation responds after Gospel is announced: **Glory to you, O Lord**)

Gospel

Luke 3:7-18

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one "who is coming." John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

(Congregation responds after Gospel is read: **Praise to you, O Christ**)

Sermon

God's Victory Dance

Pastor Saul

Hymn of the Day

Open the Eyes of My Heart

See Insert

***Nicene Creed (8:30)**

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Sacrament of Holy Baptism (11:00)

ELW Page 227

***The Prayers**

***The PEACE is shared**

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

Offertory

Messiah

Olson

Worship Team

Processional Offering

(Please come forward to the altar to place your offering and *Gifts for Living the Mission* (Time & Talent) Sheets - baskets will be provided.)

Words of Institution

The Lord's Prayer

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

Distribution of Holy Communion

Distribution Hymns

ELW 461, 723

***Post Communion Blessing**

***Post-Communion Hymn**

Soon and Very Soon

ELW 439

***Prayer & Benediction**

***Dismissal**

P Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

***Postlude**

This Week at First Lutheran:

Today: 8:30 & 11 a.m.
9:45 a.m.
9:45 a.m.
10:00 a.m.

Worship/Holy Communion
Sunday School Christmas Program rehearsal in Sanctuary
Butterflies
Adult Bible Study

Monday: 9:00 a.m.–3 p.m.
5:00 p.m.
5:00 p.m.
5:15 p.m.

WELCA Love Days
Al-Anon
Boy Scouts
Foundation Meeting in the Conference Room

Tuesday: 9:00 a.m.
9:00 a.m.
6:00 p.m.

Staff Meeting
Christmas Cookies in Kairos Room
Girl Scouts

Wed.: 9:30 a.m.
10:00 a.m.
12:10 pm
3:45 p.m.
4:30-5:15 p.m.
5:30 p.m.
7:00 p.m.
7:30 p.m.
7:45 p.m.

Al-Anon
AA
Worship/Soup Lunch
Children's Choir
FLY K7 Advent/Christmas Party
Hosanna Handbells
Advent Vespers – Required for Confirmation students
Adult Choir
Senior FLY Games & Cookies

Thurs.: 7:30 a.m.
8:45 am

BBC (Breakfast Bible Club) @ Taco John's
Morning Watch – Pr. Jennifer – KBRF AM 1250
NO ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN DECEMBER
(Next Meeting will be Thursday, Jan. 7th)

Friday: CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

Next Sunday, December 20:

8:30 a.m.
9:45 a.m.
10 a.m.
11:00 a.m.

Worship
Sunday School
Adult Bible Study
Sunday School Christmas Program

Fellowship and Refreshments this morning will be served by the families of DeAnna & Marissa Hurley and Levi Danielson. Join us in the narthex following worship today!

Altar Flowers are given by Gloria Springer in honor and memory of family.

Rose on the Altar is in celebration of the baptism of Hattie Caroline Nelson, daughter of Andru Nelson and Amy Baldwin. Sponsors are Scott & Laurie O'Keefe.

Flowers by the Pulpit are in memory of Hildegard Wasiloski given by Mark & Penny Wasiloski.

Radio Broadcast is sponsored by Kevyn Heck & Angie Bowman in celebration of several family birthdays this month.

Sympathy to Dalyce Leabo and her family on the death of her sister, Beverly Jacobson. Also, sympathy to the family of Hildegard Wasiloski who passed away last Sunday. Her funeral was in Sauk Rapids on Friday.

Large Print Edition of the order of worship, the lessons, and the hymns for today are available. If you would like copies for worship, please ask an usher.

Join Us for the Beautiful Evening Vespers Service on Wednesdays at 7 p.m. during Advent. It's a wonderful play of darkness conquered by the light of Christ and includes some of the best music of the Christian tradition. Worship will be done by 7:40 p.m. **We will also have the 12:10 p.m. service with soup lunch to follow in the Narthex.**

Sunday School Christmas program will be next Sunday, December 20th, at the **11 o'clock service ONLY**. There will be a regular worship service at 8:30. **Full dress rehearsal is today between services in the Sanctuary.**

Christmas Books & DVDs will be on the table in the library for easy check-out! Come see our big selection for all ages on display for you.

The Christmas and Advent offering will be divided among the Mama Naomi Clinic in Tanzania and one of our local benevolences. Our Advent Coin Folders are available to be picked up at the info counter or in the rear of the sanctuary.

Lenten Planning Task Force for 2016: Yes, believe it or not, it's time again to ask for volunteers to serve on the Lent/Easter Worship Planning Task Force. This group will work with Pastor Saul to come up with a theme and ideas for visuals and decorations to help the congregation have a meaningful worship experience during the seasons of Lent and Easter. No special artistic ability required. Everyone is welcome. Please talk to Pastor Saul or call the church office. (739-3348) We will begin meeting in December.

The Pastors would like to ask for your help in making sure that everyone who needs a visit from our Visitation Pastor, Stan Satre, is on our visitation list. We do not want anyone to be missed. Please let one of the Pastors know if you, or anyone you know that would like a visit. Thank you for your help.

The King of glory

Refrain
Em

The King of glo - ry comes, the na - tion re - joic - es.

Bm⁷ Em

Em

O - pen the gates be - fore him, lift up your voic - es.

Bm⁷ Em

G C Bm/D D⁷ G

1 Who is the King of glo - ry; how shall we call him?
2 In all of Gal - i - lee, in cit - y or vil - lage,
3 Sing then of Da - vid's Son, our Sav - ior and broth - er;
4 He gave his life for us, the pledge of sal - va - tion;
5 He con - quered sin and death; he tru - ly has ris - en,

Em CM⁷ G/B CM⁷ D⁷ G Refrain

He is Em - man - u - el, the prom - ised of ag - es.
he goes a - mong his peo - ple, cur - ing their ill - ness.
in all of Gal - i - lee was nev - er an - oth - er.
he took up - on him - self the sins of the na - tion.
and he will share with us his heav - en - ly vi - sion.

Open the Eyes of my Heart

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord,
o - pen the eyes of my heart; I want to
see You, I want to
see You. 1. Esus
2. VERSE
To see You high and lift - ed up,
shin - ing in the light of Your glo -
- ry. Pour out Your pow'r and love
as we sing, "Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho -
- ly."

Chords: E, B6/D1, A2/C1, A, Esus1, E, E, B, Cfm, Cfm/B Bsus, B, Cfm, Ffm

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GIFTS FOR LIVING THE MISSION (Time & Talent) FORMS

During the offering time, we will process forward to present our "Gifts for Living the Mission" (Time and Talent) Sheets before the altar. There are so many areas of our joint ministry where we could use your gifts of service. Please prayerfully consider as you fill out your form.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

3 & 5 p.m.

Blessing of the Family of God

Everyone will receive a family blessing from the pastors. (If you are a family of one, we invite you to receive a blessing for yourself and your loved ones wherever they may be.)

11 p.m.

Holy Communion

On this holy night we participate in the mystery of the incarnation as Christ comes to us in the bread and wine.

Christmas Day - One Service at 10 a.m.

A Festival of Lessons & Carols/Holy Communion

This worship tradition from King's College Chapel, Cambridge, England, brings Christmas Day to life with rich music. We hear the Christmas story in the regal language of the King James, sing some of our favorite carols, and break bread together. (There is no sermon.)

SUNDAYS, DECEMBER 27 & JANUARY 3
THERE WILL BE ONLY ONE SERVICE AT 10 A.M.
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL, NO ADULT BIBLE STUDY