

Wisconsin Rapids Moravian Church

310 First Avenue South 715-423-0180 www.wrmoravian.org

“Sharing Christ, Serving People”

Sunday, January 3, 2021

2nd Sunday after Christmas

CALL TO WORSHIP – Psalm 147: 12-20

L: Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion!

C: For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you.

L: He grants peace within your borders; he fills you with the finest of wheat.

C: He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.

L: He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes.

C: He hurls down hail like crumbs— who can stand before his cold?

L: He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow.

C: He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel.

L: He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his ordinances.

C: Praise the Lord!

WELCOME & STEWARDSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

LIGHTING THE CHRIST CANDLE

BECHLER

Sing hallelujah, Christ doth live, our light forevermore;
The Prince of Peace all glory give, His blessed Name adore;
With kings of old, your homage pay to Him who in a manger lay;
With Judah's shepherds, bring again the angel's song to men.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE WITH PASTORAL PRAYER

With 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**

DRAWING OF 2021 WATCHWORDS

SCRIPTURE:

Jeremiah 31:7-14

⁷For thus 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.

HYMN

O come, O wisdom from on high, and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show, and teach us in her ways to go.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

O come, Desire of Nations, bind all peoples in one heart and mind;
bid envy, strife and quarrels cease; fill the whole world with heaven's peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Immanuel shall come to you, O Israel!

TEXT: Latin, 9th cent. Composite tr. TUNE: Gregorian Plain Song, Mode I. Arr. Thomas Helmore (1854)
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SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 1:3-10

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.

HYMN

No more let sin and sorrow grow, nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found, far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

TEXT: Isaac Watts (1719) TUNE: Arr. from George Frideric Handel (1742)
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OFFERTORY PRAYER with PRAYER OF SERVANTHOOD

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come. We give you thanks for your constant presence. Through seasons of constancy and change, you are with us, calling us out of ourselves into the world to serve others. Grant that we may be united in love for each other and for those we haven't yet met. Grant us wisdom, patience, and perseverance as we work through the details and challenges of the ministry you have placed before us. Continue, O Lord, to bless the work of our hands. Bless the work of our hands. Amen.

SCRIPTURE:

Ephesians 1:11-14

¹²As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

HYMN

Come, O long-expected Jesus, born to set your people free;
from our sins and fears release us; O, in you our rest shall be.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope to all the earth in part,
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.

SCRIPTURE:

John 1:1-9

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.

HYMN 464

Lord of all being, throned afar, your glory flames from sun and star;
center and soul of ev'ry sphere, yet to each loving heart how near!

Lord of all life, below, above, whose light is truth, whose warmth is love,
Before your ever-blazing throne we ask no luster of our own.

Grant us your truth, your freedom give, that hearts for you might solely live
till all your living altars claim one holy light, one heav'nly flame!

John 1:10-18

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.

LITURGY FOR CHRISTMAS

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

For he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high has broken upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,

To guide our feet into the way of peace.

For unto us a Child is born,

Unto us a Son is given.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Thanks be to God for this gift beyond words!

My eyes have seen your salvation,

Which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples.

TUNE: IN DULCI JUBILO

Dear Christian friends, rejoice, with heart, and soul, and voice;

hear the news that John did cry: "God to us is drawing nigh;

turn away from fear and sin, to let the Savior enter in." God is drawing nigh! God is drawing nigh!

TEXT: © W. Thomas Stapleton

Saving God, we confess to you our sinfulness. We are consumed with greed and with self, instead of loving you as we ought. Too often we are indifferent to those for whom this season is not a time of joy. You call us to the simple life, but we engage in extravagance, which directs our hearts away from you and from those in need.

Forgive us, and renew us, gracious Savior. Amen.

With Mary we exalt you, God our Redeemer:

**My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.**

**Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.**

His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

**He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.**

**He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his descendants forever.**

TUNE: ADESTE FIDELES (39 F)

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem!

Come and behold him, born the King of angels!

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

O sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation! O sing, all ye citizens of heav'n above!

Glory to God, all glory in the highest!

O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!

Glory be to you, Lord our God; you have chosen us in Jesus Christ, our Lord, before the founding of the world.

You have given us such love, Father, that we should be called the children of God!

You have blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

**You have rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of your
beloved Son.**

You have redeemed us through Jesus Christ, your Incarnate Son.

For the sake of the great love with which you love us, make us alive in Christ, our Lord.

Holy Child of Mary, Savior of the world,

Reveal yourself to us.

By your holy incarnation,

By your human birth,

By your pure and blameless childhood,

By your obedience and diligence,

By your humility, meekness, and patience,

By your extreme poverty,

By your griefs and sorrows,

By your prayers and tears,

By your having been despised and rejected,

By your cross and suffering,

By your death and burial,

By your triumphant resurrection and ascension,

Help us and save us.

For the poor, the abused, and the sick,

For prisoners and the homeless,

For victims of natural disaster and war,

For those who are in danger, misery, or distress,

For those who minister to human need in your name,

For all who share your good news,

For your whole church on earth,

We pray for your blessing, strength, and encouragement.

God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

May we all be transformed into the image of Christ from one degree of glory to another.

TUNE: CHRIST THE LORD

Christ the Lord, the Lord most glorious, now is born; O shout aloud!
We by him are made victorious; praise the Savior, hail our God!
Praise the Lord, God, our salvation, praise him who retrieved our loss;
sing, with awe and love's sensation, hallelujah! God with us!

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BENEDICTION

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WATCHWORD FOR THE WEEK

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

Ephesians 1:7

Caffeine or Community?

I took a walk the other day, planning to grab some coffee to sustain me through the afternoon. These days I wear a mask when I'm outside and practice social distancing in an effort to care for others and myself. It's a lot to manage all at once, especially when I want to stay grounded: clearing my thoughts and feeling my feet against the pavement. But nowadays it's hard to let go and just be, trying instead so that I don't get too close to anyone. Sometimes, I pretend that the distance doesn't affect me. Deep down, I know that it does.

As I wondered along the sidewalk, I was surprised to run into someone I hadn't seen for many months. A conversation ensued and needless to say, I lost track of the time. The coffee shop was closed when I finally arrived. The hours are different now and I couldn't remember. I walked back home in silence. No coffee. Bummer. But I was grateful. If I had really wanted to, I could have made it to the coffee shop on time, but I would have missed the chance to reconnect with someone else. And what is it that we really need to sustain us in these days? Caffeine or community?

The writer of John's Gospel reminds us to be on the lookout for human connection. The God of love appears in the flesh and blood and bones of life: love that makes a home and shelters us, love that lights the way for all people, love that shines in the lives and in the faces of those whom we meet along the street on an ordinary day. How many times am I in such a hurry that I'm not even paying attention?

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