



How Much is Enough?

JOY

3rd Sunday of Advent

*December 12, 2021*



Ascension Lutheran Church  
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## Welcome to Worship...

Welcome to all God's guests, including those who call themselves "members" of this church named Ascension Lutheran Church more than 50 years ago.

A special welcome to guests who are here for the first time or who call yourselves "visitors" among the people of this community. It is at God's invitation, through worship, the Holy Spirit calls each of us to come to a place of **community, communion** and **commitment**. Each of us brings a different lens to worship, and yet, in a worshiping community, these differences become celebrations of diversity.

**Children are always welcome in worship services;  
However, please know  
a nursery is provided for children under 4 years of age.**



### Introduction

*Christ's presence in our midst in the wonder of the holy supper is cause for singing. The nearness of the God in prayer, in every circumstance, is cause for rejoicing. The coming of one "more powerful" than John, even with a winnowing fork in 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.*

## How Much is Enough?— JOY

### Welcome to Worship

*P* As John baptized new converts, he invited them to live with “changed hearts and lives.”

When asked how to do that, his answers all point to making sure no one is cheated or left without the basic necessities of life, including the right to not be harassed.

A full life of joy, which the prophet Isaiah describes as an everflowing spring, is the birthright of all children of God. May we act to make it so.

*Cantors*

**Joy waits for us as we wait.  
Joy waits for us to sing.  
Joy waits for our amazement  
at the grace in everything.  
In this time of preparation  
for the work of co-creation,  
for the birthing of a world  
where wonder is restored.  
Joy is born in us once more!**

### Lighting of the Advent Wreath

*WA* Today we offer the Light of Joy to illumine the Door of Welcome.

May this light shine in our hearts, in our lives, and in our church.

May Joy awaken us to possibilities and lead us to greater hospitality.

There *IS* room in this Inn, a House for the Holy.

## Opening Song

**All**

Joy waits for us as we wait. Joy waits for us to sing. Joy waits for  
our a - maze - ment at the grace in ev - ery - thing. In this time of  
pre - par - a - tion for the work of co - cre - a - tion, for the birth - ing of a world where  
won - der is re - stored. Joy is born in us once more!

Amanda Udis-Kessler

## Sharing the Peace

*In our continued physical distancing out of love for the health of one another, we will share the peace of our risen Lord by "speaking" that peace through sign language.*

**P** Christ become Joy with you.

**All** And also with you.

## Confession and Forgiveness

**P** Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,  
who alone does wonders,  
who lifts up the lowly,  
who fills the hungry with good things.

**All** Amen.

**P** Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God for whom we wait,

**All** in the presence of one another,  
we confess our sin before you.  
We fail in believing that your good news is for us.  
We falter in our call to tend your creation.  
We find our sense of self in material wealth.  
We fear those different from ourselves.  
We forget that we are your children  
and turn away from your love.  
Forgive us, Blessed One,  
and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.

*P* God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you!  
Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ✝ your sins are forgiven.  
You are children of the Most High,  
inheritors of the eternal promise,  
and recipients of divine mercy.  
God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

**All Amen.**

### A Reading from Zephaniah, the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter

*The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.*

<sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter Zion; shout, O Israel!  
Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter Jerusalem!

<sup>15</sup> The LORD has taken away the judgments against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

<sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
Do not fear, O Zion; do not let your hands grow weak.

<sup>17</sup> The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a warrior who gives victory;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness, he will renew you in his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing <sup>18</sup> as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you, so that you will not bear reproach for it.

<sup>19</sup> I will deal with all your oppressors at that time.

And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,

and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

<sup>20</sup> At that time I will bring you home, at the time when I gather you; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes, says the LORD.

*Zephaniah 3:14-20*

L Word of God, Word of Joy.

**All Thanks be to God!**

### A Reading from Philippians, the 4<sup>th</sup> chapter

*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 that they will experience God's joy and peace.*

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

*Philippians 4:4-7*

L Word of God, Word of Life.

**All Thanks be to God!**

### Gospel Acclamation

*Please stand in body or spirit.*

♪ ♪ Emmanuel, Emmanuel, His name is called Emmanuel ♪ ♪  
God with us revealed in us. His name is called Emmanuel

CCLI Song # 12949 Bob McGee

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### Gospel Reading

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter.

**All Glory to you, O Lord.**

*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.*

<sup>7</sup> John 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?" <sup>8</sup> Bear 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. <sup>9</sup> Even 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."

<sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" <sup>11</sup> In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." <sup>12</sup> Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" <sup>13</sup> He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." <sup>14</sup> Soldiers 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."

<sup>15</sup> As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup> John 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. <sup>17</sup> His 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."

<sup>18</sup> So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

*Luke 3:7-18*

*P* The Gospel of our Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**

[You may be Seated](#)

Sermon

Pr. Debra Jimenez

# My Life is in You, Lord

Chorus

My life is in You Lord. My strength is in You Lord.  
My hope is in You Lord, in You it's in You.  
My life is in You Lord. My strength is in You Lord.  
My hope is in You Lord, in You it's in You. *(2nd time to ending)*

Verse

I will praise You with all of my life;  
I will praise You with all of my strength.  
With all of my life, With all of my strength,  
All of my hope is in You. *Chorus*

Ending

In You.

CCLI Song # 17315

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## Blessing of the Quilts *(see insert)*

You may be Seated

## Prayers of Intercession

*L* In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

Make of my heart a sta-ble, a house for the Ho-ly, a warm and stur-dy

place for Joy to live and grow.

*(each prayer petition ends with)*

*L:* Hear us, O God.

*All:* Your mercy is great.



*While we still will not physically pass the offering plates we will continue to have the plates available at the entrance to receive your offerings and will lift them up in thanksgiving before the throne of grace.*

### **A Story of Innkeeping**

Many imaginative tales have been spun about "The Inn" and the people who may have been involved in the story.

As we've already said, we know very little about the circumstances from the Bible.

Another theory is that it wasn't an inn at all but the downstairs of a house where the family animals were kept, under the top floor where the family lived.

This scenario suggests that each and every home can be a birthing place for more goodness in this world.

It suggests that *THIS* House of God, this church, might contain a surprising nook or cranny that could house a holy endeavor for bringing more joy to someone's life.

### **Offertory Prayer**

*P* God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people.

***All* Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.**

## The Great Thanksgiving and Words of Institution

*P* The Holy One be with you

**All And also with you.**

*P* Lift up your hearts

**All We lift them up to our God.**

*P* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

**All It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*P* It is right, and a good and joyful thing,  
always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Birthing God,  
creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in our mother's womb, house of the holy,  
growing us in your image.

Our hearts and lungs became a place of opening and welcoming,  
doors for the Spirit of Life that you breathed into us.

We have not always understood ourselves as sacred creation,  
a place for the dwelling of the Holy inside of us.

We have not always seen that in others.

When we turn away from each other and from you,  
your love remains steadfast.

You deliver us from the captivity of isolation and fear,  
make covenant to be our steadfast, indwelling God,  
and continue to speak to us through prophetic utterance,  
in the Spirit and through the people.

And so,

with your people on earth

and all the company of heaven

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

O Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly O Ho - ly God of  
 pow - er and might, Heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.  
 Ho - san - na in the high - est. Blessed is He  
 who comes in Your name Ho - san - na in the hi - est!

*P* In the midst of a time of despair, oppression, division, and fear,  
 your gestation in the house of a holy womb—  
 through an unlikely midwife of salvific power—  
 brought Jesus, the Christ, into this world.

His baptism, ministry, death, and resurrection  
 gave the blueprints for the building of church community,  
 and rejection of slavery to sin and death.

You made a new covenant with us  
 to be midwives, by water and the Spirit,  
 birthing more hope, more peace, more joy, more love in this world,  
 making more room in this house, at this table, for all.

In another house, on another night—  
 the night in which he gave himself up for us—  
 he took bread, gave thanks, broke the bread,  
 gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.  
 Do this in remembrance of me.”

*P* When the supper was over, he took the cup,  
gave thanks, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
poured out for you and for *ALL PEOPLE* for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,  
we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,  
in union with Christ’s offering for us,  
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

***All* Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

*P* Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,  
and on these gifts of bread and wine.  
Open our hearts in and through this act,  
stripping away any excuse or fearful hesitation,  
so that we will open our doors to the world  
as the body of Christ, redeemed by his love.

Through your Son Jesus Christ  
with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,  
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God,  
now and forever.

***All* Amen.**

## The Lord’s Prayer

*P* Let us approach the throne of grace as we pray as Jesus taught us:

***All* Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**All 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.**

## The Invitation

*P* Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

## Communion Songs

### Those Who See Light

*Verse 1*

Those who see light can walk in the dark.  
Those who see love can see God.  
Those who look up will discover God's face,  
those who look down will uncover God's path,  
those who perceive God is here with us now will see God's return.

*Verse 2*

Those who see light can walk in the dark.  
Those who see love can see God.  
Those who have witnessed the sun rise and set,  
those who have studied a flower unfold,  
those who have focused on land, sea, and sky have seen Jesus Christ.

*Verse 3*

Those who see light can walk in the dark.  
Those who see love can see God.  
Those who see good in each person they meet,  
those who look after their neighbors in need,  
those who believe God's now living in them will see God's return.

# Jesus, Name Above All Names

Verse 1

Jesus, name above all names, Beautiful Savior, glorious Lord  
Emmanuel God is with us, Blessed Redeemer, Living Word

Verse 2

Jesus, loving Shepherd, Vine of the branches, Son of God  
Prince of Peace, Wonderful Counselor,  
Lord of the universe, Light of the world

CCLI Song # 21291

Naida Hearn

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## Post Communion Blessing *and* Prayer

*P* The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you  
and keep you in his grace.

**All Amen**

*P* Most High God,  
you have come among us at this table.

**All By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word,  
sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all,  
through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. Amen.**

## *Stewardship of Life and Ministry Announcements*

### Closing Carol

Today's closing carol is "What Child is This" that invites "peasants and kings"  
to claim Christ as their own .

Chatterton Dix was not a clergy person like most of the hymn writers of the  
19th century. He was a businessman in England. He asks the question,

“Why lies he in such mean estate,” referring to the stable, and in the original second verse, answers by connecting the humble, wooden birth manger to the wood of the cross “borne” at his death:

**Why lies He in such mean estate,  
where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear: for sinners here  
the silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear, shall pierce him through;  
the cross be borne for me, for you  
Hail, hail, the Word made flesh,  
the babe, the son of Mary.**

True joy acknowledges the suffering of the world, and invites all people regardless of status to claim Christ’s grace and joy as salve for the soul.  
May we offer warm laps and soft lullabies to sooth a hurting world.

## Benediction

*Please stand in body or spirit.*

*P* May God’s Door of Welcome  
swing open in your heart and in your life.  
May Christ’s humble first dwelling  
remind you of the plenty you already know.  
And may the Spirit lead you into  
more possibility and hospitality than you can imagine,  
making room in The Inn for all.  
May it be so for you. ✝ May it be so for us.  
May it be so for this church.

**All Amen**

## Sending Song

# What Child Is This

- 1 What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?  
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet  
while shepherds watch are keeping?  
This, this is Christ the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing;  
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!
- 2 Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?  
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.  
Nails, spear shall pierce him through,  
the cross be borne for me, for you;  
hail, hail the Word made flesh, the babe, the son of Mary!
- 3 So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh;  
come, peasant, king, to own him.  
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.  
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;  
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!

Text: William C. Dix, 1837-1898 - Tune: Greensleeves  
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## Dismissal

*P* Go in peace. Christ is near

**All Thanks be to God.**

Readings for next Sunday,  
December 19th  
4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

<b>First Reading:</b>	Micah 5:2-5a
<b>Psalm:</b>	Luke 1:46b-55
<b>Second Reading:</b>	Hebrews 10:5-10
<b>Gospel:</b>	Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

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