



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

December 15, 2024
Third Sunday in Advent

Announcements

Juice boxes are still needed at Street Help Shelter. The Welcome Centre Shelter for Women needs granola bars, fruit rollup-type items and another snack item for snack packs for children at the centre. Please leave donated items on the table in the Narthex.

Coming Up

December 21 - Trinity's NEW tradition Christmas musical event will be the first offering in our new "Trinity Musical Arts Series." The premiere event begins at 2 p.m. and will feature a performance of the Academy Brass Quintet. This concert marks the beginning of our new ministry that builds upon Trinity's great musical tradition and aims to establish affordable music outreach to the community. Tickets are \$20 for adults and \$10 for students. Tickets are available in the church office and at the door.

We Remember in our Prayers

In Residence: Cordelle

Members: Bunny, Donna, Ed, Edda, Joan, Susan, Connie, Lorraine, Brenda

Friends & Family: Anna, Asdis, Audrey, Dot, Jean, Mary, Randy, Roger, Rose, Frank, Tanya, Nash, Jeff

Thames Area Clergy: Rev. Rob Wiesner, St. Peter's, Brodhagen

Introduction to the day

Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

Hymns

ACS #905 We are waiting for Jesus

ELW # 242 Awake! Awake, and greet
the new morn

ELW #239 Hark, the glad sound people

ELW #267 Joy to the world

Advent call to worship

Alleluia the Christ child comes,
And we await his birth.

Let us throw off our distractions,
And allow the chaos to settle.

Let us watch for the signs,
And listen to the messengers.

Let us stand on tiptoe,
And shout aloud and sing.
Something new is emerging,
Something new is being birthed.

*~ written by Christine Sine (2012),
and posted on GodSpace.*

Prayer of the day

Stir up the wills of your faithful people,
Lord God, and open our ears to the
preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your
salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of
repentance; through Jesus Christ, our
Saviour and Lord, who lives and reigns
with you and the Holy Spirit, one God,
now and forever..

AMEN



First reading: Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴ Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,
O daughter Jerusalem!

¹⁵ The Lord has taken away the
judgments against you,
he has turned away your enemies.
The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your
midst;

you shall fear disaster no more.

¹⁶ On that day it shall be said to
Jerusalem:

Do not fear, O Zion;
do not let your hands grow weak.

¹⁷ The Lord, your God, is in your midst,
a warrior who gives victory;
he will rejoice over you with gladness,
he will renew you in his love;

he will exult over you with loud singing
¹⁸ as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,
so that you will not bear reproach
for it.

¹⁹ I will deal with all your oppressors
at that time.

And I will save the lame
and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into
praise
and renown in all the earth.

²⁰ At that time I will bring you home,
at the time when I gather you;
for I will make you renowned and
praised
among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes
before your eyes, says the Lord.

Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6

² Surely God is my salvation; I
will trust, and will not ¹ be afraid,
for the Lord God is my strength and
my might, and has become ¹ my
salvation.

³ **With joy you ¹ will draw water
from the wells ¹ of salvation.**

⁴ And you will say in that day: Give
thanks to the Lord, call ¹ on God's name;
make known the deeds of
the Lord among the nations; proclaim
that this name ¹ is exalted.

⁵ **Sing praises to the Lord, for he
has done ¹ gloriously;
let this be known in ¹ all the earth.**

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy,
O ¹ royal Zion,
for great in your midst is the
Holy ¹ One of Israel.

Second reading: Philippians 4: 4-7

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will
say, Rejoice. ⁵ Let your gentleness be
known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶
Do not worry about anything, but in
everything by prayer and supplication
with thanksgiving let your requests be
made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of
God, which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in
Christ Jesus.



Gospel: Luke 3:7-18

⁷ John said to the crowds that came out
to be baptized by him, "You brood of
vipers! Who warned you to flee from the
wrath to come? ⁸ Bear fruits worthy of
repentance. Do not begin to say to
yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our
ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from

these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" ¹¹ In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹² Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³ He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

¹⁵ As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶ John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷ His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸ So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Sermon

Feel the joy!

May you feel the joy of God's grace in your hearts and in your lives this morning and always ...

Since we entered the Advent season, we have been in a period of expectation ... anticipating God breaking into the life of the world in the form of a baby in a manger. It is a time when we journey through the darkness of the season ... preparing ourselves ... clearing away the barriers to fully receiving and fully giving love.

But let's put all that on pause this morning.

The third Sunday in Advent is known as Rose Sunday or for the more traditionalist among us ... as Gaudete <gaw -dee -tee> Sunday. It is also called the Sunday of Joy.

In some faith traditions, the Advent wreath candle that would be lit this morning would be pink or rose-coloured rather than the usual blue.

This day focuses on the response to the promise and nearness of God. And that response should be joy ... joy and gladness in the promised redemption ... the promise of a new creation.

John doesn't seem too joyous this morning as he calls the crowd on the banks of the Jordan a "brood of vipers!"

The people's self-interest in offering to repentance threatens to poison their relationships.

Last week, Luke offered us the image of John the Baptist as the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophesy.

Isaiah's call to prepare the way of the Lord ... by filling in valleys ... by levelling hills and mountains ... by straightening the paths that lead to God ... is seen as preparing one's heart and the life of the world for the coming Messiah.

In the wilderness, John proclaims a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. It is a message that touches something within the people. Crowds flock to hear John and to be baptized in the Jordan.

Today ... in the wilderness ... John tells the gathering what true repentance means for them and for the world ... what they will experience once the way is prepared.

Repentance through baptism is not about simply washing sins away ... to John ... repentance carries far greater value and responsibilities that extend beyond the individual.

Those are the vipers that he addresses at the beginning of this morning's passage ... the people who look at repentance solely as personal salvation when the Son of Man returns.

John tries to head off such thoughts.

He expects some in the crowd to claim privilege through their lineage ... that their ties to Abraham ... excludes them from having to bear good fruit from their repentance. These people ... like some in modern congregations ... believe the works of their ancestors ... their legacy ... grants them special

status when it comes to acting within a community. Some even argue that what they themselves did in the past gives them special status and privilege.

Nonsense, John would say to such a notion.

John warns those who believe their lineage means they do not have to produce good fruit ... he says such unproductive family trees deserve to be tossed into the fire.

Members of the crowd ask John, "What, then, should we do?"

In essence, they want to know how to live into their baptism.

The people who asked this question weren't the ones who count Abraham as an ancestor. The people who want to know how they can live into the forgiveness they have received through repentance are those who society despises or who it has pushed to the margins by circumstances.

They are told to express generosity and empathy for the poor and the hungry ... feeding and clothing them rather than hoarding necessary items for themselves.

The tax collectors are told not to extort extra money from those paying taxes ... the soldiers are told not to bully or oppress others. They are told how to amend their practices to live into the full promise of repentance.

It is a promise that reshapes the world.

To Luke, repentance is lived out in one's everyday practices.

Willie James Jennings is a professor of theology at Yale University.

About this morning's passage, he wrote:

"The life of repentance reverses the order of possibility. When it comes to our life and work, the life of repentance demands that we ask what can be done, ..."

John's answers to the gathering shows what can be done ... what forms generosity, justice and contentment mark lives that bear the good fruits of repentance.

Repentance to John ... and to Luke ... is an invitation ... it is an invitation to a life that is aligned with God's purpose. It is a life of joy ... and that is the good news within this story.

There is joy in sharing ... there is joy in being welcomed and embraced by a community. The sorrow of hunger and of a life alone is replaced by the joy of nourishment and relationship.

John challenges the people ... and us, as well ... to consider our relationships with God and with one another. John calls us to live into our baptismal promise ... the promise God made to us ... and our promise to God and to one another to live life differently ... to live humbly and lovingly ... to model what can be.

Gaudete Sunday is anchored in Paul's letter to the Philippians. It is a passage that calls on the people to rejoice and give thanks because God has come near and freedom is known. It is a freedom that comes through

baptism and through a heart cleansed of sorrow and fear ... all the bad fruits.

As Paul writes to the Philippians, baptism is a welcome into new identity that lifts people out of worry and aggression and into "the peace of God, which passes all understanding." (4:7; Melinda Quivik)

It is a joyous peace.

Advent ... as the darkness begins to ease as we near the manger ... remains a time when we are called into self-reflection ... a time when we make paths straight and remove the obstacles to faith-filled love.

It is a time to consider if we are in right relationships or if our relationships are marked by assumed privilege rooted in lineage and tradition. A time to consider whether or not we have fully lived into the baptismal promise ... whether we produced good fruits or have allowed things to wither on the vine.

It is a time to consider what can be done.

In baptism, we are called to imitate John the Baptist and point to Jesus.

The voices of John the Baptist and of Paul tell us how to prepare for this arrival: share your stuff, stop worrying, live with justice and sing with joy. (Liv Larson Andrews)

Is this how we respond to the advent of the Lord?

John ... this morning ... gives a picture of action-oriented fruits of repentance ... of grace active in the world ... of the loving relationship that

should mark the lives of those who follow the one who comes after John.

Repentance then is not just about sin, it is about life and how we share life-giving and life-affirming grace.

It is how we allow the Spirit to work in and through us ... how the Spirit burns away the life-diminishing parts of our lives ... leaving behind the affirming relationships and that are marked by acts that bear witness to the love we have received and share.

It is when we know what can be done.

Through such love ... joy flourishes.

And it is such joy that is experienced as God breaks into the world in the form of a baby.

Let us be joyous and let us share that joy!

AMEN

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

Blessing

The Ancient One, enthroned,
the Crucified One, now risen,

the Indwelling One, poured out,
✠ bless you now and forever.

AMEN

EVEN MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS...

We are in the process of reviewing and updating our membership records. If you would like a visit from Pastor Chris, please call the church office and leave a message. Pastor Chris would be happy to visit and bring you communion, if you have difficulty attending church services.

COMING SERVICES

December 22 – Advent 4

December 24 – Christmas Eve, 3 p.m.
& 7 p.m.

December 29 – Lessons & Carols

**TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
PRE-AUTHORIZED REMITTANCE PROGRAM**

AUTHORIZATION

I hereby authorize *Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 1215 Parent Avenue, Windsor, ON N8X 4J1, to cause a cheque to be drawn on my account, each month as a contribution by me to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, as follows:

Total *monthly* contributions to Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church of:

_____ (\$ _____,00) per month
Distributed as follows:

Current Giving/Benevolence	\$ _____	per month
Global Hunger and Development Agency (GHDA)	\$ _____	per month
Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR)	\$ _____	per month
ELCIC World Missions/Volunteers in Mission	\$ _____	per month
Specify _____	\$ _____	per month
Specify _____	\$ _____	per month
Specify _____	\$ _____	per month
Total Monthly Giving:	\$ _____	per month

Contributor's name _____ Envelope # _____

Bank/Trust/Credit Union Name _____

Branch Address: _____

Account Number _____ Type of Account _____

Date: _____ Signature: _____

This authority may be changed or cancelled by the contributor at any time.

To ensure accuracy, a sample cheque marked "VOID" must accompany this form.

The transfer of contributions to the ministry of Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church will begin in the month *following* receipt of this authorization.