

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

P.O. BOX 69 WARD, TX 78960

Sunday, December 13, 2020

3rd Sunday in Advent

GUESTS AND VISITORS: Welcome to Holy Cross and to today's worship service. Please register your attendance in the Fellowship Book, and please come and worship with us again. If you have an interest in joining Holy Cross, please speak with Pastor or one of our Elders.

The Coming of the Christ Brings True Rejoicing in His Forgiveness

When he preaches repentance, John the Baptist points us to Christ Jesus. John was sent by God *"as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him"* (John 1:7). He baptizes with water in order to *"make straight the way of the Lord,"* who shall redeem His people from their sins (John 1:23). That Lord Jesus *"who comes after"* John now stands among us and makes Himself known to us (John 1:26–27). He has been anointed by the Holy Spirit *"to bring good news to the poor"* and *"to bind up the brokenhearted"* (Is. 61:1). By the washing of the water with His Word and Spirit, He clothes His Church with *"the garments of salvation"* and adorns her with His own righteousness *"as a bride adorns herself with her jewels"* (Is. 61:10). Therefore, we *"rejoice always"* in the Lord, *"pray without ceasing"* and *"give thanks in all circumstances"* (1 Thess. 5:16–18). For *"the God of peace,"* who has called you by the Gospel, will surely *"sanctify you completely,"* so that *"your whole spirit and soul and body"* will *"be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Thess. 5:23–24).

Prelude - Selected

The Ringing of the Church Bell

Words of Welcome

Opening Hymn: *“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”* *LSB Hymn 338*



1 Come, Thou long - ex - pect-ed Je-sus, Born to set Thy peo-ple free;
2 Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er; Born a child and yet a king!



From our fears and sins re-lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Born to reign in us for - ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con-so - la-tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art,
By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;



Dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na-tion, Joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

[please stand]

The Invocation

P: In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

C:  Amen.

The Confession of Sins & Absolution

P: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins unto God, our Father, beseeching Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to grant us forgiveness.

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

C:  **Who made heaven and earth.**

P: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.

C:  **And Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.**

P: Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto Thee that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against Thee by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Thine infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Thy grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: **O most merciful God, who hast given Thine only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by**

Thy Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of Thee and of Thy will and true obedience to Thy Word, to the end, that by Thy grace, we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

P: Almighty God, our heavenly Father, has had mercy upon us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins. To them that believe on His name, He gives power to become the children of God and has promised them His Holy Spirit. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved. Grant this, Lord, unto us all.

C:  Amen.

The Introit: Psalm 85:8-9, 12-13, antiphon v. 7

Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
**for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
but let them not turn back to folly.**

Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him,
that glory may dwell in our land.

Yes, the LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.

Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.

The Gloria Patri

Pg. 6ff.

 Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Kyrie

 Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ, have mercy upon us. Lord, have mercy upon us.

1. The advent of our King
Our prayers must now employ,
And we must hymns of welcome sing
In strains of holy joy.

2. The everlasting Son
Incarnate deigns to be;
Himself a servant's form puts on
To set His servants free.

3. O Zion's Daughter, rise
To meet thy lowly King,
Nor let thy faithless heart despise
The peace He comes to bring.

4. As judge, on clouds of light,
He soon will come again
And His true members all unite
With Him in heav'n to reign.

5. Before the dawning day
Let sin's dark deeds be gone,
The old man all be put away,
The new man now put on.

6. All glory to the Son,
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever One
Through all eternity. Amen.

The Salutation & The Collect for the Day

P: The Lord be with you.

C:  **And with thy spirit.**

P: 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.

C:  **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 (ESV)

¹The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to grant to those who mourn in Zion—to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins; they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. . . .

⁸For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples;

all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.

The Gradual: Zechariah 9:9 Psalm 118:26

P: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

C: Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem.

P: Behold, your king is coming to you;

C: righteous and having salvation.

P: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

C: From the house of the Lord we bless you.

Epistle Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24 (ESV)

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil.

²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

[please stand]

C: 🎵 Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Verse: Matthew 11:10b

P: Alleluia. Behold, I send my messenger before your face,

C: who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia.

Holy Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28 (ESV)

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the first chapter.

C: 🎵 Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. . . .

¹⁹This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” ²²So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.”

²⁴(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” ²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” ²⁸These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord..

C:  Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

The Apostle's Creed

Page 12

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Sermon Hymn:

“Comfort, Comfort, Ye My People”

Hymn 61

1. Comfort, comfort ye My people, Speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
Comfort those who sit in darkness, Mourning 'neath their sorrow's load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell her that her sins I cover, And her warfare now is over.
2. Yea, her sins our God will pardon, Blotting out each dark misdeed;
All that well deserved His anger He will not more see or heed.
She hath suffered many a day, Now her griefs have passed away;
God will change her pining sadness Into ever-springing gladness.

3. Hark, the Herald's voice is crying In the desert far and near,
Bidding all men to repentance, Since the Kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way!
Let the valleys rise to meet Him, And the hills bow down to greet Him.
4. Make ye straight what long was crooked, Make the rougher places plain;
Let your hearts be true and humble, As befits His holy reign;
For the glory of the Lord Now o'er earth is shed abroad,
And all flesh shall see the token That His Word is never broken. Amen.

The Sermon

“John Bore Witness”

[we stand]

The Offertory

♪ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free spirit. Amen.

Receipt of Offerings

Hymn: “O God, O Lord, of Heaven and Earth” *LSB Hymn 834*

First verse solo by Pastor Beck



1 O God, O Lord of heav'n and earth, Thy liv - ing
2 Our fa - tal will to e - qual Thee, Our reb - el
3 Thou cam - est to our hall of death, O Christ, to
△ 4 O Spir - it, who didst once re - store Thy Church that



fin - ger nev - er wrote That life should be an aim -
will wrought death and night. We seized and used in pride -
breathe our poi - soned air, To drink for us the dark
it might be a - gain The bring - er of good news



less mote, A death - ward drift from fu - tile birth.
ful spite Thy won - drous gift of lib - er - ty.
de - spair That stran - gled our re - luc - tant breath.
to men, Breathe on Thy clo - ven Church once more,

The Prayers of the Day

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

Show us Your steadfast love, O Lord, and grant us Your salvation! Keep Your saints from every folly that would turn them from Your words of peace. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You sent John to proclaim the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Richly and daily forgive our sins and the sins of all believers. Bless our Synod president; our district president; our circuit visitor; and all pastors in Christ. Gather and preserve Your Holy Christian Church by Your voice, and send us faithful preachers who will not deny but confess Your truth. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Dear Father, be the source of strength and comfort in every home. Bless the children of our families, that every darkness would be lightened by Your Son's gracious visitation. Sanctify them completely, that their whole spirit, soul and body may be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give wisdom and success to our nation and its leaders. Behold in mercy all who are in authority over us and those newly elected. Preserve our land and its citizens in peace and harmony, and protect all who serve in harm's way. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Receive our thanks in every circumstance for Your kindness in Christ Jesus and the certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life with Him. We pray especially for the family of Bernell Teinert and all those who have lost loved ones this year. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Give us faith to trust in you for all our needs of body and soul. Be with those who are sick, including Helen, Ruby, Linda, Zachary, Bernice, Cynthia, those in our hearts and on our continued prayer list. We also ask you to look upon our land with your favor, and provide sufficient rain to sustain this land. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Into Your hands, Father, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.** the Lord may restore those caught up in error's maze, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

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.

The Collect for the Word/Church

P: Blessed Lord, who has caused all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that we may hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of Your holy Word we may embrace, and ever hold fast, the blessed hope of everlasting life, which You have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end.

C:  Amen.

The Benediction

P: The Lord bless Thee and keep Thee. The Lord make His face shine upon Thee and be gracious unto Thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon Thee and † give Thee peace.

C:  Amen. Amen. Amen.

The Closing Hymn: *“Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes”* Hymn 66

1. Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes, The Savior promised long;
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne And ev'ry voice a song.
2. He comes the pris'ners to release, In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst, The iron fetters yield.
3. He comes, from thickest films of vice To clear the mental ray
And on the eye-balls of the blind To pour celestial day.
4. He comes the broken heart to bind, The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace T'enrich the humble poor.
5. Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heaven's eternal arches ring With Thy belovèd name. Amen.

Postlude

Outreach Thought

John 1:6-8, 19-28: As the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist was sent to bear witness about the Light. John pointed ahead to the Savior of the world – Jesus. Today, we also are given the privilege and joy of pointing others to Christ. We do this so that others might believe through Him and literally - see the Light - Jesus!

Attendance Last Week

Worship: 97 Bible Class: 26

Sunday School: 19 Advent Worship: AM: 38 PM: 29

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

In **Bible Class** this morning, we will continue our NEW study of the Old Testament book of Malachi. Join us as we study this somewhat obscure minor prophet and heed the words of the Lord as He challenges us to live faithful lives in the hope and knowledge of Jesus Christ!

Christmas is almost here! Our children's Christmas Eve program will be Thursday, Dec. 24th, at 6:00 p.m. Christmas Day worship will be Friday, Dec. 25th, at 9:00 a.m. We will rejoice in the birth of our Savior and sing some of our favorite Christmas hymns!

Special Note about Christmas Eve: The elders have decided that, at this time, Holy Cross will still plan to have our Christmas Eve Children's Christmas Program. Out of an abundance of caution related to COVID, we are asking that family members of participants be given preferential seating in the sanctuary on Christmas Eve. We will still practice social distancing, and will have *both* the New Narthex *and* the Fellowship Hall available for overflow seating. Also, the service will be streamed live on Facebook, so if you don't feel comfortable being in public, or would prefer not to sit in the overflow, please plan to watch on your computer from home. Thank you for your understanding.

Practices for the children's Christmas Eve program continue this morning during the Sunday School hour. Children who are not participating in the program here at Holy Cross will have Sunday School with Mrs. Beck.

Dress Rehearsal for the Christmas program has been set for Tuesday, December 22nd, at 6:00 p.m.

Advent worship: Join us this Wednesday for our final Advent worship services at either 10:30am or 7pm. Students and faculty from Faith Lutheran High School are joining us for the daytime services. Our theme is "The Word Became Flesh," an in depth series de-tailing the first three chief parts of Luther's Small Catechism, their connection to Christ, and His connection to us!

The 2021 altar flower schedule is on the bulletin board in the narthex. If you have a special date you would like to reserve for altar flowers next year, you can do so now.

Need a last minute gift? The Ladies Aid still have cookbooks and RADA Cutlery available. These items can be purchased by contacting any Ladies Aid member or stopping by the church office during the week. They make great Christmas gifts!

The member address and phone directory is being updated and will be printed by the end of January. Have you have had a change of address, phone number, marital status, etc.? Have your grown children moved out on their own? Would you like to add a cell phone number or email address to your information? If any of these apply to you, please contact the church office by January 15th so that the correct information can included the new directory. Thank you!

2021 Offering envelopes will be put in your church mailboxes soon. Envelopes **WILL NOT** be renumbered for 2021. If you have any questions, please contact Linda Hobratschk or the church office. Thanks!

FAITH LUTHERAN HIGH SCHOOL NEWS

End of Year Giving

In Proverbs 2:6, God's Word promises: "The LORD gives wisdom; from his mouth comes knowledge and understanding." Faith Lutheran High School exists to instill Christ's wisdom in His Word to prepare faithful leaders for tomorrow. Thank you for being a part of this mission through your prayers and financial support. The Board of Directors encourages faithful giving during this time to further the ministry and mission of FLHS. Please prayerfully consider how you can give to further Lutheran education in our area. If you have any questions, feel free to contact Mrs. Nikki Kueck at (979) 242-2889.

"Faith at Christmas" Program

The students gave a marvelous performance at Faith at Christmas this past week as we celebrated the birth of our Savior through "Peace has Come." We were incredibly blessed to give this performance to those in attendance and those viewing from at home. The video of the program can still be found on our Facebook page if you were unable to watch it on Tuesday.

Shadow Days

Shadow days are a great opportunity for prospective students to follow us for a day and experience what FLHS is all about. Parents, call us today at (979) 242-2889 to set up a shadow day for your child.

Raffle Items

The Spring Raffle is just around the corner. The Board of Directors is currently looking for valuable items or monetary donations to be used in the raffle. Please contact Nikki Kueck if you have something to donate! Thank you!

Accreditation Visit

FLHS had a very successful accreditation visit on November 8th - 10th. FLHS has been officially been accredited in good standing, with no major deficiencies. Praise the Lord for the wonderful blessings He continues to bestow on FLHS.

Thank you!

Everyone at FLHS is blessed by each gift that we receive from our supporters. It's not about the size of the gift, but the cheerful attitude that gives thanks to God (2 Corinthians 9:7). Whether your gift seems big or small, it is greatly appreciated and makes a bigger impact than you know!



Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by John and Lisa Gay in honor of their 15th wedding anniversary on December 16th.

Altar, pulpit and lectern stand flowers are given to the glory of God in loving memory of Bernell Teinert by her family.



PRAYER REQUESTS FOR TODAY

Helen Kaiser, recovering from a broken hip following a fall

Ruby Bohot, in Monument Hill for therapy

Linda Lehmann, recovering from surgery on Monday

Zachary Pietsch, recovering from back surgery

Bernice Guettler, mom of Roland Guettler, recovering at home

Cynthia Segura, friend of Wendy Wagner, still in hospital ICU fighting COVID

All those on our continued prayer list

THOSE WHO SERVE TODAY

December 13, 2020

Rev. Dustin Beck

Pastor

Mr. John Gay

Lector

Mrs. Ann Bamsch

Organist

Mr. Shea Kasper

Audio/Video System

Dennis Pietsch, J.C. Schramm, Brian Varner

Elders on Duty

Layne Huenefeld

Acolyte

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES

TODAY

8:30 a.m. PreService Singing
9:00 a.m. Divine Service
10:15 a.m. Bible Class & Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Christmas Program Practice

WEDNESDAY

10:30 a.m. Advent Worship
5:30 p.m. Jr. Confirmation
7:00 p.m. Advent Worship

FRIDAY

6:00 p.m. FLHS Family Fun Night
PICNIC HALL RENTED

Next Sunday

24th Sunday after Pentecost
9:00 a.m. Divine Service w/Holy Communion
10:15 a.m. Bible Class & Sunday School
10:15 a.m. Christmas Program Practice