

Today's Theme for Worship: Like John the Baptist, we rejoice when we share God's love with others.

Gathering Rite: We Wait in Hope

Special Music sings:

All Creation lies in waiting,
in the stillness of the night,
with hope anticipating
the Advent of Eternal Light.

M: Advent is a time to prepare.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

M: During Advent we prepare our eyes to see the light of Christ.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

M: During Advent we prepare our hearts to receive the Word of Christ.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

M: During Advent we prepare to share the joy of Christ.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

M: During Advent we prepare to embrace the promise of Christ.

C: Prepare the way of the Lord; make straight the way for our God.

M: This morning we light three candles. The **first candle** reminds us that Advent is a time to wait for the Lord. We wait for the unfolding of God's plan in accordance with God's time. The **second candle** reminds us that Advent is also a time to watch. During Advent we eagerly watch for Christ's return even as we prepare to celebrate his first coming. As we light the **third candle** we also remember that Advent is a time to prepare. During advent we prepare ourselves in heart, soul and strength to welcome our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who was, and is, and is to come. We ask God to prepare us to celebrate the glory of Christmas.

Refrain (congregation)

We prepare in hope for the morning Light,
For the love of Christ to illuminate the night.
We prepare with joy for the Savior's birth;
We prepare in hope for peace on earth.

P: The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: And also with you.

Confession of Sins

P: We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.

P: God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

C: Amen.

P: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

♪ Oh Taste And See

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Bless-ed are they who take re-fuge in him.

Your Word, O Lord, is e-ter-nal;
it stands firm in the heav-ens.
Your faith-ful-ness con-tin-ues for-ev-er.

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good.
Bless-ed are they who take re-fuge in him.

Prayer of the Day

P: Let us Pray.

Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: ♪ Amen.**

First Lesson: Isaiah 61:1-3, 10-11

The LORD's Servant proclaims the year of the LORD's favor.

The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to preach good news to the afflicted.
He sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives

and release for those who are bound,
²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance for our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
³to provide for those who mourn in Zion,
to give them a crown of beauty instead of ashes,
the oil of joy instead of mourning,
a cloak of praise instead of a faint spirit,
so that they will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD to display his beauty.

¹⁰I will rejoice greatly in the LORD.

My soul will celebrate because of my God,
for he has clothed me in garments of salvation.

With a robe of righteousness he covered me,
like a bridegroom who wears a beautiful headdress like a priest,
and like a bride who adorns herself with her jewelry.

¹¹For as the earth produces its growth,
and as a garden causes what has been sown to sprout up,
so God the LORD will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up
in the presence of all the nations.

Psalm of the Day – Psalm 71

Refrain

Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

In you, O LORD, I have taken refuge;*
let me never be put to shame.

Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness;*
turn your ear to me and save me.

Be my rock of refuge to which I can always go;*
For you are my rock and my fortress.

Refrain

Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

Since my youth, O God, you have taught me,*
and to this day I declare your marvelous deeds.

Even when I am old and gray,*
do not forsake me, O God,

till I declare your power to the next generation,*
your might to all who are to come.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son*
and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning,*
is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Refrain

Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

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Second Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Paul tells us how God wants us to live as we wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁶Rejoice always. ¹⁷Pray without ceasing. ¹⁸In everything give thanks. For this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. ¹⁹Do not extinguish the Spirit. ²⁰Do not treat prophecies with contempt. ²¹But test everything. Hold on to the good. ²²Keep away from every kind of evil.

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

C: ♪ Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

These words are written that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

John the Baptist confesses, "I am not the Christ, but the voice of one calling in the desert.

⁶There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony John gave when the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?"

²⁰He confessed and did not deny. He confessed, "I am not the Christ."

²¹And they asked him, "Who are you then? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

"No," he answered.

²²Then they asked him, "Who are you? Tell us so we can 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,’ just as Isaiah the prophet said.”

²⁴They had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵So they asked John, “Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Christ, or Elijah, or the Prophet?”

²⁶“I baptize with water,” John answered. “Among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷He is the one coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie.”

²⁸These things happened in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

C: ♪ Praise be to you, O Christ!

Hymn of the Day: 14 Arise, O Christian People

1 Arise, O Christian people! Prepare yourselves today.
Prepare to greet the Savior, Who takes your sins away.
To us by grace alone The truth and light was given;
The promised Lord from heaven To all the world is shown.

2 Prepare the way before him; Prepare for him the best.
Cast out what would offend him, This great, this heav’nly guest.
Make straight, make plain the way: The lowly valleys raising,
The heights of pride abasing, His path all even lay.

3 The humble heart and lowly God raises up on high;
Beneath his feet in terror The haughty soul shall lie.
The heart sincere and right, That heeds God’s invitation
And makes true preparation-It is the Lord’s delight.

4 Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus; Turn not from me aside,
And help me to receive you This blessed Adventtide.
From stall and manger low Come now to dwell within me;
I’ll sing your praises gladly And forth your glory show.

Text: Valentin Thilo, 1607-62, alt.; tr. Arthur T. Russell, 1806-74, st. 1-3, alt.;
The Lutheran Hymnal, St. Louis, 1941, st. 4, alt.

Sermon

Apostles’ Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Offering Prayer

Electronic Giving! You can give your offerings from your smartphone with the GivePlusChurch app, which can be downloaded for free at Google Play or the App Store. You can also give at holytrinitylutheranwyoming.com by clicking the Offerings link at the top of the page or scan the QR code below. If you have any questions about any of these options, please contact Dave Conrad at dconrad765@gmail.com or 616-406-7172



Prayer of the Church

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.

Hymn: 577 Rise, O Light of Gentile Nations

1 Rise, O Light of Gentile nations, Jesus, bright and Morning Star;
Let your Word, the gladsome tidings, Ring out loudly near and far,
Bringing freedom to the captives, Peace and comfort to the slave,
That the heathen, free from bondage, May proclaim your pow'r to save.

2 Knowing you and your salvation, Grateful love dare never cease
To proclaim your tender mercies, Gracious Lord, your heav'nly peace.
Let us sound the gospel tidings To the earth's remotest bound
That the sinner has been pardoned And forgiveness can be found.

3 May our zeal to help the heathen Be increased from day to day,
As we plead in true compassion And for their conversion pray.
For the many faithful workers, For the gospel they proclaim,
Let us all be cheerful givers To the glory of your name.

4 Savior, shine in all your glory On the nations near and far;
From the highways and the byways Call them forth, O Morning Star.
Guide them whom your grace has chosen Out of Satan's dreadful thrall
To the mansions of your Father-There is room for sinners all.

Text: Herman Fick, 1822-85, abr.; tr. *The Lutheran Hymnal*, St. Louis, 1941, alt.

Prayer and Blessing

P: O Lord God, our heavenly Father, pour out the Holy Spirit on your faithful people. Keep us strong in your grace and truth, protect and comfort us in all temptation, and bestow on us your

saving peace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

or

P: Almighty God, we thank you for teaching us the things you want us to believe and do. Help us by your Holy Spirit to keep your Word in pure hearts that we may be strengthened in faith, guided in holiness, and comforted in life and in death, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: ♪ **A-men.**

P: Brothers and sisters, go in peace. Live in harmony with one another. Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

C: ♪ **A-men, A-men, A-men**

Closing Hymn: 37 Once Again My Heart Rejoices

1 Once again my heart rejoices

As I hear Far and near Sweetest angel voices.

“Christ is born!” their choirs are singing

Till the air Ev’rywhere Now with joy is ringing.

2 Hear! The conqueror has spoken:

“Now the foe, Sin and woe, Death and hell are broken!”

God is man, man to deliver,

And the Son Now is one With our blood forever.

3 Should we still fear God’s displeasure,

Who, to save, Freely gave His most precious treasure?

To redeem us he has given

His own Son From the throne Of his might in heaven.

4 God becomes the victim, taking

Mankind’s place By his grace, Full atonement making.

For our life his own he tenders,

And his grace All our race Fit for glory renders.

5 Softly from his lowly manger Jesus calls One and all,

“You are safe from danger. Children, from the sins that grieve you

You are freed; All you need

I will surely give you.”

6 Come, then, banish all your sadness!

One and all, Great and small, Come with songs of gladness;

We shall live with him forever

There on high In that joy Which will vanish never.

Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607-76, abr., adapt.; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-78, alt.