

WHAT LUTHERANS BELIEVE

THE BIBLE – We believe that EVERY word in the Bible is inspired by God, and therefore the whole Bible is the true, unalterable Word of God, clearly teaching the way of salvation. (2Ti. 3:15-17).

GOD – We believe that God is ONE (Dt. 6:4) and that He has revealed Himself in three distinct Persons (Mt. 3:13-17), the Father, our Creator and Preserver; the Son, Jesus, Who is both God and Man, and our only Saviour; the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts and enables us to live a God-pleasing life.

MAN – We believe that God created man with body and soul, in His image, but man of his own free will lost this image through sin. (Gn. 1:27; 2:7; 3.)

SIN – “Sin is the transgression of the Law.” (1Jn 3:4). There are two kinds of sin: original (inherited) sin (Ps. 51:5) and actual sin (sin in thought, word and deed) (Mt. 15:19). Man is subject to death and eternal damnation by reason of the guilt that attaches to sin.

REDEMPTION – We believe that God out of pure love and mercy redeemed mankind from sin through the all-sufficient sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus, and His resurrection shows that God was satisfied with the work of Christ. (Jn 3:16; 1Jn 2:2; Ro. 4:25).

FAITH – We believe that the sinner must personally receive the merits of Jesus for salvation and trust that, “Jesus died for me.” (Jn 17:3; Ja 1:21; Ps. 31:14).

THE CHURCH – We believe that the church, established by Christ is the whole number of believers in Christ, for only believers are members of the church. Jesus Christ is its one and only foundation (Ep. 2:19-22). The church is found wherever the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ’s institution.

SACRAMENTS – We believe that Christ instituted two sacraments, and when Baptism is administered to infants and adults, according to the command of Christ, God offers His grace and forgiveness of sins (Acts 22:16). In the Lord’s Supper communicants receive in, with and under the bread and wine also Christ’s body and blood. Believing communicants receive this for the forgiveness of sins (1Co. 11:24-25).

SECOND COMING OF CHRIST – We believe that Christ will return visibly to earth (Acts 1:11) on the Last Day (Mk. 13:32) to judge the world (Acts 10:42). The believers will go to heaven, to be with God forever (1Th. 4:13-18). The unbelievers will go to hell, eternally separated from God (Mt. 25:32, 46).

RESURRECTION – We believe that on the Last Day believers in Christ will rise from the dead, their souls reunited with their earthly bodies and glorified by Christ (Jn 14:19; 17:24).

Third Sunday in Advent

December 11, 2022

INTROIT

Psalm 71:14-18; Antiphon: Philippians 4:4

Rejoice in the Lord always;

again I will say, Rejoice.

I will hope continually

and will praise you yet more and more.

My mouth will tell of your righteous acts,

of your deeds of salvation all the day,

for their number is past my knowledge.

With the mighty deeds of the Lord GOD I will come;

I will remind them of your righteousness, yours alone.

O God, from my youth you have taught me,

and I still proclaim your wondrous deeds.

So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me,

until I proclaim your might to another generation,

your power to all those to come.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son

and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Rejoice in the Lord always;

again I will say, Rejoice.

COLLECT OF THE DAY

P *Lord Jesus Christ,*

we implore You to hear our prayers

and to lighten the darkness of our hearts

by Your gracious visitation;

for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and forever.

G *♪/Amen/♪*

GRADUAL

Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26 alt

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!

From the house of the Lord we bless you.

RESPONSE FOR PRAYERS

After each petition:

P *Lord, in Your mercy,*

G **hear our prayer.**

Isaiah 35:1-10 (ESV)

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus;

² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who have an anxious heart,

“Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God
will come with vengeance,
with the recompense of God.
He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

For waters break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;

in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ And a highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Way of Holiness;

the unclean shall not pass over it.

It shall belong to those who walk on the way;
even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;

they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return

and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain gladness and joy,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

James 5:7-11 (ESV)

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹ Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹ Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

Matthew 11:2-15 (ESV)

² Now when John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” ⁴ And Jesus

answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. ⁶ And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is he of whom it is written,

“ ‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face,

who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹² From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and the violent take it by force. ¹³ For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, ¹⁴ and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵ He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Isaiah 35:1–10

James 5:7–11

Matthew 11:2–15

The Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ Brings True Rejoicing, Even under the Cross

Sometimes life requires the astonishing patience of Job. Like him, we are to rejoice in the midst of affliction, be grounded in repentance under the cross of Christ, hope relentlessly in His resurrection, that we might see “*the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful*” (James 5:11). In the promise of the Gospel, therefore, “*be patient*” and “*establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand*” (James 5:7, 8). Like St. John, the Baptist, whatever your own kind of prison or suffering may be, call upon Jesus and receive the strength of His Word from those He sends to you. For as “*the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up,*” so is the good news of Jesus preached to you, also (Matt. 11:5). He comes and restores the fortunes of Zion, His holy Church, so that “*sorrow and sighing shall flee away*” (Is. 35:10).

Next Week’s Readings from God’s Word:

December 18: Fourth Sunday in Advent (Series A)

Isaiah 7:10-17; Psalm 24 (v.7); Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25