



Color in as you reflect on the Word.

Service of the Word

December 20, 2020

Advent 4

"I Believe in the Light: Illuminating Light"

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 build your Advent wreath with four candles and means for lighting them 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

The “great light” prophesied by Isaiah in today’s text is echoed in the first strains of John’s Gospel good news: the light that brings peace—that saves the people from all that would extinguish it—has been there from the beginning. The Word is made flesh and dwells among us. This reign is now... will we believe it? Will we continue to put flesh on it, embodying the peace meant for all humanity?

[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 light, I believe in the light,
That has come, that has come, and is coming.

Reader: We see the star rising

Congregation: We see the star rising

Reader: We hear the glad tidings

Congregation: We hear the glad tidings

Reader: We know we are not alone

Congregation: We know we are not alone

Prayer of the Day

Holy One,
we thank you for the glimpses we catch
of your gift of peace on earth.
Even in the midst of fear,
of challenge, of struggle—
even when we aren't sure that
goodwill among us can be found,
ignite the flame of peace within us,

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

[Congregation joins choir recording in unison]

**I believe in the light, I believe in the light,
That has come, that has come, and is coming.**

Pastor: Help us face the pain of life
and embrace the assurance that light is already here, and always coming.. **Amen.**

[for online worship]

Pastor: You are invited to light your Advent 4 candle of Peace at this time.

GATHERING SONG: “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (ELW 257, st. 2)

O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way. *Refrain*

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

WORD

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

FIRST READING: *Isaiah 9: 2-7 (CEB)*

The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.
On those living in a pitch-dark land, light has dawned.
You have made the nation great;
you have increased its joy.
They rejoiced before you as with joy at the harvest,
as those who divide plunder rejoice.
As on the day of Midian, you've shattered the yoke that burdened them,
the staff on their shoulders,
and the rod of their oppressor.
Because every boot of the thundering warriors,
and every garment rolled in blood
will be burned, fuel for the fire.

A child is born to us, a son is given to us,
and authority will be on his shoulders.
He will be named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.
There will be vast authority and endless peace
for David's throne and for his kingdom,
establishing and sustaining it
with justice and righteousness
now and forever.

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. 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.” Learning another person’s language is a show of respect and helps establish a relationship, which can be the foundation of peace.

Everywhere I go.
I’m going to let it shine!
Everywhere I go.
I’m going to let it shine!
Let it shine
Let it shine
Let it shine!

Thank you, everyone, for “singing by signing!” I feel more PEACE already! When we add more music and more light to the world we increase the Peace in the world. Peace happens when we consider that everyone has a light to shine and we give them room to grow in that light and we celebrate it!

Thank you! Let’s pray a repeat-after-me prayer.

Thank you, God...

for giving us light... and for giving us music... Help our hands dance... and our hearts sing... to spread more [hope] ... in the world... Amen...

GOSPEL: LJohn 1: 1-18 (CEB)

In the beginning was the Word
and the Word was with God
and the Word was God.

The Word was with God in the beginning.
Everything came into being through the Word,
and without the Word
nothing came into being.
What came into being
through the Word was life,
and the life was the light for all people.
The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness doesn’t extinguish the light.

A man named John was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify concerning the light, so that through him everyone would believe in the light. He himself wasn't the light, but his mission was to testify concerning the light. The true light that shines on all people was coming into the world. The light was in the world, and the world came into being through the light, but the world didn't recognize the light. The light came to his own people, and his own people didn't welcome him. But those who did welcome him, those who believed in his name, he authorized to become God's children, born not from blood nor from human desire or passion, but born from God.

The Word became flesh and made his home among us. We have seen his glory, glory like that of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

John testified about him, crying out, "This is the one of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is greater than me because he existed before me.'"

From his fullness we have all received grace upon grace; as the Law was given through Moses, so grace and truth came into being through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. God the only Son, who is at the Father's side, has made God known.

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON -

SONG OF THE DAY: *Joy to the World* (ELW 267, vs 1,2,4)

1 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.

4 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.

2 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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of power and might, shine your radiance and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

A brief silence.

Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths (*Nearby churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues may be named*). Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creator God, you scatter the proud. Everything we have belongs first to you. Bless and protect the seas, mountains, plains, forests, skies, and soils that surround us. Give us humility as we tend them. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Righteous God, you humble the powerful and lift up the lowly. We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they amplify the voices of people in need. Guide all people entrusted with leadership, to create societies in which everyone can flourish. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Nourish those who lack access to adequate food and nutrition. Bless the work of advocates, community organizers, and food pantries. Encourage others to provide for their neighbors in need. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Healing God, you pour out mercy to all who cry out to you. Surround everyone in need of healing in body, mind, or spirit with your tender presence (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Eternal God, you are faithful to the promises you made to our forebears. We give thanks for the ministry of Katharina von Bora Luther and other ancestors who organized, planned, dreamed, encouraged, and reached out as they served you. We give thanks for the bold leadership of female leaders in our own time. Inspire others with their steadfast witness. 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

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

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.

SENDING

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

Carol of Resistance - Carol of Resistance - *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (ELW 290)

Introduction to the Carol:

Our Carol of Resistance this week is part of the repertoire of Christmas songs that were created by people who endured brutal hardships as the result of African colonization and North American slavery. But, though people of African descent were ripped from much of their cultural heritage, they maintained their heritage of group song, punctuated by West African rhythms and vocal stylings. Of course the safest thing for oppressed peoples to sing about was the religious beliefs that, first forced upon them by their oppressors, later gave many hope in the midst of suffering. “Go Tell It On The Mountain” is probably the best-known African American Christmas song and the words “seeker” and “watchman” are thought by some to have been code words for those seeking freedom on the Underground Railroad. It was made popular by the Fisk Jubilee Singers in the 19th century as these college students—themselves freed slaves—traveled the country to raise money and awareness. They were turned away from hotels, railway waiting rooms, and even some churches because of their color. As we sing, let us honor them, honor all who have endured slavery and the continued systemic racism caused by slavery. Let us...

“Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere.

Go tell it on the mountain, that Jesus Christ is born.”

... indeed that the Prince of Peace that calls us
to break the chains of oppression... *is born!*

[the hymn begins]

Refrain

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

1 While shepherds kept their watching
o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens
there shone a holy light. Refrain

2 The shepherds feared and trembled
when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus
that hailed our Savior's birth. Refrain

3 Down in a lonely manger
the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation
that blessed Christmas morn. Refrain

Benediction

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

And so, my friends, like bells ringing out the news
that the light has dawned and shines on all people,
fill the night left by sadness with messages of peace.
Go into your lives humming the tunes that keep that peace 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, waiting with patience for the pandemic to wane. Thankful for the recovery of residents and staff, who contracted Covid-19. Testing continues weekly, but it appears the virus has been isolated and those infected are either better or recovering.

Our People and those connected to us: Pastor Steve Neuder and family, 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; Jill Camp; Marguerite Suttmeier, Doris Hansen, ...

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 into our lives.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- ◆ **Giving Tree:** Good work! Thank you to Tiffany Wright and Hali Jacobs and all of you who helped reflect Christ's light into the lives of those in need in our community.
- ◆ **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.
- ◆ **Blue Christmas - Noon on December 21,** parking lot outside the Office. Details in the newsletter.

- ◆ No Holy Communion Service this week.
- ◆ Christmas Eve - We will provide worship materials you may use on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day for your observation of Christ's birth. For those who can access, there will be online resources too. Plan to sing Silent Night - out your window or on your porch with a source of light at 4:30 p.m. There is also a movement afoot, started in Minnesota and now is spreading to other NPR stations. To play Silent Night on the radio at 6:30 p.m. CT. Our local FM station, 88.5 KRFY (not an NPR station) is going to play Silent Night at 4:30 p.m. Pacific Time to support the community's singing.
- ◆ Firewood - If you or a loved one is in need of firewood, please contact Firewood Rescue at Firewoodrescue2020@gmail.com .