

Sunday, December 13, 2015
Third Sunday of Advent



BETHESDA LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MALMO

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Church Secretary: Mary Kramer-Long & Mary Braun

Ministers: All Members of the Congregation

MISSION STATEMENT

We will LIVE and SERVE through FAITH

we will ACT with LOVE and KINDNESS

we will GIVE hope and SUPPORT to all.

Hearing Assistance is available during the service.

Please notify usher if you would like assistance

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INTRODUCTION

The presence of the Lord “in your midst” in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the Lord in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one “more powerful” than John, even with his winnowing fork in his hand, is good news—and cause for exultation—for us who are being saved. Great joy is the tone for the third Sunday of Advent.

CALL TO WORSHIP

“Go Tell It on the Mountain”

[Chorus]

Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere. Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born

- 1. While shepherds kept their watching, o'er silent flocks by night, behold throughout the heavens, there shown a holy light. [Chorus]*
- 2. The shepherds feared and trembled when lo above the earth, rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. [Chorus]*
- 3. Down in a lonely manger, the humble Christ was born; and God sent salvation that blessed Christmas morn. [Chorus]x2*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING HYMN:

“Away in a Manger”

ELW# 277

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, the Lord of Israel who comes to set us free, the mighty Savior who comes to show mercy, the Dawn from on high who guides us into peace.

Amen.

Let us come before God in confession.

Silence is kept for reflection.

To you, O God,
we lift up our souls. You know us through and through; we confess our sins to you. Remember not our sins; remember us with your steadfast love. Show us your ways; teach us your paths; and lead us in justice and truth, for the sake of your goodness in Jesus Christ our Savior.

Amen.

Sisters and brothers, come with joy and draw water from the well of salvation. Remember the gift of baptism: your sin is washed away in the name of † Jesus; you belong to Christ; you are anointed to serve. Stand up and raise your heads! The reign of God is near.

Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

PRAISE TEAM ANTHEM: “Bethlehem”

First Reading: Philippians 4:4-7

Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns, with the hope they will experience God’s joy and peace.

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6

In your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (Is. 12:6)

²Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid, for the LORD GOD is my strength and my might, and has become my salvation.

³**With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. R**

⁴And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the LORD, call on God's name; make known the deeds of the LORD among the nations; proclaim that this name is exalted.

⁵**Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be known in all the earth.**

⁶Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. **R**

Gospel: Luke 3:7-18

John the Baptist heralds the mighty one "who is coming." John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.

⁷John said 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 worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the ax is lying at 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 should we do?" ¹¹In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" ¹³He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." ¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

SERMON: “Peace Comes to our Hearts”

OFFERTORY SONG: “Silent Night”

ELW# 281

OFFERTORY PRAYER

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Emmanuel has come, is here, and is coming soon. Let us join in prayer for the church, the earth, and those who are in need, that all receive what God promises to give.

A brief silence.

For the church throughout the world, for bishops, pastors, and seminaries, for the courage to live out the challenges of our baptism, and for the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For the earth, for glaciers, for the protection of dormant vegetation and hibernating animals, and for wisdom in the use and care of the creatures and landscapes we live among, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For the nations of the world, for soldiers and police, for all who suffer political oppression, for our enemies, and especially for *(here places or situations in need of peace may be named)*, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For all those in need, for those who are sick or cold, injured or outcast, for victims of fraud or extortion, for all who will die today, and especially for . . . , let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

For this congregation, for joy in Christ, and for our community, for an increase in practices that truly enact justice and compassion, let us pray.

Have mercy, O God.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

THIS WEEK AT BETHESDA

December 14 – December 20

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| Sunday | 12/13 | Between Services | Quilt Sale |
| Monday | 12/14 | 9:00 am 1:00 pm 7:00 pm | Women's Devotions @ Beckers Double Deck Pinochle AA/Alanon |
| Tuesday | 12/15 | 10:00 -12:00 5:30 pm | Pastor Text Study Council Meeting |
| Wednesday | 12/16 | 8:00 - 12:00 8:30 am 9:30 am 5:45 pm 7:00 pm | WIC Bible Study Hardanger Cantata Practice Praise Team |
| Thursday | 12/17 | 8:00 am 10:00 am 12:30 pm | Romeos Poinsettia Setup Fun Timers |
| Friday | 12/18 | 10:00am | Bones |
| Saturday | 12/19 | 9:00am | Cantata Dress Rehearsal |
| Sunday | 12/20 | 9:00 am | Cantata (One Service) |

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ATTENDANCE REGISTRY Please sign and pass the attendance registry folders which you will find in the pew.

QUILT SALE today a quilt sale will be held between services. These quilts are at bargain prices! Be sure and pick one up... or two or three! They will be lovely gifts or one for your own home.

OFFERING ENVELOPES Please pick up your 2016 offering envelopes in the fellowship hall. Remember your financial tax statements will be ready by the end of January 2016.

WANTED for next year's bazaar – any deer antlers and grouse tail feathers. Please call Char Berg at 320-684-2102.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (continued)

DIRECTORY Please stop by the Fellowship Hall and pick up your new church directory. If information is incorrect, please write the changes on a piece of paper and put in the basket on the secretary's desk in the office. We will put any new updates in the monthly newsletter so you can correct your copies.

CHRISTMAS CARING & SHARING project will use part of our local benevolence dollars from the veggie stand and designated donations to give gas and food cards to needy families. If you know someone who needs help this Christmas please complete the forms and place in box in the entry by today, December 13.

POINSETTIAS Sign-up for Poinsettias plants in the Fellowship Hall. We still have the sign-up sheet available. Please help beautify our church for Christmas. The plants are \$15.00 each. Buy one in memory/honor of a loved one.

MISSION & EVANGELISM is EVERYONE'S JOB! You can help mission giving by taking an attractive calendar or planner and leaving a Cash Food Shelf Donation. AND/OR.....You can help spread the word and invite someone to join us here at Bethesda by taking another calendar with a list of Bethesda Services and events to a neighbor or friend. Calendars and Planners are available in Fellowship Hall or entry way. Thank you for your support.

HEIFER INTERNATIONAL There is a Christmas giving display in the Fellowship Hall for Heifer International. Pick up information and free pencil and/or check out the website on the bookmark: <http://www.heifer.org/>

CANTATA REHEARSAL – Saturday, December 19th at 9:00am

CANTATA Bethesda's Annual Christmas Cantata will be performed on Sunday, December 20th at 9:00am. Coffee, Cookies and Friendship follow the performance in the Fellowship Hall of the Church. Invite your friends and neighbors to enjoy this free concert put on by the Church Choir; visit with friends and neighbors, and enjoy the holiday season with music and friendship.

CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY SERVICES there will be two services on Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24, one at 3:30 pm and one at 5:00pm. On Friday, December 25, Christmas Day's Service of Holy Communion will be at 9:00am followed by a Ham Dinner.

WINTER WORSHIP SCHEDULE Only One Worship Service on Sundays in January, February & March 2015. It will be at 9:00am starting next Sunday, December 20th for the Cantata.