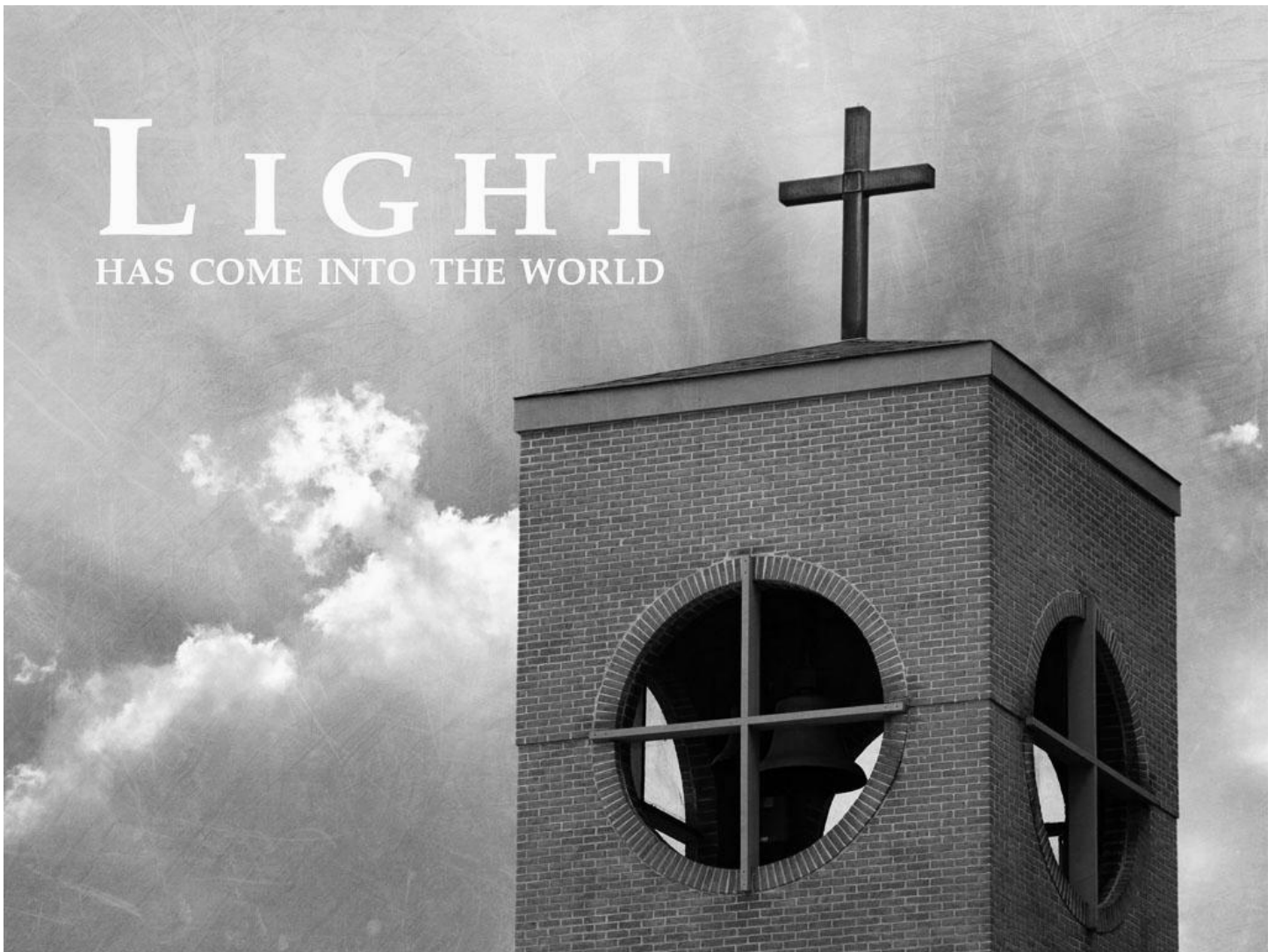


*An evening setting of Holy Communion*



St. David's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Saturday, December 14, 2019

5:30 pm

Holy Communion

Advent 3

PASTOR: THE REVEREND FARON H. JOHNSON

AUTHORIZED LAY MINISTER: MR. DAVID FINNEY

Church: 479-4110; Fax: 479-2994

[www.stdavidslutheran.org](http://www.stdavidslutheran.org)

## ***Welcome to St. David's Lutheran Church!***

We are blessed by your presence and honored that you have chosen to worship with us today. Please take a moment to sign the friendship sheet that is located in the booklet at the end of each pew, near the center aisle. These sheets will be collected after the service.

**The Sacrament of Holy Communion** is offered to all who are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit and who recognize the Sacrament as the true body and blood of our Lord. Baptized children are also welcome to receive the elements at the Lord's table at St. David's with the guidance and consent of their parents or guardians. Persons, who may not wish to receive the bread and wine of the communion, are still welcome to come to the table to receive a blessing. To do so please fold your hands and bow your head.

**Prayer Requests** may be made by placing the request in the small wooden box at the rear, near the doors through which you entered. The acolyte will collect the requests and they will be included during the prayers of the congregation.

**For your comfort** there is a restroom, equipped with a changing table and supplies and a water fountain located upstairs. Simply exit through the double doors back into the narthex. The restroom is straight ahead in the parlor, beside the grandfather clock, and the water fountain is to the right at the beginning of the hallway.

**Devotional** – The worship folder you are holding is also a weekly devotional booklet. The prayers and Scripture readings are appropriate for use at any time during the week. The liturgy itself is a Scripturally based order for daily prayer and devotion with Scriptural references noted where they apply. Even the hymns are appropriate tools for prayer and praise. Finally, there is a daily lectionary of Scripture readings for the rest of the week on the last printed page.

### **INTRODUCTION**

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

## WELCOME

*The assembly stands.*

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

In the name of the Father,  
and of the † Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.*

Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

**Amen.**

*The presiding minister announces God's forgiveness with these or similar words.*

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

**Amen.**

*The assembly stands.*

## **GREETING**

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

**And also with you.**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. . . .

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

## **FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10**

A reading from Isaiah the 35<sup>th</sup> chapter.

*{The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.}*

<sup>1</sup>The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus <sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly,  
and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,  
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.

<sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup>Say to those who are of a fearful heart,

“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

<sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

<sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,  
and streams in the desert;  
<sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool,  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.  
<sup>8</sup>A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it,  
but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.  
<sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there,  
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there,  
but the redeemed shall walk there.  
<sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,  
and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;  
they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **PSALM 146:5-10 (read responsively)**

*The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)*

<sup>5</sup>Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God;

<sup>6</sup>**who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;  
who keeps promises forever;**

<sup>7</sup>who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who  
hunger.

The LORD sets the captive free.

<sup>8</sup>**The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are  
bowed down;**

**the LORD loves the righteous.**

<sup>9</sup>The LORD cares for the stranger;  
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the  
wicked.

<sup>10</sup>**The LORD shall reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

*All: The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (Ps. 146:8)*

## **SECOND READING: James 5:7-10**

A reading from James the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter.

*{In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than  
discontent.}*

<sup>7</sup>Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup>You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup>Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup>As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The assembly stands.*

## **GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11**

The holy gospel according to Matthew the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*{John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.}*

<sup>2</sup>When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup>and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" <sup>4</sup>Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup>the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup>And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

<sup>7</sup>As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? <sup>8</sup>What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup>What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup>This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.'

<sup>11</sup>Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The assembly is seated.*

**HOMILY**

Together we confess our faith:

## **APOSTLE'S CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Keeping awake as we watch for Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

*A brief silence.*

Holy God, we rejoice that your promises take on flesh in Jesus. Grant patience to your church awaiting the fulfillment of your reign of justice and peace. Restore in us the hope that we are called to proclaim to the world. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Life-giving God, we rejoice that you coax flowers from the desert and water from the wilderness. Send rain to parched fields and sun to flooded plains. Nurture all that lies sleeping under frozen ground. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Almighty God, we rejoice in your authority as Prince of peace. Deliver us from those who wield power through unjust and oppressive ways. Raise up prophets to speak your truth in this and every nation. Hear us, O God.



**Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, we rejoice that you dwell in human bodies. Renew signs of your joyful presence in people of all shapes, sizes, ages, and abilities. (*We pray especially for . . .*) Empower all to embrace their callings and the gifts of your Spirit. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Generous God, we rejoice that you create us to praise you. Strengthen the voices and hands of all who prepare to celebrate Christ's birth with music, dancing, and proclamation, in worship and in the community. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Eternal God, we rejoice that all who die in Christ are raised to new life. We thank you for the lives of those who have prepared the way for us and have now joined the great cloud of witnesses (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You hear the cries of our hearts, O Lord. Fill us with hopeful expectation, that in each day and hour we may love and serve our neighbors, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The minister and congregation may greet one another in the name of the Lord.*

Peace be with you.

**Peace be with you.**

*Please be seated, while the table is set.*

*The assembly stands.*

## **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. The table is now set with communion elements that were consecrated at last Saturday's service for our reception today. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

When our congregation gathered for worship last Saturday, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown to us in Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension, and they shared in the holy meal of the Lord's Supper. Now, I bring to you this same word of life, and this same bread and cup of blessing, so that we may share in these gifts and be strengthened in communion with all the people of God.

Gathered at the Lord's Table, we celebrated with thanksgiving that "in the night in which Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying: Take and eat; this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink saying: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me." This is the supper of our Lord Jesus Christ, and this meal is shared with the assurance of our Lord's presence through the gift of the Holy Spirit. This bread and cup, shared in the gathering of our faith, are now given here for you.

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

## **LAMB OF GOD**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
grant us peace, grant us peace.**

*The assembly is seated.*

*The Holy Communion is distributed with these or similar words:*

The body of Christ, given for you

The blood of Christ, shed for you

## **COMMUNION**

*Following the Holy Communion the congregation stands:*

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen.**

## **POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

**Amen.**

## **BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **QUIET MEDITATION**

## **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Share the good news.

**Thanks be to God.**

This evening, David Finney, an authorized lay worship leader in the Allegheny Synod, ELCA, will distribute the gifts of bread and wine set apart at the gathering of our brothers and sisters from St. David's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Davidsville on December 14<sup>th</sup>. Because Pastor Johnson is on vacation is not available to preside at our worship today, and with the blessing of Bishop Michael L. Rhyne, this form of distribution under special circumstances is being used **only** during this time of our congregational transition.

## **GOSPEL MESSAGE**

**December 15, 2019**

### **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

#### **A Change in Tone**

John the Baptist, just last week crying out in the wilderness with a voice unmistakable and bold, has dramatically changed his tone. Now imprisoned by Herod, he has abandoned his confident pitch that pulsed at the river Jordan's banks. His confidence tottering and proclamation fading, John now implores about his cousin Jesus, "Is he the one?"

A stream of hope had run through the crowds on the Jordan's banks. It had flowed through those who rushed from the water, dripping with baptismal verve and ready for the kingdom of heaven John announced. But now it was drying up. John was filled with misgivings, his hope having evaporated inside the prison walls.

Where is justice for the prophet? What of mercy for John? A prison cell was his reward for proclaiming heaven's kingdom come, for unlocking a conclusive truth at the portals of a warping empire. Malicious bars of injustice imprisoned him, hammered in a forge of vengeance: this man called by God, the first of two miracle children born of wonder foretold by angels, the ascetic in the desert, arouser of hope, baptizer of Jesus himself—held in chains! All the glowing hope looked to be a fading tale told by a disappointing martyr.

Life. Who has lived it and managed to escape injury and heartache of expectations lost, fair due denied, the prize withheld? We each experience tragedies immense and minute, discouragements that sting and pass, despair that aches and endures. How thin the air of promise can feel.

Jesus offers transcendent hope when he answers John. It is hope that sees beyond short-sighted optimism, hope that prevails against searing evidence to the contrary, hope that exceeds the pace of setbacks and remains persistent when, like John, we cannot help but ask, "Are you the one . . . , or are we to wait for another?" It is Advent hope.

## ***Daily Readings for the Week December 15-21***

Sunday:	<p style="text-align: center;">Third Sunday of Advent          Isaiah 35:1-10          Psalm 146:5-10 or Luke 1:46b-55          James 5:7-10          Matthew 11:2-11</p>
Monday:	<p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 42          Isaiah 29:17-24          Acts 5:12-16</p>
Tuesday:	<p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 42          Ezekiel 47:1-12          Jude 17-25</p>
Wednesday:	<p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 42          Zechariah 8:1-17          Matthew 8:14-17, 28-34</p>
Thursday:	<p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19          2 Samuel 7:1-17          Galatians 3:23-29</p>
Friday:	<p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19          2 Samuel 7:18-22          Galatians 4:1-7</p>
Saturday:	<p style="text-align: center;">Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19          2 Samuel 7:23-29          John 3:31-36</p>

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