

WELCOMING WORD *Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Lord Jesus as forerunner of the Lord of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of the Lord and assist all flesh in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."*

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel, you have come to your people and set them free.

C: You have raised up for us a mighty Savior, born of the house of your servant David.

L: In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

C: to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

OPENING HYMN #34 Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel

Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

REFRAIN: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

Oh, come, oh, come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times once gave the law in cloud, and majesty, and awe. **REFRAIN**

Oh, come, strong Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. **REFRAIN**

Oh, come, blest Dayspring, come and cheer our spirits by your advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight. **REFRAIN**

Oh, come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery. **REFRAIN**

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING – The Candle of Love

P: Our lists are long, even in this strange mess where we live these days. And we want to do it right, we want to be safe, but we want to be able to enjoy the season. We've got work to do to put right what has gone wrong, to heal what is broken, to mend the relationships, and to prepare for new days that will come.

The prophet Isaiah reminded us that there is work to be done. "Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." When God comes in, then love and healing are to be found, but we need to make the way; we need to open the door into our lives. So, we light these candles as a sign of our faith that the God we worship is not far from us and that we can clear the way for that God to come and dwell with us. We light these candles in faith that love and healing are coming.

Sung Response: #42 Of the Father's Love Begotten (vs 1 & 2)

Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, He the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore.

Oh, that birth forever blessed when the virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Savior of our race,
And the babe, the world's redeemer, first revealed his sacred face,
Evermore and evermore.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Stir up our hearts, Lord God,

C: 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.

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 40:1-11 ¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God. ²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

SECOND LESSON: 2 Peter 3:8-15a ⁸Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

GOSPEL: Mark 1:1-8 ¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah, See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' "

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

MESSAGE Pastor John Twiton

HYMN #29 Comfort, Comfort Now My People

Comfort, comfort now my people; Tell of peace! So says our God.
Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow's load.
To God's people now proclaim that God's pardon waits for them!
Tell them that their war is over; God will reign in peace forever!

For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near,
Calling us to true repentance, since the Kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God away!
Let the valleys rise to meet him, and the hills bow down to greet him!

Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain!
Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits his holy reign!
For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad,
And all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day, he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.

OFFERTORY PRAYER: God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P: As we await the coming of Christ, we pray in hope for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

Prepare your church to share the good news, life-giving God. Put your word within us and dwell among us. Send us out to proclaim the mercy and salvation that abides in you. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our Prayer.

P: Protect the creation, life-giving God. Sustain the mountains and hills. Restore the rivers. Give us wisdom and compassion to care for wilderness areas and urban ecosystems. Move us to care for your creation in all its forms and richness. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our Prayer.

P: Purify the hearts of all people, life-giving God. Remove the hate that lives within us and among us. Mold us into peacemakers and agents of reconciliation. Raise up leaders rooted in your love and fed by your word. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our Prayer.

P: Comfort all who hurt, life-giving God. Wrap them in your tender care. Remember the forgotten and send us out to share your love with them. Be with the wandering, the worried, and the woeful. Comfort those afflicted by illness of body or spirit (*especially*). Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our Prayer.

P: Bless this congregation, life-giving God. Give strength and joy to worship leaders, musicians, teachers, guides, council members, and all who prepare the way for the celebration of the Christ child's coming among us. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our Prayer.

P: We remember the generations who have shown us your faithfulness, life-giving God. Shine your light on those who mourn and prepare us for that day when we will see you face-to-face. Lord, in your mercy,

C: Hear our Prayer.

P: Confident that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us, we bring to you these prayers and those unspoken, in the name of Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

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. 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.

BENEDICTION *May the blessing of God our creator, the love of Jesus Christ our redeemer, and the presence of the Holy Spirit the comforter, surround you and sustain you until we gather again. Amen.*

CLOSING HYMN: #70 Go Tell It on the Mountain

**REFRAIN: Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
Behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. **REFRAIN**

The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth
Rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. **REFRAIN**

Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
And God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. **REFRAIN**



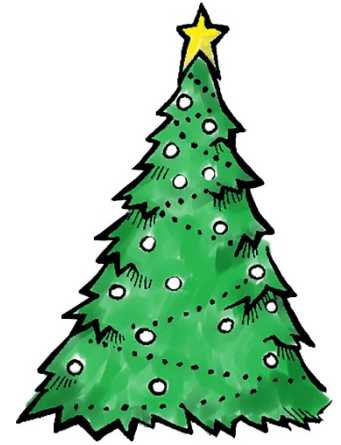
PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Ginger Quaderer (Diane Mueller's cousin)
Agnes Robertson (friend of Holly Thompson)
Nick Sydow (friend of Connie Curran's sons)
Brian Marshall (friend of Kim Kelliher)
Jeannie U'Ren
Mike Olson (Wendy Rasmussen's brother)
Irene Bruflat
Connie Fausett (sister of Diane Twiton & Jean Bower)
Harlan Oimoen
Grace Aavang
Dianne Haskins (friend of Char Smith)
Richard Schuhler (friend of Ron & Bonny Kellogg)

Allen Olson (father of Ingrid Frank)
Delores Bryant
Makenzee Smith
Brock Howe
Mary Krantz
Ruth Ann Nemet
Sally Gaard (friend of Margie Kahl)
Laurie Duden (Brenda Martin's aunt)
Bill Steinhauer
Peter Toniazzo
Shirley Thompson
Bernadine Johnson

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHRISTMAS PHOTOS NEEDED To help bring our families closer during this difficult time, we would like to invite everyone to share a photo of your family. In your photo, your family should share a special Christmas tradition at your home (past or current time). We will create an ELC slideshow to be shared during the season. Examples of photos: your decorated tree, setting up a Nativity Scene, baking cookies together, making lefse, any tradition your family does together. Please email your family photos to brenda.martin@elcmthoreb.org by Dec. 12th.



FUSE NIGHTS on ZOOM Youth, who are 9th - 12th graders are welcome to join our high school group on ZOOM, Tuesdays, December 8th and 22nd, at 7 pm. Focus will be Christmas online games and other favorites. (JackBox, Among Us) Invite your friends to join us.

BUCKY BOOKS - ONLINE ONLY Thank you for supporting our fundraiser this fall. We were informed that Bucky Books can still be available for online orders, through our link below till mid-January. Please share the link with family and friends. Books are shipped directly to your home. Books sell for \$35 each. Profits help our youth with future summer programming. Thank you for continued support.

*** ORDER ONLINE AT: <https://www.buckybook.com/evangelical-lutheran-church-mt-horeb>

SUNDAY SCHOOL on ZOOM- Join us on ZOOM, 9:00 - 9:30 am, on Sundays. We will have a break from our ZOOM times on December 27 & January 3rd. We will resume our online time on January 10th.

ELC 'COFFEE TIME' on ZOOM - Join us on Wednesdays at 10 AM each week to catch up with our church family. Time to connect and see each other! Zoom link is emailed each week. If you need the link, contact Pastor John, Tamara or Brenda.

CONFIRMATION on ZOOM 7th & 8th graders will meet for class on the 9th, at 7 PM. Christmas Zoom Party on Dec 16th at 7 pm.

ELC BINGO - Dec 10th at 7 pm Spiritual Growth and Fellowship Committee will be hosting more Virtual Bingo Games. Everyone is welcome to join us for the fun, family friendly events. Winners will be awarded gift cards for local businesses. Join us! Email Brenda.martin@elcmthoreb.org for the link.

BINGO				
15	28	37	51	73
6	17	32	45	61
9	15	★	60	70
12	26	44	52	66
7	22	34	48	72



Christmas at ELC will be held virtually this year. Our musicians are recording festive music at home and the benefit concert will stream live on Sunday Dec. 20, 6pm on Facebook Live. It will be available on ELC's website following the concert. Access it the same way we access the Sunday worship services <https://www.facebook.com/elcmthoreb>. We are requesting donations for our local Neighbors Helping Neighbors. Donations can be mailed to Neighbors Helping Neighbors, PO Box 196, Mount Horeb, WI 53572. Any checks sent to ELC with NHN on the memo line will be forwarded. We look forward to sharing our music in a unique way this season!

DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 6, 2020

SHARE: What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

READ: Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding

Monday, Psalm 27, A song of confidence

Tuesday, Isaiah 4:2-6, The branch of Zion

Wednesday, Luke 1:5-17, The birth of John the Baptism foretold

Thursday, Philippians 3:7-11, The value of knowing Christ

Friday, Habakkuk 3:2-6, The Prophet's prayer

Saturday, Psalm 126, A Harvest of Joy

TALK: Consider some of these ideas: *See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way; ³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' "* Mark 1:2-3. *The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.*

- What do you do to prepare the way for Jesus in your life?
- What 'obstacles' might need to be removed, or changed, to make his path straight in your life?
- Do you think you would be in the crowd that went out to see John the Baptist?
- What may you need to repent, and where do you need a word of forgiveness?

PRAY: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

BLESS: May you see Jesus in the face of those you meet this day. Amen!