



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
[www.trinitylutheran.ca](http://www.trinitylutheran.ca)

## CHURCH AT HOME

### Announcements:

Welcome to Trinity's worship resource for December 5, 2021, celebrating the Second Sunday of Advent.

Pastor Mike is currently on a medical leave of absence. If you have a pastoral emergency, please contact Pastor Jack Dressler - **519-250-7210**.

**Christmas Eve Service** – There will be one service at 8pm. If you are interested in attending, please call the office (519-977-7787) and provide your name and the number of people that are planning to attend.

**NOTE – There will be NO in-person service on Sunday December 26.**

Thank you again for your support for Trinity. Please continue to mail in cheques, or drop them off in the church's mailbox or make your donation either through PAR or through the Donate button on the church's website, at "[www.trinitylutheran.ca](http://www.trinitylutheran.ca)".

### Worship

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!      **And also with you!**

### Prayer of the Day

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

*God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined.*

<sup>1</sup>See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>2</sup>But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; <sup>3</sup>he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. <sup>4</sup>Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

**Psalm: Luke 1:68-79**

*In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us. (Lk. 1:78)*

<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.**

<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**

*The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.*

<sup>3</sup>I thank my God every time I remember you, <sup>4</sup>constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, <sup>5</sup>because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. <sup>6</sup>I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. <sup>8</sup>For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. <sup>9</sup>And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight <sup>10</sup>to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, <sup>11</sup>having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

**Gospel Reading: Luke 3:1-6**

*John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.*

<sup>1</sup>In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, <sup>2</sup>during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. <sup>3</sup>He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, <sup>4</sup>as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,  
make his paths straight.

<sup>5</sup>Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,  
and the crooked shall be made straight,  
and the rough ways made smooth;  
<sup>6</sup>and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.' ”  
The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The Sermon: LUKE 3:1-6*

*(Note - parts taken from Michael Deutsch, Lutheran Ministries, Jeffrey Johnson, and Jeffrey Smead)*

“It was a small and innocent voice. In the middle of a busy shopping mall at the heart of the Christmas rush, a little girl sang Joy to the World. The crowds rushed by her. Most people kept going but some stopped to listen.

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.”

A voice----a message----and for those who stopped to listen----did they feel the truth and grace that broke through the stress and strain of a rushed holiday season?

It was such a needed voice.

For Maria----it was more than a nice voice or beautiful song----it was a life saving voice with a powerful message. Maria was at the mall feeling discouraged, disheartened, depressed. Maria had planned to end her life. She had the pills. She was ready to say goodbye. But then --she heard that voice. She had stopped to listen. Tears filled her eyes. She felt the truth and the grace even though she had lost hope. That voice--those words--encircled her---embraced her. Maria went home changed, renewed because of the voice."

Our gospel today tells us of another voice. Today we are introduced to John the Baptizer. He baptized people in the wilderness and, by that baptism, changed their lives. The voice of John was bringing clarity and new life to their complicated lives.

The gospel of Luke mentions these names---Tiberius, Pontious Pilate, Herod, Philip, Lysanias, Annas, Caiaphas, Zechariah. Why all these names? They mean that this voice was real. John was a real man rooted in history. He lived in a very complicated and turbulent time of history---at a specific time, a real place, with a compelling message.

John proclaimed a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. John proclaimed---

through the words of Isaiah--- prepare the way of the Lord. John proclaimed---and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

We often think of Easter as a time of rebirth and renewing. Is it because it's in the spring when things start to sprout and grow? Is it Christ's resurrection a time that reminds us that Jesus died for us--a reminder that our sins are forgiven?

Can we look at Advent as a time of rebirth and renewing also? We often think of Advent as a time of waiting--preparing our hearts for the glorious nativity scene--for the birth of God's son. With the birth of Jesus, it also gives us a time of rebirth and a time to renew our lives--renew our hearts--renew our faith.

We are what the voice of God says we are---we are God's redeemed and rescued children!! We are the ones for whom Jesus was born. We are the ones for whom Jesus died. We are the ones Jesus draws close to with the voice of truth and grace. That's what John's voice declares. John the baptizer was the voice leading Christ into people's lives and leading people's lives into the paths of Christ.

Today is the day to hear the voice. Today is the day to reach out for God's help. Today is the day to realize that we have a life of grace to live---not just at Christmas----but each and every day.

At this time of Advent, we can renew ourselves to serve Him. We can renew ourselves to be loving and prayerful people. God is always positioning us. God is leading us. God could be leading people toward us ---so we can lead them to Him.

We all know people who are hurting in different ways. There are people who are travelling on a crooked, rough road. Their roads could be crooked and rough because of finances. Their road could be rough because they are lonelier than they've ever been before. Their road could be rough because of a family or friend's death or a diagnosis of a terrible illness. Can we smooth out the road for them? Can we straighten the path for them? Is that why God led them to us?

Is there someone who needs to see and experience the love of Jesus through us? If we help straighten that crooked road and smooth out their path, they now have the chance to see Jesus working in us. We have been given the chance to offer hope to someone who may be feeling hopeless, worthless.

In this season of Advent we can look for the chance to set something straight. Dr. David Jeremiah said---preach the gospel with our lips----SHOW the gospel with our lives in all we do.

John's words are as important to us today as they were 2,000 years ago. John wasn't talking about major road works around Jerusalem. He is talking about the major work

inside each one of us. He is talking about smoothing out the rough spots in our hearts. He is talking about reconstructing our lives so that we might receive Christ better. Our days may start off nice and smooth. Sometimes, though, it doesn't take long before our days become rough and filled with discomfort. What should we do? We go to God in prayer. We trust in God. God can restore us to the smooth even path.

Isn't it a glorious feeling to walk through the woods? There are no sidewalks when we walk in the woods. There are no smooth paths. There are beaten paths. Someone had to start those beaten paths. What if our role this Advent--this Christmas---and all the days to follow ---is to do exactly that? To start a path for someone.

Michael Deutsch says---

"You--follower of Christ----prepare the way of the Lord. Create a path so that someone can journey down the path to Christ on a path you have created."

Michael Deutsch goes on to say---"beat a path to God's throne of grace. Go there so often, day after day. Do it so that the road has become a beaten path between you and God. No obstacles. No hindrances. The more you prepare a path between you and your relationship with Jesus, the more opportunity you give for Jesus to be glorified among those around you."

We can trust in God for all our needs and to help us to walk on the straight smooth pathways. If we read further into Luke verse 16---"He who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." Did Jesus really wear shoes? Is this just a figure of speech?

What ever we think--did Jesus wear shoes---this verse in Luke gives us the comfort we need to walk on the straight smooth paths.

God put shoes on for the task of walking in our footsteps--to walk in our hurt, to walk in our sin, to walk in our death. They are Saviour shoes--to be with us---to die for us--to forgive us our sins--to raise us up to new life--to make us a new creation---to give us peace and hope.

In this chaotic world, Jesus is with us. He's right there in the middle of it with us!!

He stands with us!! He walks with us!! He wears shoes!! He's in our shoes with us!!

I keep thinking of Jeff Chu who was a guest speaker at Synod assembly. You may remember I spoke of his words before----

"Do you, child of God, know that you are loved?"

What a love--to know that Jesus is with us always!!!

Today John the Baptizer is the voice that reminds us that we are the rescued and restored children of God. We have an important irreplaceable purpose in this life. Today

John the Baptizer is the voice that gives us the good news about Jesus---He wears shoes.  
He is with us here and now.

Here is a story from J. Smead--

"A mother shared a story about a Christmas play that speaks to a life in Christ.

She said that her daughter Janna was so excited about her part in the church play. She was so excited that I was sure she had a main part. But she wouldn't tell me what part she was playing. She wanted it to be a surprise. The night of the performance all the parents and grandparents were in the audience. Then, one by one, the children took their places for the opening scene. I could see the shepherds fidgeting in one corner as Mary and Joseph stood solemnly behind the manger. In the back, the 3 Wiseman waited impatiently. Janna was calmly sitting on a chair to the side. Then the teacher began----A long time ago, Mary and Joseph had a baby and they named Him Jesus. And when Jesus was born a bright star appeared over the stable. With that cue Janna got up from her chair, picked up a large tin foil star, walked behind Mary and Joseph and held the star up high for everyone to see. When the teacher told about the shepherds coming to see the baby, the young shepherds came forward and Janna jiggled the star up and down excitedly to show them where to come. When the Wiseman responded to their cue, Janna took a few steps forward to meet them and to lead the way. Her face was so bright as the real star might have been that night. On the way home, Janna said with great satisfaction--I had the main part!! You did?, I asked wondering why she thought that. Yes, she said. I showed everybody how to find Jesus!!!

I showed everybody how to find Jesus."

Wouldn't that be a wonderful way to be remembered!!

That was the mission of John the Baptizer. And that is our mission too.

We are to be faithful--preparing to see Him.

We are to be the light of the world----to lead others to Him.

We are an Advent people.

We are holding the star.

We can be the main part ---to show everyone to Jesus.

**Amen**

**Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

### **The Prayers of Intercession**

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

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. 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.**

God of presence, bless those of this community who cannot be with us this morning, and those who walk with them, especially:

***In Residence:*** Margaret; Maria; Stan; Katie; Katherine; Cordelle;

***Needing our prayers:*** Peter; Brenda; Doug; Dorothy; Bill; Bev; Ed; Marilyn; Jordan; Audrey; John; John; Greg; Sam; Katie; Walter; Hart; Frank; Pastor Mike & Patti

***Recovering:*** Katherine; Carol; Betty; Greg; Kati; Bill; Sharon; Mary;

And all those we name in our hearts...

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

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.**

**Lord's Prayer**

*Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:*

**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.**

**Benediction**

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.**

**Dismissal**

Go in peace. Christ is near.

**Thanks be to God!**