

As We Gather

Advent is a time to focus on what ultimately matters. Amid all of the other "must-dos" of this season—endless shopping lists, office parties, Christmas concerts and pageants—the one thing that matters most is receiving what Jesus gives and then sharing these gifts with others. Today's readings prepare our hearts for the coming of Jesus with an Advent "clean-up," opening our eyes and hearts to receive His saving grace and His perfect peace. Our Savior shows us what truly is "excellent" and what matters most.

Holy Communion

Holy Communion is being celebrated today. It is the belief of the Lutheran Church, based on Jesus' own words, that in this Sacrament His body and blood are really present and that forgiveness of sins and the assurance of salvation are offered to all who come confessing their sins and believing in Him. Communion is therefore offered to those who share this confession of faith. Children who are not yet confirmed are invited to come forward with their parents to receive a blessing. Guests who may have questions about Communion at Mt. Calvary are encouraged to talk to Pastor Brighton.

PRELUDE

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND GREETING

OPENING HYMN:

"Prepare the Royal Highway"

Hymn #343

THE INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS AND ASSURANCE OF FORGIVENESS

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

(Please kneel)

Holy God,

We are in need of grace. We are desperate for peace. As people born in sin, no matter where we turn, our pursuits to find wholeness leave us feeling empty and alone. Only in You, dear Father, are we made complete. Only in You, dear Savior, are we forgiven. Only in You, dear Holy Spirit, are we restored. Draw us near to Calvary's cross that we may learn again of the sacrifice made once and for all. Complete, forgive, and restore us today by Your saving grace and perfect peace. Amen.

The God of grace and peace is not a God who is distant and far away from His creation. As Your everlasting Father, He draws close to you through the saving work of His Son. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, You are fully and freely forgiven! You are the Father's own children! Upon this your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH – THE PREPARATION CANDLE

On this second Sunday in Advent we light two candles in the Advent Wreath. The second candle is known as the "Preparation Candle." It is to remind us to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Christ's coming into the world to be our Savior and to always be ready for Christ's Second Coming.

O Lord, help us to remove all obstacles that would keep us from receiving Jesus as Lord in our hearts and lives. Lead us to trust in the salvation given to us by His death and resurrection and guide us as we make preparation for Jesus' Second Coming.

Amen.

THE HYMN:

"Come, O Long Expected Jesus"

**Come, O long expected Jesus
Born to set Your people free.
From our fears and sins release us
By Your death on Calvary.
Israel's strength and consolation
Hope to all the earth impart.
Dear Desire of ev'ry nation
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.**

**Born Your people to deliver
Born a child and yet a king.
Born to reign in us forever
Now Your gracious kingdom bring.
By Your own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Your all sufficient merit
Raise us to Your glorious throne.**

(As the hymn stanzas are sung, Lyle and Carrie Wurdeman and sons, Garrett and Colton will light the second candle on the Advent wreath at the 8:00 am service and D.J. and Cynthia Nelson, and sons, Caleb and Seth will light it at the 10:45 am service.)

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

Father, come fill our hearts with thankfulness and praise for all the ways You bless us in both body and soul. Focused upon Your saving work, enrich us today with Your gifts, that we may boldly live as Your partners in the Gospel; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

(Please be seated.)

THE OLD TESTAMENT READING: Malachi 3:1–7b (*The Lord sends His messenger to His people.*)

¹Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ²But 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. ³He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD. ⁴Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

⁵Then I will draw near to you for judgment. I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, against the adulterers, against those who swear falsely, against those who oppress the hired worker in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, against those who thrust aside the sojourner, and do not fear me, says the LORD of hosts.

⁶For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed. ⁷From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says the LORD of hosts."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE EPISTLE READING: Philippians 1:2–11 (*We thank Jesus for our partnership in the Gospel.*)

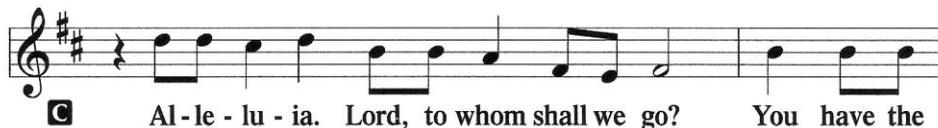
²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, ⁵because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. ⁹And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, ¹⁰so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE ALLELUIA VERSE:





words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

THE HOLY GOSPEL IS ANNOUNCED:

The Holy Gospel according to St Luke the third chapter.



C Glo - ry to You, O Lord.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 3:1–14 (*John preaches repentance for the forgiveness of sins.*)

¹In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet,

“The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall become straight, and the rough places shall become level ways, ⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

⁷He said therefore 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? ⁸Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ⁹Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

¹⁰And the crowds asked him, “What then shall we do?” ¹¹And he answered them, “Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.” ¹²Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, “Teacher, what shall we do?” ¹³And he said to them, “Collect no more than you are authorized to do.” ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, “And we, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.



C Praise to You, O Christ.

THE CHILDREN’S MESSAGE:

Pastor Brighton

THE HYMN OF THE DAY:

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

Hymn #344

THE MESSAGE:

"Advent Clean-Up"

Pastor David Brighton

THE NICENE CREED:

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried. And the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father, and he will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE PRAYERS: After each petition, the Worship Leader will say, *"Lord in Your mercy,"* and the congregation will respond, *"Hear our prayer."*

THE GATHERING OF THE TITHES AND OFFERINGS

++ The Stewardship Thought ++

Advent points us to the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Messiah, the baby Jesus, Our Savior.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given... and His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6)

OFFERTORY HYMN:

"Praise and Thanksgiving"

**Praise and thanksgiving, Father, we offer
For all things living, created good:
Harvest of sown fields, fruits of the orchard,
Hay from the mown fields, blossom and wood.**

**Bless, Lord, the labor we bring to serve You
That with our neighbor we may be fed.
Sowing or tilling, we would work with You,
Harvesting, milling for daily bread.**

THE ORDER OF HOLY COMMUNION

THE PREFACE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

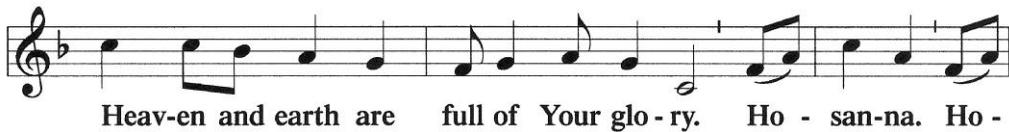
Lift up your hearts.

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 truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:



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 WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.



C Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the



world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace.

THE DISTRIBUTION *(The center cup in each tray is white grape juice for pregnant moms or those allergic to alcohol.)*

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS: *"Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence "*
"Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord"
"O Jesus, Blessed Lord, to Thee"

Hymn #621
Hymn #637
Hymn #632

THE POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

THE BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

Amen.

THE CLOSING HYMN:

"In Christ Alone"

**In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my Light, my Strength, my Song;
This Cornerstone, this Solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.**

**In Christ alone, who took on flesh;
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.**

**There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.**

**No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.**

By Keith Getty and Stuart Townend
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A MOMENT FOR SILENT PRAYER

THE POSTLUDE

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PRAYER CONCERNS

Jeannie Hawkins, who is recovering at home after hospitalization for fluid in her lungs.

Charlotte Mae Thomson, daughter of former Vicar Kevin & Jordan Thomson, Born Dec 2nd.

Karen Harmon, who is asthmatic and has contracted whooping cough and pneumonia.

Marrissa Halsell, who is struggling with her multiple sclerosis.

Bob Yeager, who is recovering from rotator cuff surgery.

Josie Kong, Evvy Keyes' mom, who has been diagnosed with hydrocephalus (water on the brain) and a brain tumor.

Tony Kong, Evvy Keyes' dad, who is still in the ICU, and on a ventilator.

Keep In Your Prayers

Regina Ragan, Deaglan Lovett (Jennifer O'Donnell's infant son), Jan Clark, Chet Branscom, Ralph Wenrick, Jacque Bohm, Rosie Schulz, Diane McCall, Courage Trasmer, Paul Brown, Nancy Hoar, Monika Reynolds, Gary Webb, Yekabu Gedru and Karen Johnson.

(NOTE: Those listed under "Keep in your prayers" are removed from the list after eight weeks. If there is someone you would like to keep on the list for another eight weeks, please contact the church office.)

Those Battling Cancer

Those battling cancer: Ken Reilly, Anne Harter (daughter of Dick & Susan Kesler), Margaret Frazier, Mary Jahnke (Joe's sister), Barry Rice (Becky McVay's brother), Norma Young (Melinda Hopf's aunt), Paula Babcock, Kathy Grube, Chet Branscom, Mary Schwope (Michele Durbin's aunt), Jeannette Poniske (Fred Tamer's mom), Bruce Oswalt (Krystal Ferguson's father), Gary Jennings (Margaret Jennings' son) and Elaine Mead (Jeannie Hawkins' aunt).

Those Serving our Country in Dangerous Areas

Jake Huffman, Chris Walker, Darrin Landis, Denver Yarbrough, Michael Welch, Jonathan Fetchik and Christian Corbitt, for safety and good health as they serve our country in dangerous areas.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our Altar Flowers were provided this week by Gary Hadley, in honor of Lexie's birthday, and by Steve & Jackie Kaestner, in honor of their grandson Jaxon's birthday.

Hanging of the Greens will take place after church today around 12:45. We'll have some pizza immediately following the 10:45 service down in the MFH, then come upstairs to help decorate the tree in the narthex, hang wreaths, and put out the nativity. Everyone is invited to come and help! Many hands make light work! - Ruthie Radcliff, Altar Guild

Honduras Mission Trip Opportunity. Christ Lutheran Church in Perry welcomes you to join their 6th Annual Mission trip to Children of Love Lutheran Orphanage and Church in La Paz, Honduras on January 23-30, 2016. The trip cost is a round trip ticket to Tegucigalpa in Honduras (currently about \$400-\$600), plus \$200, and your passport. For additional information, see childrenoflove.org or contact John or Renee Lehenbauer at ph/txt (478) 397-5914 or christlutheranperry@gmail.com.

The Angel Tree is now set up in the entry lobby and quite a few of you have picked up Angels. This week, we received the requests from the Salvation Army and Lutheran Services. If you have not picked up an Angel, we encourage you to get one now. The deadlines for returning the Angel along with the gift are as follows: **Warner Robins Rehabilitation**, 12:00 pm, Monday, **December 7th**. **Family Promise**, 12:00 pm Tuesday, **December 15th**. **Lutheran Services**, 12:00 pm Thursday, **December 10th**. **Salvation Army**; 12:00 pm Wednesday, **December 16th**. **Rainbow House**, 12:00 pm Monday, **December 21st**. **IMPORTANT:** Please return the entire angel to MCLC with the unwrapped gift in a Christmas Bag under the tree (there will be a box for gift cards and each day we will move the gift cards to a safe location). If you have any questions, please contact one of the following Social Ministry board members: Jan Langston, Jan Clark, Cheryl Hernandez, Brenda Wessling or Liz Hunter

Red Cross Blood Drive Results: Twenty-five pints of blood were donated by members of our congregation and others in our community. Thanks to all who helped host the Red Cross Team here at MCLC - registration volunteers and our trustees. A special thanks to those who came to donate blood during the Thanksgiving week.

Mount Calvary's Helping Hands Christmas Dinner! Christmas Day from 12-2 at First United Methodist Church (205 N. Davis Dr.) we will serve hundreds of people with a warm Christmas dinner. We will need help preparing the event, working in the kitchen, serving food, making deliveries, and much more! If you want to help in any way, big or small, please sign-up on the Helping Hands Christmas Dinner sign-up sheet at the information desk or outside Vicar's office.

PrimeTimers Christmas Party and White Elephant Gift Exchange (for those over 50). The PrimeTimers Annual Christmas Party will be held on Thursday, December 17th at the Landings Golf Club Restaurant, 309 Stathams Way, Warner Robins. Social time is at 6 PM and dinner will be served at 6:30 PM. The menu will consist of Parmesan Crusted Chicken or Roast Beef with salad, mashed potatoes, peas & carrots, rolls, and iced tea and coffee. Dessert will be apple crisp. The dinners are \$23.00 each. This includes room fee and gratuity. Your checks should be made out to EDNA HICKS. The last day to pay is Sunday, December 6th as we have signed a contract. In the memo part of the check, write either chicken or beef. Each couple is asked to bring a wrapped white elephant gift for our gift exchange. Please give your checks to Edna Hicks, Marie White or Don Netzinger. Please sign up at the service desk. This should be a fun night and we hope to see you there!

SERVING US TODAY

PREACHER: Pastor David Brighton. **LITURGIST:** Pastor David Brighton/Vicar Tim Staffeld. **ELDERS:** Brian Harper (8 am) and Bob Gerstenberger (10:45 am). **ACOLYTES:** Cody Halsell (8 am) and Maddy Hagemann (10:45 am). **USHERS:** Early – Brian Harper, David Rossman, Bob Yeager & Richard Uitto. Late – Mike Hopf, Bruce Bauman, Dave Harter, Ed Bodony & Earl Bogardus. **ALTAR GUILD:** Courtney Staffeld, Cindy Branham, Anita McIntyre, JoAnn Smith & Arlene Zeuner. **LAY READERS:** Carol Yeager (8 am) and Julie Dimes (10:45 am). **SLIDE PREPARER:** Gary Webb. **PROJECTIONISTS:** Open (8 am) and Josh Johnson (10:45 am).

SERVING US NEXT WEEK

ELDERS: Kenn Keyes (Wed 7 pm), Rob Crawford (Sat 6 pm), Darron Counselman (Sun 8 am) and D. J. Nelson (Sun 10:45 am). **ACOLYTES:** Christopher Crawford (Wed 7 pm) Libby Parsons (Sat 6 pm), Carolyn Harper (8 am) and Zoe Bowden (10:45 am). **ALTAR GUILD:** Sue Glaser, Barb Mabee, Ginger Martin, Kathy Robinson & Sharon Suckow. **LAY READERS:** David Miller (Sat 6 pm), Laird Van Gorder (8 am) and Barbara Mabee (Sun 10:45 am). **GREETERS:** Gary & Lexie Hadley (Sun 8 am) and Champ & Pat Aldredge (Sun 10:45 am).

NEXT WEEK'S READINGS

Zephaniah 3:14-20 and Philippians 4:4-7

ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK

Thanksgiving Eve Service - 71

Saturday – 38 Early – 85 Late – 124 Total – 247

THIS WEEK AT MOUNT CALVARY

Today	12:00 am	Christmas Program Dress Rehearsal
	6:30 pm	TAG Night
Monday	10:00 am	Ladies Guild
	6:20 pm	Evangelism Callers
	6:30 pm	Women's Small Group
Tuesday	6:30 pm	Praise Team Rehearsal
	7:00 pm	Council
	7:15 pm	Bell Choir
Wednesday	6:00 pm	Dinner
	7:00 pm	Worship & Christmas Program
	7:45 pm	Sanctuary Choir (after Christmas Program)
Thursday	10:00 am	Ladies Bible Study
Friday	7:00 pm	Christmas Program
Saturday	5:00 pm	Adult Bible Study
Sunday	6:30-8:30 pm	High School Christmas Party

The Board of Outreach is distributing "Christmas Blessing Cards." We ask each member to take two or three cards and use them as you bless a member of our community. Perhaps you can pay for a person's meal at a fast food restaurant and give them a "Christmas Blessing Card" in the process. We want the community to feel blessed by Mount Calvary during this Christmas season.