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Worship Services broadcast on Austin Cable Channel 181, M & W, 7:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Affiliated with
CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION
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December 13, 2020

3rd Sunday in Advent

PRESERVICE PRAYER Heavenly Father, as we, in this Advent season prepare our hearts for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant us the grace of your Holy Spirit. As we hear Your Word may the Spirit work true repentance in our hearts that we may come before You confessing our sin, and trusting in Jesus for full and free forgiveness. As we prepare to celebrate His birth, ready our hearts for His return that we may live before you for all eternity. In Jesus' name. Amen.

THE ORDER OF SERVICE: (p. 22 Worship Supplement 2000)

HYMN 73: 1, 3, 4: Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

1. Left up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold the King of glory waits;
The King of kings is drawing near, The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation He doth bring, Wherefore rejoice and gladly sing:
We praise Thee, Father, now, Creator, wise art Thou!

3, O blest the land, the city blest, Where Christ the Ruler is confessed!
O happy hearts and happy homes To whom this King in triumph comes!
The cloudless Sun of joy He is, Who bringeth pure delight and bliss.
We praise Thee, Spirit, now, Our Comforter art Thou!

4. Fling wide the portals of your heart; Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sovereign enter in and new and nobler life begin.
To Thee, O God, be praise For Word and deed and grace!

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

C: Amen.

P: God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

C: If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C: If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

P: Together let us pray.

C: Almighty God, merciful Father, we are sinful by nature, and have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. But we are sorry for our transgressions and pray You, of Your bountiful mercy, to be gracious and merciful unto us.

Forgive us for Jesus' sake, renew us by Your Spirit, and lead us in the way everlasting. Amen.

P: Jesus Christ is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. We are forgiven! With boldness and confidence we may approach the throne to find grace to help in time of need. In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the 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.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

COLLECT FOR THE DAY

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON: Isaiah 61:1-3, 10-11

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD *is* upon Me,

Because the LORD has anointed Me

To preach good tidings to the poor;

He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,

To proclaim liberty to the captives,

And the opening of the prison to *those who are* bound;

²To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,

And the day of vengeance of our God;

To comfort all who mourn,

³To console those who mourn in Zion,

To give them beauty for ashes,

The oil of joy for mourning,
The garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness;
That they may be called trees of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.” ...

¹⁰ I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,
My soul shall be joyful 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 ornaments,
And as a bride adorns *herself* with her jewels.

¹¹ For as the earth brings forth its bud,
As the garden causes the things that are sown in it to spring forth,
So the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth
before all the nations. (NKJV)

THE EPISTLE LESSON: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶ Rejoice always, ¹⁷ pray without ceasing, ¹⁸ in everything give thanks;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹ Do not quench the
Spirit. ²⁰ Do not despise prophecies. ²¹ Test all things; hold fast what is
good. ²² Abstain from every form of evil. ²³ Now may the God of peace
Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and
body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

²⁴ He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it. (NKJV)

THE APOSTLES CREED

HYMN 63: On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry

1. On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Come, then, and hearken, for he brings
Glad tidings from the King of kings.

2. Then cleansed be ev'ry Christian breast
And furnished for so great a Guest,
Yea, let us each our hearts prepare
For Christ to come and enter there.

3. For Thou art our salvation, Lord,
Our Refuge, and our great Reward.
Without Thy grace our souls must fade
And wither like a flow'r decayed.

4. Lay on the sick Thy healing hand
And make the fallen strong to stand;
Show us the glory of Thy face
Till beauty springs in every place.

5. All praise, eternal Son, to Thee
Whose advent sets Thy people free,
Whom, with the Father, we adore
And Holy Ghost forevermore.

THE SERMON: John 1:6-8, 19-29

Theme: Following John's Pattern of Testimony

- I. Bearing Witness of the Light that Is Christ
- II. Keeping the Focus on Jesus

SERMON TEXT: John 1:6-8, 19-29

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. ... ¹⁹Now this 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."

²²Then they said to him, "Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

²³He said: "I am

'The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

"Make straight the way of the Lord," '

as the prophet Isaiah said."

²⁴Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. ²⁵And they asked him, saying, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

²⁶John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. ²⁷It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."

²⁸These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! (NKJV)

PRAYER; THE LORD’S PRAYER

HYMN 106: 1, 2, 4, 7: The People That in Darkness Sat

1 The people that in darkness sat
A glorious light have seen;
The light has shined on them who long
In shades of death have been,
In shades of death have been.

2. To hail Thee, Sun of Righteousness,
The gath’ring nations come;
They joy as when the reapers bear
Their harvest treasures home, ...

4. To us a Child of hope is born,
To us a Son is given,
And on His shoulder ever rests
All power in earth and heaven ...

7. Lord Jesus, reign in us we pray,
And make us Thine alone,
Who with the Father ever art
And Holy Spirit one, ...

BENEDICTION;

C: Amen.

Hymn 97:1, 4 Let Us All with Gladsome Voice

1. Let us all with gladsome voice Praise the God of heaven,
Who to bid our hearts rejoice, His own Son hath given.

4. O Lord Christ, our Savior dear, Be Thou ever near us.
Grant us now a glad new year. Amen, Jesus, hear us!

CALENDAR

TODAY: Thank you for coming to hear the Word. Sunday school and Bible class are scheduled to follow the service. We will meet in the fellowship hall spreading out with families at individual tables to maintain social distancing.

Used bulletins should either be taken home or deposited in the wastepaper basket at the narthex door. Your offerings may be placed in the offering plate at the rear of the nave.

WEDNESDAY: Catechism via ZOOM at 4:00 p.m. – 5:30.

Midweek Advent meditation begins at 7:00 p.m. The theme for our midweek meditations this year is Advent Proclamations. This coming Wednesday we will consider the Advent Proclamation: “Behold Your God!” The text is Isaiah 40:9-11.

NEXT SUNDAY: Worship with Holy Communion at 9:30. Please register for communion by texting or calling the pastor. A church council meeting is scheduled to follow the service. Next Sunday’s sermon text: 2 Samuel 7:8-16.

FUTURE DATES TO REMEMBER

December 25: Christmas festival worship at 9:30. (No service is scheduled for Christmas Eve this year.)

SERVING TODAY

Organist: Denise Barthels

OUR RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL:

Attendance: Dec. 6 worship – 15 Bible Class - 10; Sunday school – 0
Dec. 9 Midweek Advent worship - 12

Weekly Offerings Needed	\$ 1,250.00	Other offerings	
Offerings Received	\$1,330.00	ILC Building Fund	\$50.00
Needed for Year:	\$60,000.00	Memorials: Jim Bennett	\$300.00
Received for Year:	\$54,139,00	Lincoln Cole to Property Imprv. Fund	\$50.00

December Church Cleaning – Nelson

The ILC Christmas Concert will be held Friday, December 18 at 7:00 pm. Because of the mild forecast for Friday, the concert will be held **outside** on the hillside next to the gym. Guests are encouraged to bring their own chairs, if they wish. Because of the considerable space we have outdoors, it will be open to the public.

Nominations for ILC Professor: The following nominations have been received to fill the professorship vacated by the impending retirement of Professor John Reim at the end of the 2020-21 academic year: Pastors Paul Krause, Neal Radichel, Rob Sauers, and David Schaller. All comments from members of CLC congregations regarding these candidates are to be received by email or letter no later than midnight December 29, 2020 (letters postmarked December 24, 2020) to: Mr. James Burkhardt; 217 Windy Lane; Rockwall, TX 75087; email: jeb6217@yahoo.com.

CLC Project KINSHIP - On the Rise! As endeavors to spread the Gospel overseas continue to increase, so do our opportunities to support these endeavors. Of the current 113 overseas seminary students, there are currently five students that do not have stateside sponsors. Please consider becoming a sponsor through the CLC KINSHIP program. The cost for this particular sponsorship is \$35/month (\$420/year). There will also be sponsorship opportunities for the overseas orphan population in the near future, and KINSHIP would welcome folks who are willing to be put on the “wait list” for those sponsorships. These sponsorships require a similar financial commitment. Contact is Dan Roehl (danroehl@hotmail.com or 507-381-2042).

2021 CLC Mission Helper Trip to Nepal - CANCELLED With an application deadline quickly approaching and still so much uncertainty concerning international travel, vaccination requirements and availability, and government restrictions on gatherings in Nepal due to the pandemic, the decision has been made to cancel the 2021 trip that was tentatively scheduled for July with the prayer that things will be back to normal enough by this time next year to make plans for 2022.