



Christmas

OUR SAVIOR
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Second Sunday after Christmas
Sunday, January 3, 2021



OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH
745 Front Street S., Issaquah, WA 98027
425-392-4169

SERVICE OF THE WORD: CHRISTMAS

GATHERING: THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Go, Tell It On the Mountain—African American spiritual
Jiyoung Lee, Scott Hafso

WELCOME

Pastor Jim Kruse

GREETING

PM: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
the Maker of heaven and earth,
the Word made flesh,
the Lord and giver of life.
Today Christ is born: Alleluia, alleluia!
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

PM: Let us pray. Almighty God,

C: you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

CAROL

In the Bleak Midwinter

Marc Montague

Text: Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894; Music: Gustav Holst, 1874-1934

In the bleak mid-winter, frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow, snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter, long ago.

Heaven cannot hold him, nor earth sustain;
Heav'n and earth shall flee away when he comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter a stable place sufficed
The Lord God almighty, Jesus Christ.

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb;
If I were a wise man I would do my part;
Yet what I can I give Him – give my heart.

FIRST LESSON

Jeremiah 31: 7-14

⁷Thus says the Lord: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O Lord, your people, the remnant of Israel." ⁸See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. ⁹With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn.

¹⁰Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." ¹¹For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. ¹²They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. ¹³Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. ¹⁴I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty says the Lord.

AM: Word of God, word of life. C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND LESSON

Ephesians 1: 3-14

³Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. ⁵He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace ⁸that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight ⁹he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, ¹²so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. ¹³In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; ¹⁴this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory.

AM: Word of God, word of life. C: Thanks be to God.

Text: Marcus Prudentius, 348-413; Music: Plainsong, 13th cent.

Of the Father's love begotten ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega, he the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been, and that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore.

This is he whom seers in old time chanted of with one accord,
Whom the voices of the prophets promised in their faithful word;
Now he shines, the long-expected; let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.

Let the heights of heav'n adore him; angel hosts, his praises sing;
Pow'rs, dominions, bow before him and extol our God and King;
Let no tongue on earth be silent, ev'ry voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore.

THE GOSPEL

John 1:[1-9] 10-18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being ⁴in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

¹⁰He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. ¹²But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵(John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

PM: The Gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON*I Would Like to Elevate the Discussion*

Pastor Jim Kruse

One of the lasting symbols of the year that we have just completed will be a mask. This is one of mine. When 2020 began none of us had these small swatches of fabric in our wardrobe. And why would we? But now, today, we all have at least one of them, or access to a stash of disposable masks. I think I have 7, or maybe 8 of them. From the smallest to the largest, the youngest to the eldest, we know what they are and we know how to use them.

And yet, if someone were to write a history of the last few months, and how we got to

this place of being a mask-wearing, hand-washing, keep-your-distance kind of people, there would be a wide variety of tales to tell. Someone might tell a story of how confusing things were at first. Where did this disease come from and what were we supposed to do about it? Few people were certain. And masks were not that important at first. Someone else might tell the story of the fear that gripped the places of outbreak. People seemed to be getting gravely ill for no apparent reason. Health care systems were quickly overrun. When would it end? And then, of course, many will write the story of about widespread misinformation, some deliberate, some with good intentions in mind. They will write stories about people who thought it was just like the flu and other viral infections. And those who downplayed the ease of spread. Masks might make a difference, but maybe they won't. Both sides weighed in. Who knows? And story after story will be told about the politicizing of the coronavirus pandemic of 2020. You know the stories better than I do.

This transition from not having a mask, to not wanting a mask, to not knowing what to do with a mask, to not wanting to be told we have to wear a mask, to government and business requiring that masks be worn, has been fraught with fear and confusion and anger, misinformation, and political intrigue. Masks like this will show up on museums, and when they see them, children will ask their grandparents, "Now why did Great-grandma have to wear one of those all the time?" They will be told, but they won't believe it. They won't really understand.

If you can imagine what it will be like in 10 or 20 or 30 years from now, when the history of our times are being written, then you may be able to imagine what it was like for those who took up the task of writing about the events of the Bible. And especially about the birth and life of Jesus. We hear these stories today and we wonder, "did all of this really happen? And who was there to see it and tell it and get it right? And what did somebody make up for the sake of a good story?"

One of the things I have discovered over the years of offering Bible studies to adults is that it does not really matter what text we are studying at the moment, or even what fine point I may be trying to make about it, eventually someone will get around to asking, "Did that really happen or is it fiction?" Or someone else will say, "Did Jesus really say that or did later writers put those words in Jesus' mouth." And then a side discussion begins with earnest, each side speculating one way or the other. We will get sidetracked along these lines for a while. But almost always someone says, "I would like to elevate the discussion and talk about truth." Well, that is not really what they say, not in so many words. What they really say is, "Well I just think the important thing to remember is that Jesus loves us." Or they will say, "I just think it really means that God is a God of grace and forgives us." That is what they really say. But what I hear, and what everyone else in the room seems to hear is, "I would like to elevate the discussion and talk about truth."

We have heard many fanciful stories over the last couple of weeks, and for those who remember Epiphany on January 6th each year, you're are going to hear another one on Wednesday. They are stories about a virgin girl becoming pregnant by the Holy Spirit. They are stories about angels visiting this world with messages of a miraculous birth. They are stories about hard working shepherds seeing choirs in the sky. They are stories about ancient philosophers following stars in the heavens; guided to finding the baby who is God himself born into the world. These are the stories that people told to one another about Jesus for

years and years after he lived, after he was crucified on the cross, and after he was raised from the grave. And almost from the very first time they were told people began to question their authenticity. Is this fact, or is it fiction? What really happened? And what did somebody make up for the sake of a good story?

By the time John sits down to write his Gospel, more than/ a hundred years after the birth of Jesus, he has heard every one of these stories hundreds of times. He has heard every story and every argument for and against. He is tired of the confusion, tired of the distraction. And so he says, using the words that I just read as today's Gospel, "I would like to elevate the discussion and talk about truth. And here it is:"

"In the beginning, before anything and everything that ever existed, there were the Words of God, the very Thoughts of God. This was the dynamic, creative, powerful speaking of God that brought everything into being," John says. "He was life lifted from death, he was light lifted from darkness, he was the fullness of the very living God. And then one day this Word was enfleshed, wrapped in human form, and God in human form took up a space in our world. Most people did not get what had happened," John said, "because this is not what they were looking for. They were too busy trying to separating fact from fiction to be able to see the truth. But for those who were able to see it, HE was all that is glory, all that is grace, and all that is truth."

Even today we continue to struggle to understand what really happened, and what it means. The world still tells us that our God is more fiction than non. The world tells us that we are ordinary and insignificant creatures at best. And that there is nothing in our living or in our being that reminds us of our special place in the heart of God.

That is why it is so important that we elevate the discussion in order to tell each other again and again and again the truth about this Baby born in Bethlehem, and what it means to be baptized into his life, his death, and his resurrection from the dead.

It is enough to be at one with this frail human baby. You are not forgotten, even if the world tells you that you are alone. You are not insignificant, even if the world has not made a place for you. You are not unattractive, even if the media and advertisers raise up their own standard of beauty. You are a dear child of God, born not of blood, or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. Whether that makes sense to you or not, it does not matter. It is the truth.

My hope is that someday, someone, maybe a hundred years from now, will sit down to write the history of what happened in the world in the year 2020, and how we became a mask-wearing, hand-washing, keep-your-distance kind of people. And she will begin by saying, "I would like to elevate the discussion and talk about truth." And then she will say, in words more eloquent than mine, that the people of the 2020's did whatever they could to care for one another at a time of deep peril?

And that's the truth. Thanks be to God.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Brightest and Best

Lori Downey

Text: Reginald Huber, 1783-1826; Setting: Brent Maher, Kathy Mattea

Hail blessed morn, see the great Mediator
Down from the regions of glory descend.
Shepherds, go worship the babe in the manger.
Lo for a God the bright angels attend.

Brightest and best of sons of the morning,
Dawn on our darkness and lend us thine aid.
Star in the east, the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer was laid.

Cold on his cradle the dew drops are shining.
Low lies his bed with the beasts of the stall.
Angels adore him, in slumber reclining;
Wise men and shepherds before him do fall.

OFFERING

As you consider how your life has been sustained emotionally, physically and financially, during the challenging events of 2020, please take this opportunity to give your gratitude to God through your generous financial support of the ongoing ministries of Our Savior Lutheran Church.

OFFERING PRAYER

PM: Good and loving God, we rejoice in the birth of Jesus, who came among the poor to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts, let them be blessing for others. With all heaven and earth, we shout for joy at the coming of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and

weariness. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness especially Carol, Waverly Manner residents and staff, Les, Mayah, Gail, Judy, Jerry, Mary, Ron, Carol, JD, Marlene, Nancy, communities across the country, Dave, Guests of the Community Meals Program, Sonja, Nicole, Josee and Jeannie. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of the powerful and helpless, you clothe us with strength when our spirits are weak and weary. We continue to pray for those affected by COVID-19. Bring comfort to the families of those who have died; grant healing for those recovering; protect and sustain all care providers; guide those working to develop and distribute a vaccine; and sustain those who are facing financial uncertainty due to loss of income. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For what and for whom else do the people of God pray this morning?

[Here other intercessions may be offered.]

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith. With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

PM: Lord, remember us in your love as you teach us to pray:

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

BLESSING

PM: Having been justified by God's grace, you are now heirs of hope – a hope born in a manger. And with this hope, you have been blessed – a hope for all people. In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

POSTLUDE

Fanfare — Sharon Elergy Rogers

Jiyoung Lee

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Additional worship resources:

Reading: Psalm 147: 12-20

Suggested Hymn for Listening: *Bright and Glorious Is the Sky*

Text: Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig, 1783-1872; Music: Danish folk song

Serving in Worship:

Worship Leader:	Pastor Jim Kruse
Lector:	Kate Gagnon
Cantors:	Lori Downey, Marc Montague, Scott Hafso
Organist:	Jiyoung Lee
Pianist:	Scott Hafso
Videographer:	Leslie Waltzer
Video Editor:	Dave Carlson
Banner:	Elaine Stamm
Bulletin Cover:	Craig Gillin

Readings for next Sunday: Genesis 1:1-5; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11

Prayer is putting our faith into action. We invite you to include these people in your daily prayers. You can make prayer requests via email at office@oslcssaquah.org. All written requests will remain on this list for 4 weeks.

Sue Smeichel and her medical team for successful cancer surgery and recovery. (wife to Karen Hansen's cousin)

Roger Stanley healing, discernment for his medical team. (brother of Alice Lewis)

Carol Harbolt peace and healing. (Ray Harbolt)

Weatherly Inn residents and staff (Ray Harbolt)

Les Gagnon peace and healing. (Kate Gagnon)

Mayah healing. (Connie Fletcher)

Judy Shaffer comfort and peace of mind. (Sandy Aldworth)

Jerry Nack preparing for upcoming surgery for spinal stenosis. (Kate Gagnon)

Mary healing, wholeness, comfort and a clear sense that God is in control. (Marilyn Carlson)

Ron Gerde healing for recent medical issues. (Brother to Bob Gerde)

Carol Johnson ongoing medical issues, and mourning the recent loss of her husband & her brothers. (Mary Fricke)

JD Golick diagnosed with stage 3 stomach cancer, completed one cycle of chemotherapy. (nephew to Patty Gerde)

Marlene Pickering discernment in medical decisions to alleviate pain. (Mary Fricke)

Nancy Cumming peace as she awaits an opportunity to move into Timber Ridge. (Mary Fricke)

Safety and peace for communities being torn apart during these difficult times. (Karen Hansen)

Dave Carlson continued healing and following kidney transplant surgery.

Guests of the Community Meals Program safety, health and peace of mind. (Connie Fletcher)

Sonja 3 years old undergoing treatment for cancer. (granddaughter of Henrik & Patty Christopherson)

Nicole DeCamp healing and strength. (Ken DeCamp and Cheryl Leiter)

Josee Jordan peace of mind as she faces health challenges. (Dianne Tanner)

Jeannie Lindquist continued healing and strength.

Healing and peace of mind: Henrik & Patty Christopherson (Dianne Tanner); **Vern Lindquist**; **Marian James**; **Gregory** (nephew of Joanne Suttmeier); **Doug Patur**; **Katie Moeller**; **Margot Inman**; **Ken Acker** (son of Lucy Acker); **Marilyn**

Carlson; **Taufik Hidayut** (Ken Konigsmark); **Don Wilkinson** (husband of Gwynn Wilkinson); **Rebecca Thomas**; **Tanisha Foote** (Marilyn Carlson); **Dorothy Soland**; **Randi Strom**; **Jeanne Kuipers**; **John Pass**; **Florence Kinnune**; **Carol Harbolt**; **Sandy Aldworth**; **Jen Winslow**; **Larry Pruitt**.

Undergoing cancer treatment: Les Carlson (father of Dave Carlson); **Harold Mandt** (brother of Mary Ann Hult and Lorna Robertson); **Chris Howe** (brother of Mark Howe); **Peggy Scalise** (cousin of Mark Howe); **Eileen Letts** (cousin of Mark Howe); **Keith DeCamp** (brother of Ken DeCamp); **Barbara Jones** (mother of Ron Sordahl); **Doug McVety** (Helen Nychay); **Al Batt** (Connie Fletcher); **Larry Harbolt** (Ray Harbolt); **Gerald Welch** (Vern and Jeannie Lindquist); **Christy Williams** (Bill Bergsma); **Dana Mancini** (Jan Setterlund); **Greg Petersen** (Wes Collum); **Barry Donker** (Joan Parish); **Germaine Korum** (Lyle and Alice Lewis); **Kathryn Aitcheson** (Gerrie Hendrickson); **Yuko Takiguchi** (Teiko Soland); **Barb** (Janette Singley)

Living with cancer: Liz Kidd (Bob Beck); **Duane Jacobson**; **Mary Lewis** (sister-in-law of Lyle and Alice Lewis); **Mark Becker** (uncle of Paula Seeger); **Barbara Krogh Jarvis** (sister of Steve Krogh); **Suzanne Lewis** (daughter-in-law of Lyle & Alice Lewis); **Mira Bergsma**

Expectant Mothers: Alyssa Saavedra (Cheryl Neeb); **Shawna McIntyre** (Cheryl Neeb)

Mourning the death of loved ones: For peace and comfort during this time of grieving for the family and friends of: **Beverly** (sister of Ashley Saunders); **Gail** (sister of Sandy Aldworth); **Mike Golick** (brother-in-law to Patty Gerde); **Ray Kruckenberg** (uncle of Dianne Tanner); **Tom Wiese** (Sandy Aldworth); **Talton Johnson** (husband of Carol Johnson); **Jean Stanley** (sister-in-law to Alice Lewis); **Delores "Dee" Bakamus** (Dar Boni); **Marlene Braun** (sister to Cheryl Neeb); **Nikki** (niece to Doug & Dianne Tanner)

Members and friends serving in the military; fire & police departments, & emergency rooms: Mike special ops, unexpectedly called up. (nephew of Dave and Marilyn Carlson)

Global Missions and Missionaries: Alexandra, Miriam, and Kati, recipients of our Global Missions Peru Scholarships. Congregations in Chiclayo, Pe-