

Order for Worship
December 5, 2021
Second Sunday in Advent
Theme: Laying the Foundation (Peace)

+ GATHERING +

WELCOME

PRELUDE Savior of the Heathen, Come – J.S. Bach

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CALL TO WORSHIP

If life was a home, then we would pray—

may love be the foundation.

May God be the cornerstone.

May the Spirit be the windows—ushering light in.

And may hope be the walls—holding us together.

In this hour of worship, let us work toward building that home together.

We may not know the path ahead, but God is here, even now.

Let us give thanks for a foundation of love as we worship God.

OPENING HYMN ELW 250 Blessed be the God of Israel

Blessed be the God of Israel who comes to set us free
and raises up new hope for us: a Branch from David's tree.
So have the prophets long declared that with a mighty arm
God would turn back our enemies and all who wish us harm.

My child, as prophet of the Lord you will prepare the way,
to tell God's people they are saved from sin's eternal sway.
Then shall God's mercy from on high shine forth and never cease
to drive away the gloom of death and lead us into peace.

Text c. 1989 Hope Publishing Company
Arr. c. Oxford University Press
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CALL TO CONFESSION

In our scripture passage for today, Zechariah, a new father, speaks to his newborn son, John the Baptist, for the very first time. I want you to imagine yourself in his shoes . . .

What would you say to a newborn sleeping in your arms?
What would you want them to know on their very first day?
What would feel important?

I imagine that all of you would speak words of love. It's impossible not to speak words of love when you're holding a baby, and yet as we grow up, that skill tends to become harder for us to practice. So let us return to our foundation—to words of love, starting with love for ourselves as we pray the prayer of confession together.

Holy God,
when John was Born, Zechariah leaned down and whispered words of love into his ear. We know that you do the same for us, day in and day out, yet we sometimes fail to hear it. We forget that in the beginning we were made good. We doubt that we could possibly be enough. We hustle for our self-worth and wear ourselves out aiming for perfection. We deflect words of praise. We hide behind shiny first impressions. Forgive us. Trusting our worth is the hardest job. Open our ears as you open our hearts, so that we might rest on the foundation of goodness you have laid for us. Gratefully we pray. Amen.

Family of faith, no matter how old we get, God continues to say to us: “You are loved; you are forgiven.” That is the foundation of our lives. That is the truth upon which we build our home. So breathe deeply. There is grace and peace here. Join me in proclaiming this good news:
**We are loved. We are forgiven. We are claimed.
This is our foundation.
Thanks be to God.**

HYMN OF PRAISE Zechariah’s Lullaby
(sung to the tune of Away in the Manger ELW 278)

When old Zechariah held his baby son
He blessed him and dreamed of what he would become
As baby John rocked in the temple that morn
This song Zechariah sang for his newborn

“And you child will be called a prophet of Christ
To bring hope to hearts and to shadows the light
For God has sent visions of what you will do
A dream to proclaim and a world to renew”

We lay a foundation for what is to be
Not knowing yet praying for what we can’t see
We trust in God’s imagination to build
From blueprints and hope for a dream yet fulfilled.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE
As we reflect on the foundation of our faith in our lives,
we gather together around the candle of peace.
The home we long for is a home that knows peace—
peace that rests between us and our grief,
peace around our anxiety,

**peace between us and our self-criticism,
peace amidst our relationships,
peace at the core of our being,
peace hovering through and in our world.**
The home we long for is a home that knows peace.
So today we light the candle of peace—as a reminder and as a prayer.
Let it be so. **Amen.**

ADVENT SONG ELW 253 He Came Down

He came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have peace;
hallelujah forevermore.

Text: Cameroon traditional

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OPENING PRAYER

God, who speaks a good news language—we admit, listening has never been our greatest gift. We are easily distracted, our minds run a million miles a minute. We doubt your faith in us, and take the easy way out when it comes to hope. So today we bow our heads and ask for help. Settle our hearts. Quiet our minds. Steady our breathing. Help us to rest in you. Help us to listen for your good news. Gratefully we pray.

Amen

+ WORD +

FIRST 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.

³I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶I 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. ⁷It 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. ⁸For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION ELW 510 Word of God, come down on Earth

Word of God, come down on earth, living rain from heav'n descending;
touch our hearts and bring to birth faith and hope and love unending.
Word almighty, we revere you; Word made flesh, we long to hear you.

Text c. James Quinn, SJ, admin. Selah Publishng Co., Inc.

Music: Johann R. Ahle

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GOSPEL: Luke 1:57-80

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.' They said to her, 'None of your relatives has this name.' Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And all of them were amazed. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel,

you have come to your people and set them free.

**You have raised up for us a mighty Savior,
born of the house of your servant David.**

Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies,
from the hands of all who hate us,

**to show mercy to our forebears,
and to remember your holy covenant.**

This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham:

to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

**free to worship you without fear,
holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.**

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,

for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,

**to give God's people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.**

In the tender compassion of our God

the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

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

The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY For Builders Bold, Whose Vision Pure
Sung to the tune of ELW 282 It Came upon the Midnight Clear

For builders bold whose vision pure saw more than brick or stone,
who laid in hope foundations sure with Christ the cornerstone;
For those who honored your commands and trusted your strong Word,
who offered faithful hearts and hands, we give you thanks, O Lord.

We come, O Lord, inheritors from those whose work is done.
Lord, make us now contributors to years beyond our own.
Let faith's enkindled flame not fail; let love's best gifts increase.
Let hope in Christ's sure Word prevail till earth and time shall cease.

Words: Herman G. Stuempfle (1993) Tune: FOREST GREEN (8.6.8.6 D)
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STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe that God has come to us;
**that God brought us into being,
that this God gave us breath and purpose,
that we have been blessed to be a blessing to others,
that we have fallen short of this commandment
but that God has nevertheless loved us despite our brokenness.**

We believe that God is coming to us;
**that God is not happy to leave us alone,
that this God will come to us as a particular human being,
that God will be made known to us in flesh and bone like ours,
that Mary will soon give birth and Joseph will soon clap his hands in joy
that Jesus Christ will be born and our salvation made complete.**

We believe that God will come to us;
**that God will have the final word and that Word will be good,
that this God will give us the presence of the Spirit to continue our work,
that we are called to be disciples to all the corners of the earth,
that the day is coming when tears and pain will be no more,
and all will gather at the Table to sing an endless and perfect "Alleluia!"**

CALL TO OFFERING

Zechariah gave one of the greatest gifts he could give to his son. He gave him a foundation of love—words of purpose, pride, love, and belonging. So, in turn, remembering that joyful day, we try to make a similar impact by giving what we can. And we pray that the gifts we give now—our time, our money, our talents—will be infused by the Spirit to make a more purposeful world of love and belonging that we can be proud of. So let us give now. Let this be the foundation—the very start—of a better world.

If you gave your offering online, mailed it to the church or dropped it in the basket on your way into worship – thank you. Please feel free to get up during the musical offering and present your offering to the basket in the front of the space or on the windowsills.

MUSICAL OFFERING Soon and very soon – Andraé Crouch

arr. c. 2011 Crouch Music and Bud John Songs
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OFFERING PRAYER

Holy God, You are our home. You and your goodness are the place we return to, the place we long to lay our head. So today as we offer you these gifts, we pray that you would take this offering and turn it into ministry. Use these gifts to transform the world we live in to better reflect the home you have envisioned for us—a home of peace, a home built on the foundation of love. Gratefully we pray.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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.

+ SENDING +

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

As you leave *this* service, *your* service begins:

Comfort the homesick.

Open your doors to others.

Seek sanctuary.

Be brave enough to go home by another way.

And remember that here in God's house, all are welcomed—so come back soon.

In the name of our Foundation—God, Spirit, and Son.

Amen

SENDING HYMN ELW 264 Prepare the Royal Highway

Prepare the royal highway; the King of kings is near!

Let ev'ry hill and valley a level road appear!

Then greet the King of glory, foretold in sacred story:

Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

Then fling the gates wide open to greet your promised king!

Your king, yet ev'ry nation its tribute too may bring.

All lands will bow before him; their voices join your singing:

Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's word!

Text: c. 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Music: Swedish folk tune

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace, filled with peace.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE Trumpet Tune for Advent – Daniel Read

arr. Jon Spong, c. 1968 Abigdon Press

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Mark your Calendar

- Monday, Dec. 6 7pm Planning meeting for Journey to Bethlehem on Zoom
- Tuesday, Dec. 7 7pm Advent Pilgrimage in Palestine on zoom
- Wednesday, Dec. 8 7pm Confirmation Learning

- Sunday, Dec. 12 8:45am Faith Formation (preK—grade 5)
- 9:30am Worship (& zoom)

Worship Attendance		
11/28/2021 – In Person– 41 Zoom - 25 households		
Giving Amounts	Total received between 11/14-28/2021	Amount Needed between 11/14-28/2021
General Fund	\$8,475.62	\$11,216
Building Fund	\$419.76	
<i>Weekly average is based on the 2021 budget. A weekly building fund amount needed is no longer reported as the building fund has been used for the mortgage, which has been paid off. All other building expenses are included in General Fund budget and giving. The above numbers include electronic giving. Mint duty is being done every other week for the time being.</i>		
Capital Campaign Activity Update		
Capital Campaign Contributions Pledged		\$ 260,000.00
Capital Campaign Contributions received between 11/14-28/2021		\$540
Capital Campaign Contributions received to date		\$ 253,339.65

Advent Pilgrimage in Palestine – *continues Tuesday's at 7 PM via Zoom*

During the Advent season we often talk a lot about the Holy Land of the past without talking much about the Holy Land of the present. What is going on in Bethlehem today?

Pastor Becky will be leading a three week Advent conversation guided by ELCA Young Adults and ELCA Peace Not Walls on the WAY to Bethlehem. Conversations will take place on Tuesdays, November 30, December 7 and 14 at 7 PM in the Fellowship Hall.

If you would like to connect to the conversation using Zoom, please use the link below to join us virtually.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84120654612?pwd=RkRDMVpGT3pISHJGUG9BMTRNOUhzQT09>

Annual Congregational Meeting will be held within worship on Sunday, December 12th at 9:30am. Save the date and plan to be in worship to vote on the proposed budget, elect new council members and hear our ministry emphasis for 2022. St. John's 2022 Budget is available for you to review.

Experience a FREE drive thru Journey to Bethlehem

Saturday, December 18 from 4-6 PM

Rain date – Sunday, December 19 from 4-6 PM

- Live Scenes
- Christmas Carols
- Live music
- Nativity-themed gift
- Bonfire
- Refreshments

The committees and teams of St. John's are creating a Drive Thru Journey to Bethlehem event for the congregation and community this December. Even if you're not on a committee or team, you can still be part of the event!

The next planning meeting is Monday, Dec. 6th on

zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81878337530?pwd=Q3RpZXROUUV0cE9BbTE0QU5vK1pOdz09>

COOKIES! We are asking for homemade cookies to share at the bonfire at the Journey to Bethlehem event. Please contact Kathy Drosey or Linda Lewis if you can help. Cookies are due at the church by Monday, December 13th.

New Member Small Group

Interested in becoming a member of St. John's Lutheran Church? A new member small group will be offered in the beginning of 2022. The small group will meet after the 9:30 AM Sunday worship service on January 16, 30 and February 13. New members will then be formally received into the community during the 9:30 AM worship service on Sunday, February 20. If you are interested in being part of the new members small group, please let Pastor Becky know by January 9th.

Longest Night Worship – Tuesday, December 21 at 6:30 PM

For those who have experienced loss, the holidays can be a particularly painful time, stirring up grief in acute ways. As a result, churches around the world have adopted the practice of having a “Blue Christmas” or a “Longest Night” service during the Advent season. In the Northern hemisphere, this service is often observed on December 21st, the Winter Solstice, which is the longest night of the year.

Worship this evening will offer space for prayer, reflection, and remembrance amidst the holiday hustle and bustle. In this pandemic season of life, grief and loss are magnified and nearly universal, and we hope that these words and this worship experience will provide a space of calm, quiet, and healing.

To connect to the service using Zoom, please use the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84822432054?pwd=THFuOWZ0dWovWnJlZGRVaktzR2hCZz09>



3pm—Family Christmas Eve Service
including communion,
a children's sermon and favorite Christmas carols

7pm—Traditional Christmas Eve Service
including candle lighting, communion and brass

Both services will be live streamed on Zoom. To connect to either service, please use the link below:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83021224743?pwd=b1RmUS9LcXd1Z041K2JlUx5aUtRZz09#success>