

# St. John's Lutheran Church

December 5, 2021

St. John's Lutheran Church \* Helena, Montana

Advent II



Welcome

Opening Hymn....."Joy To The World" #267

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her King;  
let ev'ry heart prepare Him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.*

*Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*No more let sin and sorrow grow  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of His righteousness  
and wonders of His love,  
and wonders of His love,  
and wonders, wonders of His love.*

## **Confession and Forgiveness**

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

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,  
who alone does wonders,  
who lifts up the lowly,  
who fills the hungry with good things.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God for whom we wait,  
**in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you.**  
**We fail in believing that your good news is for us.**  
**We falter in our call to tend your creation.**  
**We find our sense of self in material wealth.**  
**We fear those different from ourselves.**  
**We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love.**  
**Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace.**  
**Amen.**

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you!  
Through the power of the Holy Spirit,  
+ your sins are forgiven.  
You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise,  
and recipients of divine mercy.  
God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.  
**Amen.**

## **Lighting of the Advent Wreath and Advent Candle Lighting Song**

*Tune: "Infant Holy, Infant Lowly"*

*Lyrics by Rev. Elana Keppel Levy*

*Week Two-Peace*

*Candles glowing, promise showing holy peace so still and bright.  
New tomorrow, free from sorrow – living in Christ's holy light.  
Shunning violence, loving neighbor, joy of silence, trust our savior—  
Living in Christ's holy light!  
Living in Christ's holy light!*

## Prayer

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

**Amen.**

## Prayer of the Day

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## Special Music.....St. John's Sanctuary Choir

### **"Stir Up Your Power" by Linda Cable Shute**

*Stir up your pow'r, O Lord, and come.*

*Again we pray, "Your will be done."*

*May Advent blue to us foretell the echo of Emmanuel.*

*Is heaven's moment far or near?*

*And when will Jesus reappear?*

*The coming dawn is our delight in this,  
the darkest hour of night.*

*We could inside the church remain,  
like dry ground watching for the rain.*

*We could decide to sit and wait as Jesus we anticipate.*

*But we must keep hands to the plow;*

*God's time is not yet and now.*

*Our faith informs what we shall do.*

*May Christ return and find us true,*

*may Christ return and find us true.*

## Scripture Readings

### **Malachi 3:1-4**

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Luke 1:68-79**

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

**He has raised up a mighty savior for us**

**in the house of his servant David,**

as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
**that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.**

Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,

and has remembered his holy covenant,

**the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,**

**to grant us**

that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,

might serve him without fear,

**in holiness and righteousness**

**before him all our days.**

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

**to give knowledge of salvation to his people**

**by the forgiveness of their sins.**

By the tender mercy of our God,

the dawn from on high will break upon us,

**to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,**

**to guide our feet into the way of peace.”**

**Philippians 1:3-11**

I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God’s grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

The Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Acclamation: “My Soul In Stillness Waits”**

*Refrain: For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits, truly my hope is in you.*

*(verse sung by cantor)*

*Refrain: For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits, truly my hope is in you.*

The Holy Gospel according to Luke, the 3rd chapter beginning with the 1st verse.

**Response after the announcement: Glory to you, O Lord.**

**Luke 3:1-6**

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

The gospel of our Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Children's Message**

*Children ages 4-5th grade are invited to attend Sunday School during the remainder of the service. We will bring them up for communion and you can pick them up following worship downstairs in the Sunday School room.*

**Hymn of the Day ..... "Prepare the Royal Highway" #264 verses 1-2**

*Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!  
Let ev'ry hill and valley a level road appear!  
Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:  
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!*

*God's people, see him coming: your own eternal king!  
Palm branches strew before him! Spread garments! Shout and sing!  
God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail you!  
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!*

**Sermon: "Blessed...God's Tender Mercy"**

**Hymn of the Day ..... "Prepare the Royal Highway" #264 verses 3-4**

*Then fling the gates wide open to greet your promised king!  
Your king, yet ev'ry nation its tribute too may bring.  
all lands will bow before him; their voices join your singing:  
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!*

*He is no earthly kingdom; it comes from heav'n above.  
His rule is peace and freedom and justice, truth, and love.  
So let your praise be sounding for kindness so abounding.  
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!*

## Nicene Creed

**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.**

## Prayers of Intercession

**Prayer Response** *(Each portion of the prayers ends with these words.)*

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

## Sharing of the Peace

*(...Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." (John 20:19))*

The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

## The 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.**

*The thanksgiving continues with the preface for the day; the assembly responds  
(sung to the tune of Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent):*

*Holy, holy, holy, holy  
God of power and God of might.  
Heaven and earth declare your glory  
hail hosanna Lord of light.  
Blessed be the coming Savior.  
Hail hosanna Lord most high.*

## Praying 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.

## Lamb of God (Agnus Dei)

1. Jes - us Christ, God's dear Lamb, Tru - ly man, yet great I AM  
2. Word made flesh, you now dwell here with us, Em - man - u - el  
3. Mar - y's child, our broth - er, Mak - ing us one with your Fath - er,

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Sins you take for our sake: Grant us mer - cy, Christ our Lord.  
Heal our strife; give us life: Grant us mer - cy, Christ our Lord.  
Take our sin; o'er death win: Grant us your e - ter - nal peace.

## Communion Distribution

*(Those at home...take and eat, this is the body and blood of Christ given for you. We celebrate open communion and all who are baptized are welcome to receive the forgiving and gracious presence of Christ in communion. Those who prefer not to commune are invited to come forward to receive a blessing. Grape juice is available and Gluten Free wafers are available at the center station. Please space yourselves out as you come up and cleanse your hands with sanitizer before communing.)*

Hymn During Communion .....“People, Look East” #248

*People, look east. The time is near  
of the crowning of the year.  
make your house fair as you are able,  
trim the hearth and set the table.  
People, look east, and sing today—  
Love, the Guest is on the way.*

*Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,  
one more seed is planted there.  
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,  
that in course the flow'r may flourish.  
People, look east, and sing today—  
Love, the Rose, is on the way.*

*Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,  
one more light the bowl shall brim,  
shining beyond the frosty weather,  
bright as sun and moon together.  
People, look east, and sing today—  
Love, the Star, is on the way.*

*Angels announce with shouts of mirth  
him who brings new life to earth.  
set ev'ry peak and valley humming  
with the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east, and sing today—  
Love, the Lord, is on the way.*

**Post-Communion Prayer**

Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. **Amen.**

**Announcements**

**Benediction (to the tune of “Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful”)**

The Lord bless and keep you, look with love upon you,  
be gracious, and cause His face to shine with peace!  
*Glory to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!*  
*The savior close beside us, God's love from harm to hide us,*  
*The Spirit's pow'r to guide us evermore!*

**Dismissal**

**Postlude**

## MINISTERING IN WORSHIP TODAY

**Pastor Brad Ulgenes, Preaching & Presiding**

**Dodie Walsh, Organ & Piano**

**Connie Conley, Choir Director**

**Angela Conley, Technology and Sound**

**Susan Frey, Lector**

**Communion Servers**

**Betty Dotson, Nora Johnson,**

**Danyel Bauer, Betty Olaf**

**Altar Guild**

**In our prayers this week:** Marge Prebil, SSGT Andrea Jones, Pastor Patricia Harant, Jean Norby, Payan Teeters, Dale Twingley, Cathy Christopherson, Betty Dotson, Richard Bomar, Pam Gurley, Brooklyn Skinner, Jim & Tina, Pr. Randy Olson, John Ogren, Bruce Gottwig, Georgine Larson, Mary Lou Hadley, Tom Morrow, Rueben, Vickie Alpiner, Emma Rose Plute, Jeff Shirley, Jeremy Stockstad, Rosita Moe, Tatiana Ceaicovschi, Gina Hultin, Chris Gibbs, Randy Holmes, Lester Anderson, the children at Intermountain, for those who are alone, for those who suffer from depression, for the homeless in our community, and for all who seek health and wholeness

**For those who have died and now rest in God's merciful care:**

Marina Durah, Roy Wilson (Karen Doig's father), Lloyd Norby (Pastor's uncle), Shirley Herrin, Fern Holshue, Taryn Massa, Donna Anderson, Joanne Larsen, Sarah Wilson (Karen Doig's mother), Roger Redlin, Jeannette Mattfeldt, and all the Saints in heaven

**For those in residential living centers, extended care or homebound:**

Wilma Carlson, Mike Kieckbusch, Hazel Aasved, Esther Fuehrer, Marge Mihelish, Georgine Larson, Tom Morrow

**Missionaries:** Willie, Anne, and Micah Langdji in Cameroon

Missionaries around the world

### ANNOUNCEMENTS AND IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

#### **JOHN FLORIDIS CONCERT TO BENEFIT FAMILY PROMISE OF GREATER HELENA**

Missoula guitarist and singer-songwriter John Floridis returns to Helena on Tuesday, Dec. 14th at 7:00 pm, for a contemplative concert of seasonal music to benefit Family Promise of Greater Helena. The concert at St. Paul's United Methodist Church will be limited to 200 in-person attendees and also will be streamed online at <https://www.youtube.com/c/StPaulsUnitedMethodistChurchHelena>. Tickets for the in-person concert are \$15 and will be available beginning Dec. 1 at the Myrna Loy Center and at Birds and Beasley's on the Walking Mall. Donations are gratefully accepted from viewers who tune in on YouTube at: [familypromisehelena.org](http://familypromisehelena.org)

Thanks to everyone who participated in the non-event Comfort Food challenge in September. Over \$7,000 was raised for Family Promise of Helena!

#### **2022 PLEDGE CARDS**

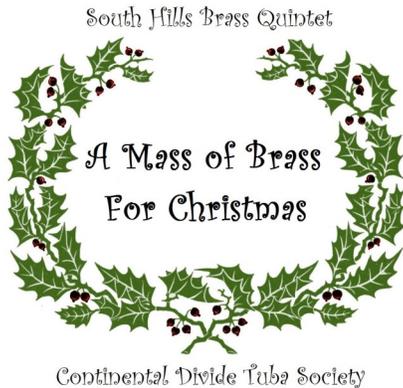
Please bring in your pledge cards for 2022 and drop them off in the Stewardship box in the back of the church. This helps us to plan our budget for the next year. Thank you!

#### **LESSONS FOR 12/12/21**

Zephaniah 3:14-20, Isaiah 12:2-6, Philippians 4:4-7, Luke 3:7-18

## QUILTER S.O.S.

HELP! The quilters have run out of sheets! We use any size, color or print of a cotton blend. Please no white as the quilts are used for beds, doors, and windows. Thank you for all of your support.  
God's Work, Our Hands—Linda & Mildred



A Mass of Brass is Back! The South Hills Brass Quintet and the Continental Divide Tuba Society proudly present their fifth annual joint Christmas concert, A Mass of Brass for Christmas. The concert will feature a variety of music from traditional carols and classical works to modern Christmas favorites. This free concert will take place on Sunday, December 19th, at 3:00 pm at the Covenant United Methodist Church. Covenant United Methodist has requested that all attendees be masked while inside the church building. We hope to see you there!

## SOCIAL MINISTRY CAUSES FOR DECEMBER 2021

The Christmas Tree in the narthex will give us the possibility to support three causes: The Friendship Center, The Florence Crittenton Center, and ELCA World Hunger Good Gifts project. Please visit the tree and help with these important missions. You may also give through their websites or use the Social Ministry pew envelopes.

The mission of THE FRIENDSHIP CENTER is to be a safe haven for those affected by domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking and to empower our community to flourish in relationships free from violence. [thefriendshipcenter.org](http://thefriendshipcenter.org)

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FLORENCE CRITTENTON is a relationship-based organization in Helena, Montana that provides family-centered support. Through a comprehensive continuum of services, our programs offer an array of support and services to help families thrive. We believe that children should accompany their parents to treatment and that a family centered treatment approach is most effective in building a lasting foundation for young families. If you take a gift tag, please return your unwrapped gifts to church by Sunday, December 12th. [florencecrittenton.org](http://florencecrittenton.org)

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Give something unexpected this Christmas! In Christ, we receive the gift of God's love. Let us share God's love with others. ELCA GOOD GIFTS are a fun, meaningful way to honor friends and family with Christmas gifts that go on to make a difference in the world. Choose from more than 50 gift-giving options (goats, anyone?), each with the ability to make real, lasting change in the life of someone in need. Give in honor of someone special and you can print, mail or email a card to let them know. [goodgifts.elca.org](http://goodgifts.elca.org)

## POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS

We will once again have poinsettias for sale to honor a loved one. The flowers will decorate the sanctuary for our Christmas Eve service. Orders are due Sunday, December 12th. Order forms are available in the sanctuary or you can contact the church office. Plants are \$10.