



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH (MISSOURI SYNOD)
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**The 3rd Sunday Of Advent Gaudete: The Sunday of John in Prison--“The Lord Has Come As Long Promised”
—17 December 2017—**

This is the one about whom it is written, ‘Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’ [St. Matthew 11.10]

WELCOME TO FAITH! GOD’S HOUSE, YOUR HOME. Ласкаво просимо до церкви! Our promise to you is this: God’s word preached directly from the Bible, the Sacraments administered as our Lord gave them, a worship service that follows the historic practices of the Church, and a warm and friendly welcome. *We ask our visitors to sign the guest book in the entryway and to return again soon.* Our pastor is ready to serve you in any way consistent with his office.

ORDER OF SERVICE—Order of Holy Communion—hymnal pg. 15

THE PREPARATION

Pre-service prayers (hymnal pg. 4; 102-109; 118; 170)

TODAY WE LIGHT THE THIRD CANDLE OF THE ADVENT WREATH. It is called the **SHEPHERD CANDLE**. It marks the faith of the shepherds and our faith as we go to Bethlehem to see our newborn Savior. The **PINK** color shows our joy.

Hymn #63 On Jordan’s Bank The Baptist’s Cry

At the final stanza, the congregation turns facing the processional crucifix

Invocation hymnal pg. 15

Confession/ Absolution pg. 15-16

The Blessing Of The Christmas Tree

In the Intercessions, when pastor prays, Let us pray to the Lord, the congregation responds with: LORD, GIVE LIGHT TO OUR HEARTS.

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD—Jesus comes with His word to enlighten us

Introit: (Philippians 4. 4-6; Psalm 85.2)

P: Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, Rejoice!

C: Let your gentleness be known to all people.

P: The Lord is at hand.

C: Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

P: You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people;

C: You have covered all their sin.

Gloria Patri [Glory to the Father] pg. 16

Kyrie [Lord] pg. 17

Gloria in Excelsis [Glory in the Highest] **omitted until Christmas**

Salutation/ Collect pg. 19

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.

Epistle

1 Corinthians 4. 1-5 [EHV]

This is the way a person should think of us: as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. ²In this connection, moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful. ³But it is a trivial matter to me if I am evaluated by you or by a day in a human court. Why, I do not even evaluate myself. ⁴I do not in fact know of anything against myself, but I am not justified by this; rather, the one who evaluates me is the Lord. ⁵Therefore judge nothing ahead of time, until the Lord comes. He will bring to light whatever is hidden in darkness and also reveal the intentions of hearts. Then there will be praise for each person from God.

Gradual: (Psalm 80. 1b, 2b; 1a, 2b)

P: You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth!

C: Stir up Your strength and come.

P: Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,

C: You who lead Joseph like a flock. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

P: Stir up Your strength **C: and come save us. Hallelujah!**

Triple Hallelujah pg. 20

Gospel— St. Matthew 11. 2-10 [EHV] pg. 21

²While John [*the Baptizer*] was in prison, he heard about the things Christ was doing. He sent two of his disciples ³to ask him, “Are you the Coming One or should we wait for someone else?”

⁴Jesus answered them, “Go, report to John what you hear and see: ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the gospel is

preached to the poor. ⁶Blessed is the one who does not take offense at me.”

⁷As these two were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the crowds about John. “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? No, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. ⁹So what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you! And he is much more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, ‘Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’”

Nicene Creed

pg. 22

Hymn: #272 When All the World was Cursed

Sermon— St. Matthew 11. 2-10

The Christian—An Imitator Of St. John the Baptizer

1. St. John had a unique role
2. But we can imitate his message and faithfulness

[Silence for meditation]



Offertory

pg. 22

Offering

Stewardship thought— 1 Corinthians 4:2 *“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.”* A steward manages the property of the owner for the owner’s purposes. We are stewards of all that God has given us. So we are called to use all that we are and all that we have for God’s purposes. How do we know what these are? Consider your vocations, your callings from God, in the Home, the Church, and Society: what are the roles God has called you to play? And how should you be using the gifts He’s given you to fulfill those roles?

The Prayer of the Church

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

Brief silence

In peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the Church, that the God of comfort would pardon the iniquities of all who hear the Word and receive the Sacraments, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For those who have not heard the Gospel, that the God of comfort would send pastors and missionaries to proclaim the saving Gospel, and that the Holy Spirit would cause them to abound in hope, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For all with troubled consciences, that the God of comfort would show them the love of Christ, guide them to recognize that their redemption is drawing near through Christ, and bless them through the good news preached to them, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all sinners, that the God of comfort would grant them faith to receive the forgiveness and eternal salvation given through the Holy Spirit, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the pure proclamation of the Word, that the God of comfort would cause the breath of the Lord to come upon us, and that the Word of our God would stand forever as He promises, let us pray to the Lord:

Lord, have mercy.

For all servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, that the God of comfort would bless our Synod president, district presidents, all pastors and all missionaries with zeal to rightly divide the Word of truth and apply it correctly to all people, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For our president, governor, mayor, legislature and magistrates, that the God of comfort would work through them to enact and enforce laws which allow Christians to live and worship in peace, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the hungry, homeless, less fortunate and unemployed, that the God of comfort would have the good news preached to them and guide us all to come to their help and aid, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick, hospitalized and recovering, especially those of our congregation and our loved ones, that the God of comfort would heal them and strengthen them to endure their afflictions, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those going to the Lord’s altar today, that the God of comfort will grant joy to all communicants as they eat the body and drink the blood of Christ for their forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who mourn, that the God of comfort would bless them with confidence in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting, and that God’s people may give thanks for all who have gone before us in the faith, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns

with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

THE SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

Jesus comes to nourish us with His Body and Blood

Preface	pg. 24-25
<i>Sanctus</i> (Holy)	pg. 26
The Lord's Prayer and Words of Institution	pg. 27
<i>Agnus Dei</i> (Lamb of God)	pg. 28
<i>The Distribution of our Lord's true body and blood for the forgiveness of sin and the strengthening of faith</i>	

TODAY WE CELEBRATE HOLY COMMUNION. "Advent" means "coming." Christ came in the flesh at Bethlehem, He comes now in Word and Sacrament, and He will come again in judgment. As we look forward to His final coming, we find our deepest joy and comfort in His present coming with His very body and blood for our forgiveness. Because of our sincere concern that each person communing receives Jesus' body and blood to his or her soul's benefit, we practice closed communion and invite to the Lord's Table members in good standing of a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. If you are such a guest and desire the holy Sacrament, please speak with the pastor before the service.

<i>Nunc Dimittis</i> (Now You dismiss) and Thanksgiving	pg. 29
Salutation/ Benedicamus/ Benediction	pg. 31
Hymn: #75 Ye Sons of Men, Oh, Harken	

The congregation faces the processional cross as it leaves

Silent Prayer

TELL THE GOOD NEWS ABOUT JESUS

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today—Coffee Hour/ Christmas Cookie Exchange	after service
Tuesday— Newsletter Deadline Bible Study	6 pm
Thursday—Bible Study	9.30 am
Sunday—Christmas Eve Service	7 pm
Bring your poinsettia to church to beautify chancel and bring home again	
PLEASE PRAY FOR: Virginia Butler, Dan and Jean Fraser, Jonna Holden, Arthur Scott, Karen Weiner; Mary Ellen Carl.	



Prayer: O Lord God, heavenly Father, You had Your Son, our Lord Jesus become man and come into this world to restrain the devil's tyranny, to help us poor people in the face of sin and death and to save us eternally.

We pray that You would lead us by Your Holy Spirit and direct our hearts so that we do not look to anything but Your Word alone and by this avoid every stumbling block our reason puts in our way, so that in the end we may be found in that little flock, Your Church, that is not offended on account of Your Son, Christ Jesus, but saved by Him. Amen

AS LUTHERANS WE BELIEVE: "Now, strictly speaking, repentance consists of two parts. One part is *contrition*, that is, terrors striking the conscience through the knowledge of sin. The other part is *faith*, which is born of the Gospel (Romans 10.17) or the Absolution and believes that for Christ's sake, sins are forgiven. It comforts the conscience and delivers it from terror. The good works are bound to follow, which are the fruit of repentance." (Matthew 3.8; Galatians 5. 22-23) [Augsburg Confession, XII]

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 4. 1-5 What, then, are the "mysteries" of God? Nothing other than Christ Himself, that is, faith and the Gospel about Christ. All that is preached in the Gospel, which is far beyond our thinking and reasoning and is hidden from the world, cannot be attained except only through faith....Mystery, or secret, is when you hear the things which you retain in faith, namely, that Christ, God's Son, was born of a virgin, died, and rose again, and all that was for the forgiveness of our sins.... No one can know anything about that unless he hears and believes it through the Gospel; it is too far beyond our thinking and reasoning. So God's mysteries are nothing other than the good things preached about through the Gospel, which faith alone grasps and retains....[Christ] was "justified by the Spirit," that is, through the Spirit the believers have welcomed, acknowledged, and retained Him. [Luther, LXXV, 118-19]

Notes on the Gospel: St. Matthew 11. 2-10 It is hardly believable that John himself was doubting that Jesus is the Christ. Had he not so clearly and definitely pointed to Jesus as the Stronger One who was to come after him, who as the Lamb of God would carry the sins of the world? And immediately after this Jesus boasts before the people of John's steadfastness. But with the disciples of John, who as yet were not following Jesus, although John himself had advised it, they still would not believe that Jesus is He that was to come. Therefore their master sent them directly to Jesus who would remove their doubts. [Stoekhardt]

LUTHER NOTES: **Whoever now believes** the Gospel will receive grace and the Holy Spirit. This will cause the heart to rejoice and find delight in God,

and will enable the believer to keep the Law cheerfully, without expecting a reward, without fear of punishment, without seeking compensation, as the heart is perfectly satisfied with God's grace, by which the Law has been fulfilled.

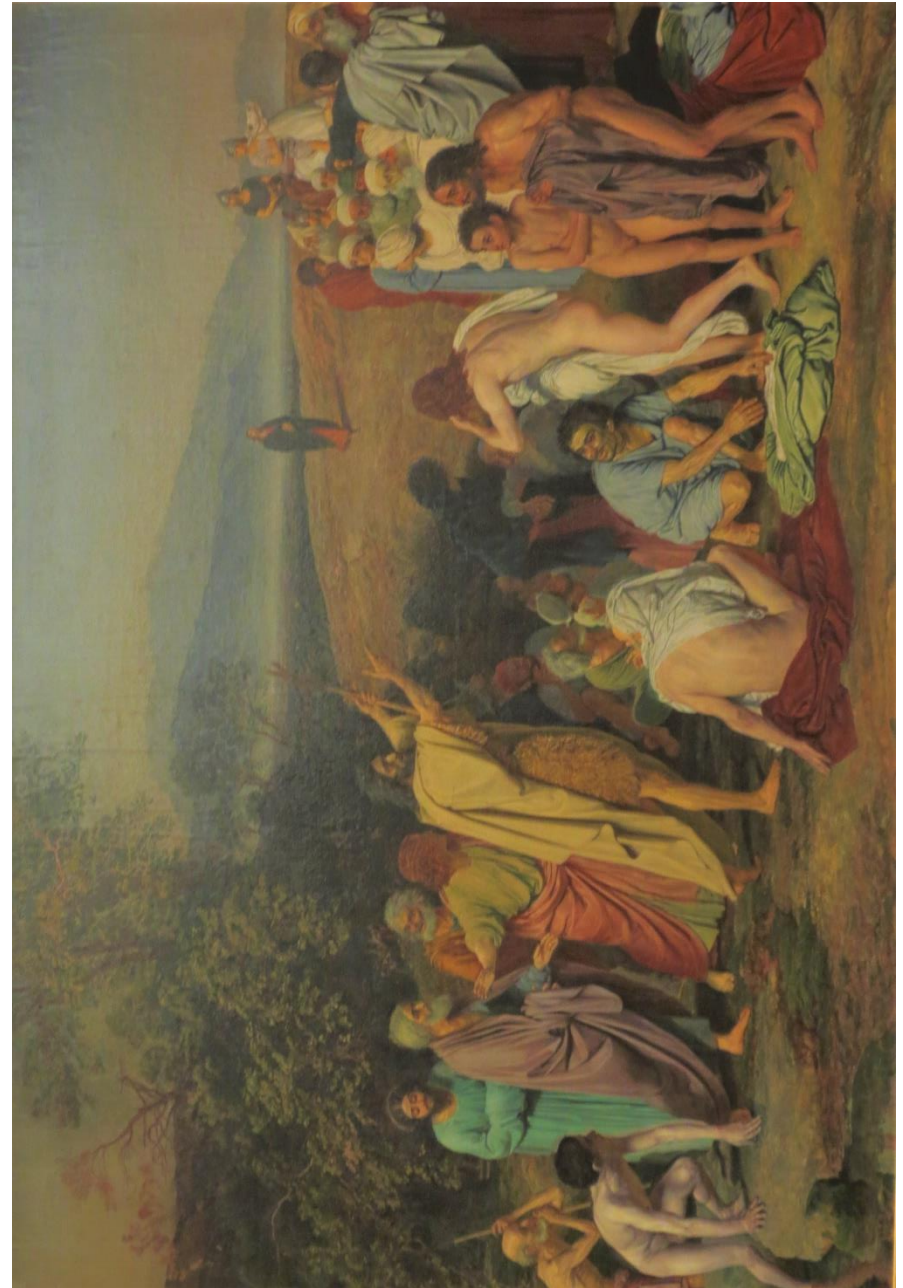
A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all. (*AE*, XXI, 344)

In order to keep your faith pure, do nothing else than stand still, enjoy its blessings, accept Christ's works, and let Him bestow His love upon you. You must be blind, lame, deaf, dead, leprous and poor; otherwise you will stumble at Christ.

Grace is ineffective if the sin is not first revealed and recognized through the Law. In Matthew 11:5 the Lord Jesus says Himself that He preaches the Gospel to the poor and to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, that is to those who because of the Law feel they are lost. LW 15:331

Old Testament: Isaiah 40. 1-8 If a person wants to recognize himself as a poor sinner and to prepare the way of the Lord, how must he begin? No one can do this for himself. First, he must take the holy Ten Commandments in his hand, quietly look in this bright mirror, and examine his whole life and being according to them. He stops at each commandment and says to himself: "God has here commanded this. Did I also do it? God has forbidden this. Did I also omit it?" Above all, however, he must go into his heart and say to himself: "According to God's commandment, this is how my heart should be. I must love, fear, and trust God above everything else, and I must love my neighbor, even my enemy, as myself. Is my heart also so constituted?"There is more to preparing the way of the Lord than this, however. Many recognize that their sins are innumerable, and yet they are not poor sinners. A person must also rightly consider what God has threatened against all transgressors of His commandments. This is what He says: "I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations . . ." (Ex. 20:5). [Walther]

Advent Collect: Everlasting God, by the mouths of Your prophets and saints of old, You proclaimed the advent of Your Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Desire of all nations, the Hope of Israel, the Redeemer of the world. Lead us to repent of all our sins, and so humble ourselves that we may be prepared to receive Him with gladness and to join in singing: Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is He Who comes in the name of the Lord; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit ever one God, world without end. Amen



Ecce! [Behold! –John 1.29]—A. Ivanov—from the *Russian Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia*