



Service of the Word

November 29, 2020

Advent 1

"I Believe in the Sun: Hope for Tomorrow"

In Home Worship with First Lutheran Church

Online resources can be found on our website

<https://www.firstlutheransandpoint.org/online-worship.html>.

Prelude *(Play music that prepares your heart, mind, soul, and body for worship. Create a place to begin building your Advent wreath with a candle and means for lighting it ready. Other symbols of Advent: evergreens, the color blue and purple, and a creche / Nativity Set, if you have one.*

"RAISE YOUR VOICE... DO NOT BE AFRAID." — THE MESSENGER

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

Welcome

Crossing the Threshold

This Advent, we are looking to hear words of comfort, of challenge and of good news. The prophet Isaiah and the four Gospel authors were writing in a time when people needed desperately to hear all of these as well. This first week, Isaiah, the prophet, and Mark—the Gospel writer who published first—reassure the people that good news is beginning and yet they both say, “Make yourself ready! Raise your voices, change your hearts, get ready to be transformed, because now is the time.” Let us embrace hope that we can do what needs to be done to bring more light into the world.

[This poem was written on a wall in a Concentration Camp during World War II. Composer Mark A. Miller put these words to music and will be the central focus of our Advent preparations this season.]

I believe in the sun, I believe in the sun,
even when, even when it's not shining.

Reader: The place without light

People: The place without light

Reader: The depth of night

People: The depth of night

Reader: The pit of unknowing

People: The pit of unknowing

Prayer of the Day

Holy One,
we thank you for the glimpses we catch of your gift of untiring hope.
Even in the midst of fear, of challenge, of struggle—
even when our view is obscured by clouds of doubt,
ignite the flame of hope within us,

People: ... that we might glow with its brilliance
from the inside out.

[Congregation joins choir recording in unison]

**I believe in the sun,
I believe in the sun,
even when... even when...
it's not shining.**

Pastor: Help us face this bleak night of the soul
and embrace it as a womb of rebirth.

Amen.

[for online worship]

Pastor: You are invited to light your Advent 1 candle of Hope at this time.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 40: 1-11 (CEB)*

Comfort, comfort my people!
says your God.

Speak compassionately to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her that her compulsory service has ended,
that her penalty has been paid,
that she has received from the Lord's hand
double for all her sins!

A voice is crying out:

“Clear the Lord's way in the desert!
Make a level highway in the wilderness for our God!

Every valley will be raised up,
and every mountain and hill will be flattened.
Uneven ground will become level,
and rough terrain a valley plain.

The Lord's glory will appear,
and all humanity will see it together;
the Lord's mouth has commanded it.”

A voice was saying:
“Call out!”
And another said,
“What should I call out?”
All flesh is grass;
all its loyalty is like the flowers of the field.

The grass dries up
and the flower withers
when the Lord’s breath blows on it.
Surely the people are grass.

The grass dries up;
the flower withers,
but our God’s word will exist forever.

Go up on a high mountain,
messenger Zion!
Raise your voice and shout,
messenger Jerusalem!
Raise it; don’t be afraid;
say to the cities of Judah,
“Here is your God!”

Here is the Lord God,
coming with strength,
with a triumphant arm,
bringing his reward with him
and his payment before him.

Like a shepherd, God will tend the flock;
he will gather lambs in his arms
and lift them onto his lap.
He will gently guide the nursing ewes.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Children's Time to Shine

"This Little Light of Mine" - Video

[One verse of sign language for this song is learned each Sunday.]

'This Little Light of Mine' is a song that turns 100 years old this year! A woman named Fannie Lou Hamer sang it on a bus one day that had been stopped by police and it became a very important song that was sung a lot during the Civil Rights movement when some people wanted to dim the light of African Americans by not letting them vote in elections. So as we all learn more about the importance of music in making the world a better place, we are going to highlight this song! There are four verses and we are going to learn one each week."

[Julia Neuder will teach us via video, how to sign verse 1 today and continue with a new verse each week that we will post separately on our website if you want to learn or practice.]

This Little Light of Mine



1 This lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
2 Ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
3 Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine;
Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine;



this lit - tle light of mine, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
ev - 'ry - where I go, I'm goin' - a let it shine,
Je - sus gave it to me, I'm goin' - a let it shine,



let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.
let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Text: African American spiritual
Music: THIS JOY, African American spiritual

Thank you, everyone, for “singing by signing!” I feel more HOPEFUL already! When we add more music and more light to the world, we increase the Hope of everyone around us. To increase hope is to increase our excitement about the future, and we add our light to what comes tomorrow and the day after that and the day after that!

GOSPEL: Matthew 18:21-35

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

²¹Peter came and said to [Jesus], “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.

²³“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

SERMON -

SONG OF THE DAY: “I Believe Even When” *University of Verne Chamber Singers*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

We pray for the ministry we share in Christ's name. Open our hearts to your call for justice, peace, and healing. Attune us to the needs of the world as you draw near. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for this planet in need of restoration: for devastated habitats, polluted waters, thawing ice, blazing fires, swelling floods, and long-lasting droughts. Renew the face of the earth and our relationship to it. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for all people who care for others in our community and around the world. Fill them with compassion and the power to respond with justice for those who are oppressed, with welcome for those who are excluded, and with relief for those who suffer. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for people who are in crisis as the seasons change: for those without homes facing severe weather, for those who are unemployed or underemployed, and for those in poverty or facing food insecurity. (*Local feeding or housing ministries may be named*). Relieve their burdens, sustain their bodies, and ease their minds. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

We pray for the people in our families and congregation who live with depression, anxiety, chronic pain, addiction, and other invisible illnesses (*especially*). Ease their suffering and support them when they struggle. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for the lives and witness of those who died while waiting for justice, peace, or healing, those whose names we know and those whose names are known only to you. Sustain all who still yearn for the completion of your redeeming work. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words, now and in creative ways throughout the week.

Offering Announcement and Opportunities to "Fill the Night" with Hope *(See the Advent 2020 Invite)*

OFFERING

If you would like to offer financial support for the ministries of First Lutheran, you can mail them to the church. 526 S. Olive, Ave. Sandpoint, ID 83864

***DOXOLOGY**

[to the tune of "Give Thanks"]

**Believe, with a hopeful heart!
Believe, and shine your light!
Believe, because the song we sing is sung for all!**

**And now let the weak say, "I am strong;"
let the poor say, "I am rich
because of what our God has done for us."
Believe!**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Carol of Resistance

Introduction to the Carol:

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote this poem at Harvard on Christmas Day in 1863 during the heart of the Civil War. His wife had died tragically in a fire and he had just found out that his son had been injured as a soldier for the Union. He heard the sound of bells and began to write, spurred on by his sorrow at the state of humankind:

*“And in despair, I bowed my head:
 ‘There is no peace on earth,’ I said,
 ‘For hate is strong and mocks the song
 Of peace on earth, good will to [all].”*

And yet hope wins out as he pens the fourth verse:

*“Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
 “God is not dead, nor doth [not] sleep;
 The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
 With peace on earth, good will to [all].”*

I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day **187**

And He will be their peace. Micah 5:5 (NIV)

1. I heard the bells on Christ - mas day Their old fa -
 2. I thought how, as the day had come, The bel - fries
 3. And in de - spair I bowed my head: “There is no
 4. Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: “God is not
 5. Till, ring - ing, sing - ing on its way, The world re -

mil - iar car - ols play, And wild and sweet the
 of all Chris - ten - dom Had rolled a - long th'un -
 peace on earth,” I said, “For hate is strong, and
 dead, nor doth He sleep; The wrong shall fail, the
 volved from night to day A voice, a chime, a

words re - peat Of peace on earth, good will to men.
 bro - ken song Of peace on earth, good will to men.
 mocks the song Of peace on earth, good will to men.”
 right pre - vail, With peace on earth, good will to men.”
 chant sub - lime, Of peace on earth, good will to men.

WORDS: Henry W. Longfellow
 MUSIC: John Calkin

WALTHAM
 8.8.8.8.(L M.)

Benediction

Pastor: You are invited to pick up this week's candle and
Hold it high for the Benediction:

We wait for justice
but we do not wait to work for change;

We wait for restored health
but we do not wait to work to heal;

We wait for wholeness
but we do not wait to work at binding brokenness;

We wait for peace
but we do not wait to work to eliminate hatred.

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news
that the sun still shines even on cloudy days,
fill the night left by sadness with messages of hope.
Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that hope alive in you
and that spur you on in your work of justice and reconciliation.

Raise your voices and repeat after me...

“do not be afraid!”

“do not be afraid!”

Amen!

DISMISSAL

This is the mission we share in Christ's name:
To Praise God! Nurture Faith! And Serve All!
Go in Peace. Prepare the Way of the Lord!
Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

WORSHIP NOTES:

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PRAYERS: Please hold the following people in prayer for healing and new life:

Luther Park - Its staff, residents, families, and our management Company, Ecumen as they seek to care for one another and stay apart and wait for the pandemic to wane.

Our Country - In the midst of division and ongoing uncertainty about our future.

Thanksgiving Weekend: For those who are traveling, those that chose to gather, and everyone who is trying to find a different way to experience and share God's grace. That we may be grateful.

Our People and those connected to us: Chris Ingham; Michael Cressina; Randy Petersen; Nicky Schripsema; Wendi Lies; Gerda Burke; Debbie Haberlock; Kara Schripsema; Kai Haberlock; Tom Taylor; Hunter Taylor; Eugene Kurwicki; Mike Shobe; Sylvia Greenwood; Janet Merrill; Sonya Nordgaarden;; Jill Camp; Marguerite Suttmeier, Doris Hansen, the family and friend of Irene Lovejoy who died November 18, 2020. The family and friends of Lori Roget, who died this week. And, all who are missing loved ones during this season.

Our Congregation - As we seek leaders to serve on our 2021 Council, Estimate a Budget for 2021, tend to Luther Park, enter into Advent and the preparations for Christ's Birth, and prepare for the coming of Christ into our lives.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- ◆ **Giving Tree:** The list of names and gifts is part of last week's weekly newsletter. It can be accessed on our webpage under the **about:Newsletter** menu. Contact Tiffany Wright 208-290-8175 or tftwright08@gmail.com with questions or to receive the list of people still needing to be selected. Wrapped gifts need to be returned by Sunday, Dec. 13th.
- ◆ **New Office Assistant & Bookkeeper:** Meet Susie Olson and Colleen Culwell. A full bio will come out in the monthly newsletter. We are working on office hours and introducing Susie to the building and her role with the church. Thankful she was still available and excited about supporting the ministries we share. Much appreciation for Sharon Roget who filled in the gaps this month and has been showing Susie the ropes this week. Sharon has also welcomed and coordinated with our new Bookkeeper, Colleen Culwell. Many of you know Colleen, because she is also our accompanist on the 2nd & 4th Sundays and took over the early service after we lost Bud Smith. Please welcome both and continue being patient and gracious with us as we transition into this new way of doing things. Also, thank you to the Church Council, especially Jim Carlson, who led the way in developing, recruiting, and filling these positions.
- ◆ **Community Thanksgiving Worship Service:** Thanks to Pastor Matt Erickson, we join with other ELCA congregations in the Northwest Intermountain Synod for a time of praise and thanksgiving with an online Thanksgiving Service. It is posted on our Online Worship Website Page so you may use as part of your Thanksgiving celebrations and reflections. Thanks to our confirmation students, who shared what they are grateful for as a part of the service.
- ◆ **Zoom Fellowship:** An invite will be emailed when the online service for Sunday is ready. Please set aside time after or before your worship on Sunday to join other members of FLC for fellowship at 10:00 a.m. on Zoom.
- ◆ **Luther Park Update:** Luther Park is regularly testing staff and residents. As of November 24 at 7:00 p.m., there are 7 active Covid-19 cases among residents and 1 active staff member (removed from work rotation). They are working closely with Panhandle Health and the state to get help with the testing and funding. The staff is working hard to safely care for and communicate with everyone connected to the site. As a congregation, we are providing the place settings, so residents may receive a full Thanksgiving Dinner delivered to their apartments on china. If you would like to send cards or call to check on residents, we now have a LP Directory. Please let the office or Pastor Lori know if you would like to serve in this ministry of encouragement and we will send you the directory.