

PEACE LUTHERAN CHURCH
CHRISTMAS 2 - REJOICE BELIEVERS!

Reverend John R. Hanson
January 2, 2022, 8:00 and 10:30 a.m.

PRELUDE

Janet Hanson, Musician

INTRODUCTION *From the beginning, by virtue of our baptism, we are called Christian. We were claimed, "Christ-ened," at the font. Bearing his name, we share the same Father and are invited to address him intimately: Abba! Jesus bears our sins in humble obedience to the will of the Father. Today we pray that the mind of Christ, whose name we bear, would be our own. It is a good way to begin, again, another year.*

WELCOME AND VERSE

A new day has dawned, a new year begun. Lord, call to us so we may hear your voice. The world turns to hopes and dreams of the future. Lord, keep us in your ways. We enter this new year with hope and excitement. Lord, remind us that you lead us. Guide us as we look to you, the author and giver of all life. Amen.
I bring you good news of great joy for all the people: To you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord.

HYMN

"For the Beauty of the Earth"

Green # 561

For the beauty of the earth, for the glory of the skies,
For the love which from our birth over and around us lies:

Christ, our Lord, to you we raise this our sacrifice of praise.

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above; for all gentle thoughts and mild:

CCLI Song # 43200 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION God is good. **All the time.**

GOSPEL: John 1:10–18

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to 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.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION All the time. **God is good!**

HYMN

"For the Beauty of the Earth"

Green # 561

For yourself, best gift divine to the world so freely giv'n;
For that great great love of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n:

Christ, our Lord, to you we raise this our sacrifice of praise.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

We gather on this New Year Day,

in the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit. Amen

Knowing there are no places to hide from God, let us bring our honest confession.

Lord, you come into the world and still the world does not know you. You are the true light, and you enlighten our path, but we stumble. You desire to make know to us the mystery of your will, yet we do our will and keep you a mystery. Save, O Lord, your people. Save us from the sins we know in our heart. Save us from the sins we hide. God of salvation, lead us back home. Amen.

Our God freely bestows on us a glorious grace in the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. In Christ we have redemption through his blood. Our sins are forgiven. We also obtain an inheritance, that setting our hope on Christ we might live, live for the praise of Christ's glory. To this purpose we are marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit. In the name of the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

WELCOME

SHARING OF THE PEACE

CHILDREN'S SERMON

"Then God Bless You!"

HYMN

"Joy to the World"

Green # 39

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let men their songs employ,
While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy,
Repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

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.

CCLI Song # 7002102 CCLI License # 1713417

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Your generosity is extravagant, Jesus; your grace and mercy so freely given, your love and presence so readily available, your Spirit and strength so reliable. We are grateful for all of these blessings that we enjoy and for the goodness they bring into our lives; we praise you for your Father's ever-advancing kingdom and the abundant life it offers. Amen.

READING: Jeremiah 31:7–14 *God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion, Israel will rejoice over God's gift of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.*

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.

READING: Ephesians 1:3–14 *In Jesus, all of God's plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God's children and have been promised eternal salvation.*

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.

HYMN

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

Green # 41

O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep, the silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels the great glad tidings tell;
Oh, come to us, abide with us, our Lord Immanuel!

CCLI Song # 27879 CCLI License # 1713417

SERMON - *"How can I keep from singing! Rejoice, creatures of our God and King, lift up your voice and with us sing, Alleluia!"*

HYMN

"Oh, Come, All Ye Faithful"

Green # 45

Oh, come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant! Oh, come ye, oh, come ye to Bethlehem;
Come and behold him born the king of angels;

***Oh, come, let us adore him, oh, come, let us adore him,
Oh, come, let us adore him, Christ the Lord!***

The highest, most holy, Light of light eternal, born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father now in flesh appearing!

Sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation, sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, in the highest:

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

BLESSING & PRAYER FOR COMMUNION

I will not offer unto the Lord that which costs me nothing. (2 Samuel 24:24)

God says, "Behold, I am making everything new!" In this new year, let us move forward with the confidence your name gives us, with a new song in our hearts and on our lips, with the new way before us, and with our eyes fixed on the horizon when Christ will return and make a new heaven and a new earth. Amen.

BENEDICTION

May God, the Almighty, bless us all, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

We have celebrated together that Jesus Christ came not only for Christians but to be known in every place on earth. For he is the Savior of all. May we come to know him better and then make him known to others, especially by the way we live.

Illuminate us with your power, O God, and fill our lives with your Spirit. Amen.

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Worship, as an action, continues to change.

Use this space to guide your thoughts as the Spirit may lead you.

Use this time to center your distractions in order to help activate your worship.

At the heart of this week's readings is a single, significant and challenging theme – that God has chosen people to be God's children, to whom God reveals God's self, and through whom God works to bring salvation to the entire universe. In Jeremiah God promises restoration for God's exiled people and offers a promise of grace and love even to those who would have been considered unclean or unacceptable to God in the past. In the Psalm, God's people are called to celebrate what God has done for God's chosen ones. In Ephesians, the wonderful blessing of salvation is proclaimed, with a specific reference to how we have been made God's children who have been shown God's plan and who have received the Spirit to empower us to participate in the plan. Finally, in John's prologue, the Word becomes flesh, reveals God to all people, but enables those who believe to become God's children. As we explore what this means, we will find that this week we are called to find comfort in God's choosing of us, but we are also called to recognize that God has also chosen those whom we would deem unacceptable, while calling all of us to participate together in bringing God's grace – God's choosing – to the entire cosmos. What can be more comforting and inspiring than to know that we live in a cosmos in which every fragment of creation proclaims that we – and the entire universe – are beloved?

In our neighborhoods, communities, and even our families, it is easy to fall into competition, suspicion, and self-interest. When times are tough, it is tempting to hoard and protect our resources from those around us for fear we won't have enough. It is tempting to become violent in our attempts to protect ourselves from those we perceive as a threat. And it is tempting to align ourselves only with interest groups of those who think, act, look, and believe as we do. But this is exactly the kind of behavior that perpetuates our suffering and brokenness and that keeps the world from healing. When we can learn to trust in the belovedness of ourselves and others, and when we can begin to reach out to make connections with those who are different from us, the world begins to change for us, and God's grace and glory is revealed. Perhaps we can explore this week who the people are to whom we are called to reach out, and with whom God seeks us to make new, healing connections, as we declare their belovedness.

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