

**REFORMATION LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**Serving Absecon - Galloway Township**  
**Rev. Heidi Link – Pastor**  
**Brian Conover - Music Director**

**Sunday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021**  
**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT / 10:00 AM**

**\* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God for whom we wait,

**in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.**

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ✝ your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace. **Amen.**

**\* CALL TO WORSHIP**

L: Have you seen it .....the Spark of Hope which God is placing among us.

**P: All we can see is hectic lives, crowded stores, darkness and fear.**

L: Look again.....the spirit of God is moving, bringing hope.

**P: We need to place our hope in God, but we are afraid.**

L: A long time ago, people were afraid and God brought to them Light.

**P: May God bring that light to us today! AMEN.**

\* **OPENING SONG**

## Christ, Be Our Light

1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for  
2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for  
truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,  
hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone  
your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.  
has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.

*Refrain*  
Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the  
dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your  
church gath - ered to - day.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957  
Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell  
Text and music © 1993 Bernadette Farrell. Published by OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213.  
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\* **GREETING & PRAYER OF THE DAY**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, 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 READING: Malachi 3:1-4** (for text of reading, see back of bulletin)

## RESPONSIVE READING: Luke 1:68-79

<sup>68</sup>Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel,  
you have come to your people and set them free.

<sup>69</sup>**You have raised up for us a mighty Savior,  
born of the house of your servant David. R**

<sup>70</sup>Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies,  
<sup>71</sup>from the hands of all who hate us,

<sup>72</sup>**to show mercy to our forebears,  
and to remember your holy covenant.**

<sup>73</sup>This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham:

<sup>74</sup>to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
**free to worship you without fear,  
<sup>75</sup>holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.**

<sup>76</sup>And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,

<sup>77</sup>**to give God's people knowledge of salvation  
by the forgiveness of their sins.**

<sup>78</sup>In the tender compassion of our God  
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

<sup>79</sup>**to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

## SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11 *(for text of reading, see back of bulletin)*

### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

#### Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel



1 Oh, come, oh, come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
2 Oh, come, oh, come, great Lord of might, who to your tribes on



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
Si - nai's height in an - cient times once gave the law



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.

*Refrain*



Re-joice! Re - joice!



Em-man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

## **BLESSING OF THE ADVENT WREATH**

**P:** The second candle symbolizes faith and is known as the candle of Bethlehem as a reminder of Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem.

Let us pray: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. John the Baptist calls all people to prepare the Lord's way for the kingdom of heaven is near. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Baptize us with the fire of your Spirit, that we may be a light shining in the darkness welcoming others as Christ has welcomed us, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever. **Amen.**

## **\* HYMN OF PRAISE**

Come, Thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, Born to  
set Thy peo - ple free; From our fears and sins re -  
lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.  
In - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, Hope of  
al the earth Thou art; Dear de - sire of  
ev - 'ry na - tion, Joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.

## **\* THE WORD OF GOD: Luke 3:1-6**

A reading from the Gospel of Luke:

*(for text of reading, see back of bulletin)*

Word of God, Word of Life.

**Thanks be to God.**

## CONGREGATIONAL SONG

### On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es  
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the  
3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,  
way for God with - in, and let us all our  
and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!  
hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.  
waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite

Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL - SANTA LUCIA FESTIVAL**

**HYMN "Santa Lucia" (ENTRANCE, verses 1 & 2; RECESSIONAL, verse 3)**

1. Night walks with heavy tread 'round farm and byre,  
Dark sun-forsaken earth shadows attire.  
Then in our winter gloom  
Candlelight fills the room:  
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!
2. Silent and dark the night, now hear descending  
Rustles of wings in flight, all darkness ending.  
Then she comes dressed in white,  
Head wreathed in candles bright:  
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!

## **READING - GIFTS**

3. Shadows will soon be gone from earth's dark valley" --  
Wonderful words anon us cheer and rally.  
Day will soon dawn anew,  
In skies of rosy hue:  
Santa Lucia, Santa Lucia!

## **\* NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen**

## **\* PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

*A brief silence.*

You send messengers into the world to proclaim the day of your coming. Make our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay preachers confident in their preaching, that their words and our lives witness to your grace. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send your Spirit to all living creatures that are endangered. Provide them with shelter and care, and bring us into right relationship with the earth that you create and call good. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send leaders to our nations, cities, schools, and businesses to work on behalf of those who have lost parents, spouses, and loved ones; immigrants; the imprisoned; those living in poverty; and all who are oppressed. Make them bold in their commitments to justice and reconciliation. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send your servants to care for those who suffer. Use our ministries and our lives to reach out with compassion to those who are hungry, oppressed, lonely, or ill (*especially*). Grant them healing and wholeness. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Send prophets to speak difficult truths, even when they are poorly received. Embolden those who ask hard questions and challenge accepted ways. Instill in youth and elders alike a passion for pointing to Jesus in all things. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

We remember your saints, both those publicly celebrated and those more humbly remembered. Confident that your work will be completed, we live in faith until the day of your coming. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

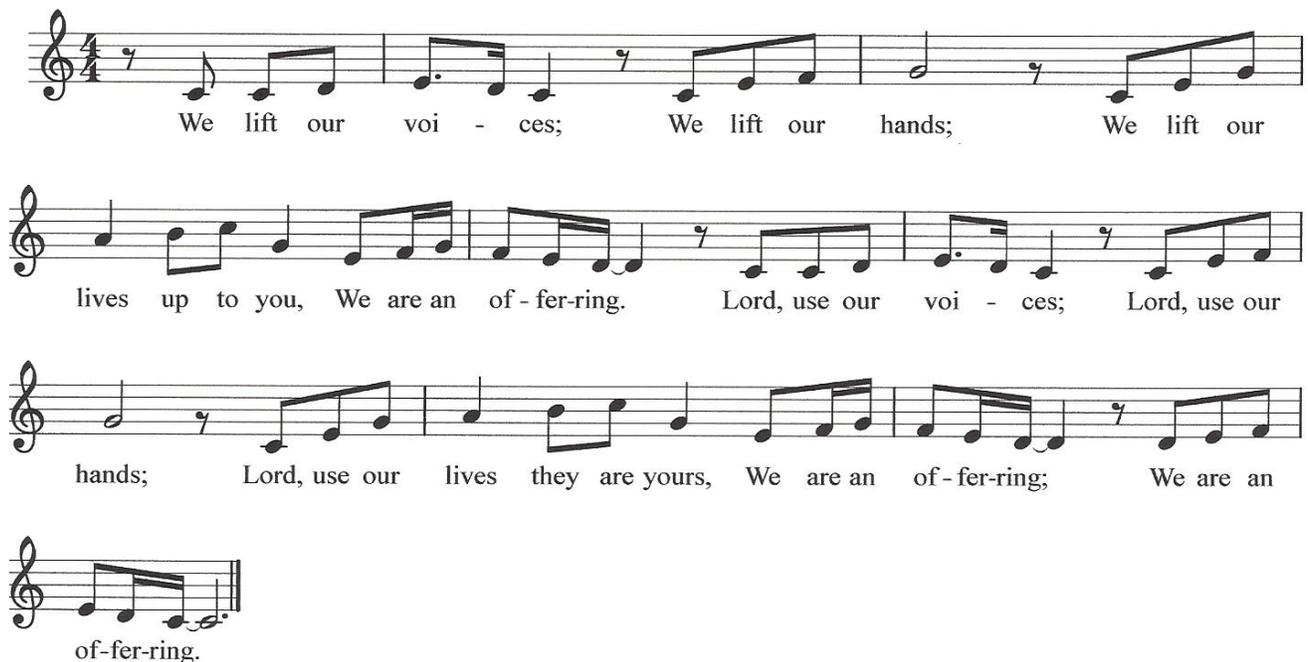
God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**

## OFFERING

### SPECIAL MUSIC

#### \* OFFERING SONG - "WE ARE AN OFFERING"



The musical notation is written on a single treble clef staff in 4/4 time. It consists of four lines of music. The lyrics are: "We lift our voi - ces; We lift our hands; We lift our lives up to you, We are an of - fer-ring. Lord, use our voi - ces; Lord, use our hands; Lord, use our lives they are yours, We are an of - fer-ring; We are an of-fer-ring." The melody is simple and repetitive, with a final cadence at the end.

#### \* OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray: God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace. **Amen.**

#### \* THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

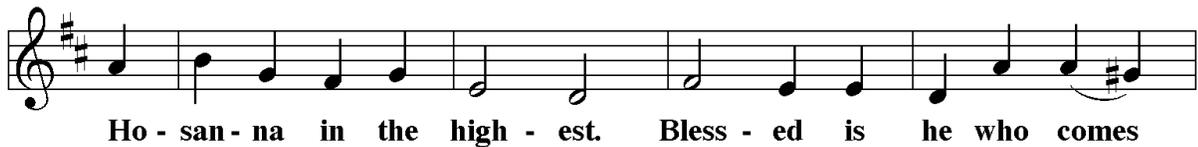
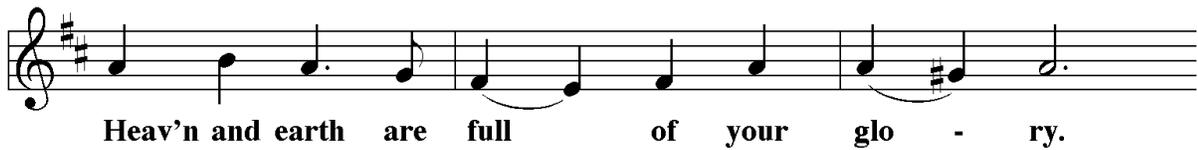
Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and salutary...*(Here the minister continues with the preface appropriate to the day or season, concluding:)* we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



**\* WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

**\* 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**

**\* INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

**We come.**

**DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION**

*(BAPTIZED CHRISTIANS who believe that the risen Christ is present in the Eucharist to forgive sin and renew life are invited to share at your pew. Please remain there, kneel as you are able, and receive the elements using the communion packet you were given. If there are other special needs, please speak to an usher.)*

**\*POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**Amen**

**\* POST COMMUNION HYMN**

**Soon and Very Soon**



1 Soon and ver - y soon  
2 No more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,  
3 No more dy - in' there,  
4 Soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon  
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King,  
no more dy - in' there,  
soon and ver - y soon



soon and ver - y soon  
no more cry - in' there, we are goin' to see the King.  
no more dy - in' there,  
soon and ver - y soon



Hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah, we're goin' to see the King!

Text: Andraé Crouch, b. 1945  
Music: VERY SOON, Andraé Crouch  
Text and music © 1976 Bud John Songs, Inc./Crouch Music, admin. EMI Christian Music Publishing

**\* PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. **Amen.**

**\* BLESSING**

And now a Blessing: The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus for whom we wait. **Amen.**

\* **CLOSING SONG**

Prepare the Royal Highway



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!  
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!  
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!  
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:  
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

*Refrain*



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*  
Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.  
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

\* **SENDING**

Go in peace. Christ is near.

**Thanks be to God.**