



In the Hands of the Refiner

The Jesse Tree - Promises and Fulfillment in Jesus Christ

"There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit." (Isaiah 11:1)

It is Advent—a time to reflect, pray, and worship the Christ who came, who comes, and who will come again. Imagine the world some two thousand years ago in the weeks before the birth of the Babe of Bethlehem. People were busy doing whatever it was that defined their lives at that moment. For some, it was struggling against hunger, fear, and desperation. For others, it was enjoying their wealth and ease. For yet others, it was simply dealing with the pressures of their lives. But for all, the weeks we call "Advent" were just days and nights lived in darkness.

And indeed, it is a dark world. God had created the world to live in union with Him. He had breathed life into the father of our race, Adam, a creature of dust. He had formed Eve from the side of Adam and had joined the two together and to Himself. How bright the world must have been as Eden lived in harmony with the Creator.

But darkness came. Those created and loved by God rebelled against Him, bringing a darkness that permeated all creation. Death had entered through sin, and as the children of Adam filled the world, they took with them the darkness of that dreadful day in Eden when sin and death entered the world.

It was a world of darkness cut off from the source of all light, the Creator. Yet a light was breaking into the world. A young girl carried in her virgin womb a Son. This daughter of Eve was about to give birth to the One who would be the light of the world. This infant would reverse forever the horror of humanity's fall into sin and death and darkness. This was the miracle of miracles: our human sister Mary became, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the mother of God, the bearer of the Savior of the world.

No human eye could perceive it that night. All that could be seen was a child. Yet this child would forever destroy the darkness, for He brought life into death, and His light was to be the light of the world.

Every force of Satan would seek to put that light out. Herod would attempt to destroy Him by killing every male infant. Scribes and Pharisees would seek to silence Him as He spoke words of life. Failing to silence Him, they would seek to kill Him. Some thirty-three years after the first Christmas, the Babe of Bethlehem would be nailed to a cross. But this is what He had come to do. The Advent story, including the culminating Christmas story, is about a baby who had been born to die—yet not just to die but to be placed in the utter darkness of a tomb and on Easter morning to burst forth from the tomb. When the child of Mary rose from the grave, the light that began at Bethlehem shone so brightly that no one can put it out.

Advent is the first season in the "Time of Christmas." The calendar of the Church begins with Advent (from Latin *adventus*, which means "coming into"), a four-week period of preparation before Christmas. The Savior's birth is second in importance only to the celebration of His resurrection.


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 Christ Lutheran
Church Duluth

 Christ Lutheran
Church Duluth

Website: clcduluth.org
President: Ouitdee Carson
V.P.: Carolyn Lofald
Treasurer: Sandy Carlson

Every Month:
Every Wed. at 6:30 PM
Bible Study

Mary Circle
First Thursday of each month
at 9:30 AM (Postponed until
further notice)

Esther Circle
First Thursday of each month
at 10:00 AM

Dorcas Circle
Second Tuesday of each
month at 1:00 PM (Postponed
until further notice)

Lutherans for Life
Second Sunday of each month
at 6:30 PM (Postponed until
further notice)

Council Meeting
Second Thursday of each
month at 6:30 PM



Christmas Eve

**Christmas Eve
Candlelight Services:**

*5 PM—Early Christmas Eve Service
(also Livestream on Facebook)*

*11 PM—Traditional Christmas Eve
Worship and Candlelight Service*

Esther Circle will meet on December 3 at 10 AM
to decorate the church.

Esther Circle will be collecting hats and
mittens for Piedmont Elementary School
until the end of December.

Let's fill the tree in the narthex with lots of
warm winter gear for the kids!



Happy Birthday!

*Sharon Super
December 5*

*Carol Johnson
December 24*

*Carol Miltich
December 28*

*Dick Kern
December 29*

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Traditionally, Advent encompasses a spiritual preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus Christ at Christmas. The Western Church sets the season of Advent as beginning on the fourth Sunday prior to Christmas Day, or the Sunday that falls closest to November 30, and lasting through the daytime services of December 24. Christmas begins with the evening services (Vigil) on December 24 and extends through the twelve days of Christmas. The Christmas octave (eight days) includes the Nativity on December 25; Feast of St. Stephen, the first Martyr, on December 26, the day after Christmas; the Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist, on December 27; the Feast of the Holy Innocents on December 28; and the Festival of the Circumcision and Name of Jesus on January 1.

This Advent, we gather in the name of Jesus and consider His great story anew. The Jesse Tree is filled with symbols telling the story of Jesus from creation to His second coming. The story of the Bible, Old and New Testaments alike, is the story of Jesus. He is the Seed of Jesse's tree. He is the Root of Jesse's tree. He is the Life of Jesse's tree. And He is the First fruit of Jesse's tree. As the Church will sing with the angels on Christmas Day, "To God on high be glory and peace to all the earth."

Christmas Blessings

Pastor Gary



Sunday services are still livestreamed on our Facebook page:

Christ Lutheran Church Duluth at 9:30 AM

You can also log onto our website clcduluth.org



Christ Lutheran Church Duluth



Christ Lutheran Church Duluth

The Meaning of the Advent Wreath

Advent specifically focuses on Christ's "arrival" or "coming," but Christ's coming manifests itself among us in three ways--past, present, and future. The readings which highlight Christ's coming in the past focus on the Old Testament prophecies of his incarnation at Bethlehem. The readings which highlight Christ's coming in the future focus on His "second coming" on the Last Day at the end of time. And the readings which highlight Christ's coming in the present focus on His ministry among us by means of the Holy Spirit through Word and Sacrament today.

The traditional use of Advent candles placed in a wreath, originated in eastern Germany even prior to the Reformation. As this tradition came down to us by the beginning of this century, it involved three purple candles and one pink candle. The purple candles matched the purple (or royal blue) paraments on the altar (purple for the royalty of the coming King). The pink candle was the third candle to be lit (not the fourth) on Gaudete Sunday, the Third Sunday of Advent. "Gaudete" means "Rejoice!" in Latin, which is taken from Philippians 4:4. ("Rejoice! . . . the Lord is near"). Hence a "pink" candle was used to signify "rejoicing." Also included is a white "Christ candle" in the middle to be lit during the 12 days of Christmas (December 25- January 5).

The Advent wreath is a Christian tradition that symbolizes the passage of the four weeks of Advent. It is a circular candle holder that typically holds five candles. During the season of Advent one candle on the wreath is lit each Sunday until all the candles, including the fifth candle, are lit on Christmas Day. Each candle represents an aspect of the spiritual preparation for the celebration of the birth of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Most Advent wreaths use three colors of candles – purple, pink, and white. However, some may use blue in place of the purple.



1st CANDLE – (purple) THE PROPHECY CANDLE or CANDLE OF HOPE

We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us. Our hope comes from God. "And again, Isaiah says, 'The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.' May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:12-13)

2nd CANDLE – (purple) THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF PREPARATION

God kept his promise of a Savior who would be born in Bethlehem. Preparation means to "get ready". Help us to be ready to welcome YOU, O GOD! "As is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: 'A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him. Every valley shall be filled in, every mountain and hill made low. The crooked roads shall become straight, the rough ways smooth. And all mankind will see God's salvation.' (Luke 3:4-6)



3rd CANDLE – (pink) THE SHEPHERD CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF JOY

The angels sang a message of JOY! "...and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.' When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.'" (Luke 2:7-15)



4th CANDLE – (purple) THE ANGEL CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF LOVE

The angels announced the good news of a Savior. "...I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10b-11). God sent his only Son to earth to save us, because he loves us! "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

(John 3:16-17)



5th CANDLE – (white) CHRIST CANDLE

The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins! His birth was for his death, his death was for our birth! "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29)

"Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, 'Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him.' In reply Jesus declared, 'I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.' 'How can a man be born when he is old?' Nicodemus asked. 'Surely he cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb to be born!' Jesus answered, 'I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.'" (John 3:1-8)



Dear CLC Family and Friends,

DELIGHT IN THE LORD AND FINISH WELL!

Have you noticed all the complaints directed at the year 2020? Me too! They have been on social media, in the news, between coworkers, family and friends...pretty much everywhere. And if you're at all like me, you may have been tempted to give in to the fear, confusion, disappointment, pandemic, and political outrage with grumbling. Too many times to count, I found myself scanning the internet for bad news so I could steel myself for the worst or for good news to set my mind at ease. Yes, it has been a year of struggle for all, with some bearing much greater burdens than others. As the year draws to a close, I wonder if our greatest challenge hasn't been our response to real and threatened trials. This is how God encourages us to respond:



“Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be perfect and complete, needing nothing.” (James 1:2-4 NLT)

We all know that joy and thanksgiving are natural, human responses to outcomes we hope for like blessings, good news, holidays, and success. But God is asking us to respond to outcomes we are against with joy, and the reason He asks is so we gain endurance leading to a complete, fulfilled life in Christ. Yet, everything in us fights to resist loss, loneliness, sickness, and disappointment; so how do we respond to trouble with joy?

“Delight yourself in the LORD, and He will give you the desires of your heart.” (Psalm 37:4 ESV)
This verse is first and foremost about how God aligns our heart's desires with His as we delight in Him, and delighting in Him looks like this:

Psalm 34: Looking to the LORD

Psalm 105: Remembering all His wondrous and mighty works

Psalm 63: Meditating on the LORD in the night watches

Psalm 130: Confessing our sins to the LORD and receiving His forgiveness

Psalm 4: Gathering together to worship Him

Psalm 51: Crying out to the LORD in prayer

Psalm 130 & 39: Waiting for the LORD and putting all our hope in Him

“Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10 NLT)

As 2020 ends and 2021 begins, I pray that you will receive grace and strength from our LORD to delight in Him, to fight for joy in Him, to courageously embrace every test to your faith, to endure in Him, and to win the race set before you. In the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

Excerpts taken from a video by John Piper on fighting for joy and finding delight in the LORD.
<https://youtu.be/ro4C9kANsnM>

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SPECIAL MUSIC IN DECEMBER

Calling all musicians and minstrels! Bless us with your talents this month for Wednesday Advent Services, Sunday Worship, and Christmas Eve!

DOES ANYONE NEED A RIDE TO ADVENT SERVICES?

I am available on Wednesdays to provide a ride to and from church. Just give me a call on my mobile number 320-815-1561, or call the church office 218-722-7537 to schedule a ride.

CLC FOOD SHARE - CHRISTMAS TURKEY OR HAM?

We will be distributing groceries to school families the fourth Wednesday of every month. Grocery packing is already done for December. Food share distribution is Wednesday 12/16/20 from 11:30am - 12:30pm. Consider the CLC Food Share 2021 for your year-end giving.

CONFIRMATION CLASS ONLINE WEDNESDAYS AT 4PM WITH PASTOR GARY!

CLC YOUTH BIBLE STUDY ONLINE WEDNESDAYS WITH SUE AT 5PM!

We're starting a new study on November 4th - Study of Romans! This study and the virtual hot chocolate will be rich. Invite a friend :)

*Pastor and I are planning a road-trip to Phoenix right after Christmas to visit our son, Laurent, and spend some time with our Arizona grandchildren. **Please pray for us:** for many opportunities to share the Good News of Jesus Christ on this trip, for good traveling weather, and for great joy as we go. Remember that we carry your hearts in ours where ever we are!*

Blessed Thanksgiving &
Merry Christmas to all!

Let's finish well in 2020,

Sue

320-815-1561

suedesha@gmail.com



*Thank
you!*

Dear CLC Family,

Your support, prayers, and continuing generosity are so appreciated.

Thank you for counting us worthy of your trust! We love you dearly and we carry your hearts in ours. Trust in the Lord and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct and guard your paths.

Blessings & Love,

Pastor Gary and Sue DeSha

December Mission of the Month

Fellowship of Christian Athletes



Fellowship of Christian Athletes focuses on serving local communities around the globe by engaging, equipping and empowering coaches and athletes to unite, inspire and change the world through the gospel.

OUR VISION: To see the world transformed by Jesus Christ through the influence of coaches and athletes.

OUR MISSION: To lead every coach and athlete into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ and His church.

OUR VALUES: Our relationships will demonstrate steadfast commitment to Jesus Christ and His Word through Integrity, Serving, Teamwork and Excellence.

- Engage (1 Thessalonians 2:8)

We engage relationally by connecting with individuals and through events in many different environments by building genuine trust, sharing our lives and sharing the gospel. We strive to connect with coaches and athletes where they are on their spiritual journey.

- Equip (Ephesians 4:12)

After cultivating relationships and once coaches and athletes come to faith in Christ, we want to equip them with Christ-centered training, events, resources and on-going support in what it means to be a follower of Christ, growing in God's Word and applying it to life.

- Empower (2 Timothy 2:2)

Once equipped, we empower faithful leaders who desire to use their time, talents and treasures to help other coaches and athletes experience the gospel, grow in their faith and share Him with others. We desire to develop disciples who make disciples, assisting them so that they can in turn engage, equip and empower others to know and grow in Christ and lead others to do the same.

You may make checks payable to Christ Lutheran Church. Thank you for your continued support in our mission "*To know Christ and to make Him known.*"

A Note About Offering Envelope Numbers:



Please be aware that your offering envelope number may change this year. Make sure to look for your name on the label and not the number you previously had. Thank you.

Financial Update

October 2020 Income \$9,147.90 YTD Income \$125,700.99

Monthly income was under expenses by \$2,451.75

October 2020 Expenses \$11,599.65 YTD Expenses \$153,741.27

YTD income under expenses by \$28,040.28

Adjusted YTD income (PPL): \$640.28 under expenses (PPL funds are now depleted)

October Mission: MN Adult & Teen Challenge—\$1,033.00

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:21

PLEASE PRAY FOR....

*Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.
James 5:14*

Our Pastor & the Leadership of the Church
CLC Lighthouse & CLC Clubhouse- kids & leaders
All of our students from pre-school to college
Mission of the Month: *Fellowship of Christian Athletes*
Our Country, Military & Police

The teachers and students at all schools
Persecuted Christians throughout the world
Piedmont Elementary
The steadfastness of our faith

THOSE WITH HEALTH NEEDS:

Vi Boder	Jane McLean	Ruth Peterson
Bob Johnson	Jean Sundstrom	Ruth Dahl
Mary Jenny	Katie Lund	Carol Schramm
Kathy Stevens	Susan Johnson	Florence Kubiak
Tom & Marlene Stauber	Judy Stocke	Evelyn Johnson
Diane Malander	Carol Johnson	Bryan Goeppinger
Dennis Peterson	Carol Sogard	Donna Swanson & Family
Mark Malander	Barb Hanson	Darlene Saaf
Don & Laviere Johnson	Brian MacDonald	Del Sandberg
Norma Johnson	Eli Miletich	

If there are any people who have been accidently overlooked, please contact the church office. We apologize for any oversights.

December Maintenance Report

Well, the month of November just flew by, dropping quite a few inches of snow our way too! A big “thank you” to Jim Carlson for always making sure the walks and entrances are shoveled. He is a blessing! Perrault has been out and removed some of the old siding and has measured and ordered replacement siding to fix the area where the old gas meter use to be. Hopefully that will be done soon us. Gary, our custodian, has been busy polishing the floors in fellowship hall. They look so shiny you can see yourself! He is also wiping down the pews after our services to disinfect them for us. Thankful he is so conscientious about our church and our health. We are still waiting for our furnace inspection, with the virus going around, many are short staffed and taking “no heat” issues first. Thankful our boilers are working well. Our heated slab is also working well and so is the heat tape on the roof over the front entry. Praise God! We had a hiccup with the water heater at the parsonage. Due to the wind and heavy snow the pipes were iced up so it could not vent properly. Thankful just a simple fix. Just a gentle reminder to everyone that you keep the snow clear from your gas meter and exhaust. We are still waiting for the window repairs to be completed there. Pastor and Sue have installed new window shades in the kitchen of the parsonage. Giving them some much needed privacy. They look so nice and shared they were a gift from them to our church. What a blessed gift! Praying everyone had a nice Thanksgiving – we have so much to be thankful for. May God grant us a beautiful and blessed season of Advent. Praying we will be able to celebrate our Savior’s birth at church this Christmas Eve!

In Christ,
Carolyn