

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Advent 3 - December 12, 2021

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

Hymn #3 - *“Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates”*

**Lift up your heads, you mighty gates!
Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation he will bring;
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise
Your joyful songs of praise.**

**The King is born in poverty,
His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness,
His scepter, pity in distress.
The end of all our woe he brings;
Therefore the earth is glad and sings.
To Christ the Savior raise
Your grateful hymns of praise.**

**How blest the land, the city blest,
Where Christ the ruler is confessed!
O peaceful hearts and happy homes
To whom this King in triumph comes!
The cloudless sun of joy is he
Who comes to set his people free.
To God the Spirit raise
Your happy shouts of praise.**

**Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple set apart**

**From earthly use for heaven's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sov'reign enter in
And new and nobler life begin.
To God alone be praise
For word and deed and grace!**

**Redeemer, come! I open wide
My heart to you; here, Lord, abide!
Oh, enter with your saving grace;
Show me your kind and friendly face.
Your Holy Spirit guide us on
Until our glorious goal is won.
Eternal praise and fame
We offer to your name.**

Confession of Sins:

P: Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

C: **Almighty God, our Maker and Redeemer, we poor sinners confess to You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You in our thoughts, words, and actions. Therefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace and forgiveness for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. O Lord, have mercy on us!**

P: Upon this your confession, I as a called servant of Christ and His Word announce to you the grace of God, and in the place of and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

First Lesson: Zephaniah 3:14-17

Sing out, daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, Israel! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart, you daughter of Jerusalem. The LORD has removed the judgment against you. He has turned back your enemy. Israel's king, the LORD, is in your midst! You no longer need to fear disaster. In that day Jerusalem will be told, "Do not be afraid, O Zion. Do not give up. The LORD your God is with you as a hero

who will save you. He takes great delight in you. He will quiet you with his love. He will rejoice over you with singing.” (EHV)

Psalm 130

Refrain: Remember your mercy, O Lord; remember your mercy and love.

**Out of the depths I cry to ‘you, O LORD;
O Lord, ‘hear my voice.**

**Let your ears be at’tentive
To my cry for ‘mercy.**

**If you, O LORD, kept a rec’ord of sins,
O Lord, ‘who could stand?**

**But with you there is for’givenness;
Therefore ‘you are feared.**

Refrain: Remember your mercy, O Lord; remember your mercy and love.

**I wait for the LORD and in his Word I ‘put my hope.
My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the ‘morning.**

**O Israel, put your hope ‘in the LORD,
For with the LORD is unfailing love and with him is full re’demption.**

**Glory be to the Father and ‘to the Son
And to the Holy ‘Spirit,
As it was in the be’ginning,
Is now, and will be forever. ‘Amen.**

Refrain: Remember your mercy, O Lord; remember your mercy and love.

Second Lesson: Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always! I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. (EHV)

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you. Alleluia.

Gospel: Luke 3:7-18

Do not be surprised when I tell you that you must be born from above. The wind blows where it pleases. You hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” “How can these things be?” asked Nicodemus. “You are the teacher of Israel,” Jesus answered, “and you do not know these things? Amen, Amen, I tell you: We speak what we know, and we testify about what we have seen. But you people do not accept our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven, except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten 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. The one who believes in him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” (EHV)

The Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Hymn #19 - "O Lord, How Shall I Meet You"

**O Lord, how shall I meet you,
How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you,
My Hope, my heart's Delight.
O Jesus, let your word be
A lamp to light my way,
To show me how to please you,
To guide me ev'ry day.**

**Love caused your incarnation;
Love brought you down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation
Procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling
That led you to embrace
In love, all love excelling,
Our lost and fallen race!**

**Rejoice, then, you sad-hearted,
Who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn o'er joys departed
And tremble at your doom.
Despair not; he is near you,
He's standing at the door
Who best can help and cheer you
And bids you weep no more.**

**Sin's debt, that fearful burden,
Let not your souls distress;
Your guilt the Lord will pardon
And cover by his grace.
He comes, for you procuring
The peace of sin forgiv'n,
His children thus securing
A heritage in heav'n.**

**He comes to judge the nations,
A terror to his foes,**

A light of consolations,
And blessed hope to those
Who love the Lord's appearing.
O glorious Sun, now come,
Send forth your beams most cheering,
And guide us safely home.

The Sermon: **Philippians 4:4-7**
 "Touched By The Savior"

Have you noticed **unusual** behavior from people recently? Maybe it's your **employer**, who's usually quite **stingy** about handing out **compliments**. All of a sudden he's **gushing** with appreciation. Or maybe it's a **co-worker** who usually comes into work wearing a **frown**, but the last few days she's been wearing a glowing **smile**. Perhaps it's a **family** member who hasn't been in touch with the rest of the family for **months**, and the other day they just called you up to **chat** for a while. Or maybe you've noticed that your **neighbors** are being more polite, and **friendlier** than usual. What's the **reason**? Why the change of **attitude**? It's probably because we're getting close to **Christmas**, and Christmas has a huge **effect** on the attitudes of people.

Sadly, we know that many of these positive attitudes won't **last**. Almost as quickly as the **stores** pull all the **Christmas** items off from their shelves, their **attitudes** will change too, and they'll return to the same old patterns that we **normally** see from them. That **happens** when people don't **understand** what Christmas is really all **about** - when they think that it's just about the pretty **lights** and **decorations**, and the gift **giving** and **receiving**. But we see a completely **different** attitude coming from people who look forward to Christmas with hearts of **faith** - who see the everlasting **love** which the LORD has showered on us through the Gift of His **Son**. The **birth** of Jesus, and the sure **hope** of His coming **again**, create an attitude in us that lasts all-year long. So this morning, let's take a look at the attitude which people have who **have** been **Touched By The Savior**. It **starts** with exceptional **happiness**. It **continues** with exceptional **gentleness**. And it **results** in a life which is **free** from **worry**, and **filled** with **prayer**.

Our text begins, "*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again, Rejoice.*" With these words, the Apostle Paul is clearly talking about a **joy** that **lasts** far **beyond** the holiday season. He's talking about a joy that is **always** present - a joy that lasts **forever**. Many people look for joy in things like **money** and **possessions**. Others think they'll find joy in personal **experiences** with their family and friends.

But what happens when the money is in **short supply**, or when the family and friends have to **leave**, or they don't **show up** at all? That kind of **joy** quickly **disappears**. Paul tells us to find **our** joy in the **Lord**. But unfortunately, many people **overlook** the **Lord** in their lives, and in doing so, they **miss out** on all **kinds** of wonderful blessings - **including** that **bundle** of joy which God gave us at **Christmas**, when He sent the Baby Jesus to us.

But you and I are **different**. We **treasure** those gifts from God. And at this time of year, we **especially** treasure the Gift which God gave to us at Christmas - a Gift which fills our hearts with **joy**. The way this special Gift from God is **wrapped** is particularly **interesting**. God **originally** wrapped this Gift in **swaddling** cloths. Then later on, when His Gift had paid for our **sins** on the **cross**, He wrapped Him in a **burial** cloth. Three days **later**, when His Gift **rose** from the dead, God wrapped Him in robes of **honor**, **glory**, and **majesty**. But the very **best** part - the part that brings us the **most joy** - is the way God has **wrapped us** in the Gift of His Son, so that **His birth** is **ours** - **His death** is **ours** - **His resurrection** is **ours** - and we are going to **heaven**.

This is the **exceptional happiness** we have because we have been **Touched By The Savior**. Even when we can't **laugh** because we're suffering through physical pain, or sickness, or heartbreak - we can **always rejoice** in the Lord. Our daily lives are **unaffected** by the changing circumstances all around us in the world, because in **Jesus** we have a **joy** that lasts **forever**.

But as our text **continues**, we also see an exceptional **gentleness** which comes to those who have been **Touched By The Savior**. We read, "*Let your **gentleness** be known to everyone. The Lord is **near**.*" Gentleness isn't really a **part** of us by nature. Human beings come into this world with **small, self-centered** hearts. Our **focus** is **inward** - zeroing in on the things which will bring **us** the most benefit. But Jesus **changes** that focus for us. Just think about the **example** Jesus set for us. He came here to the earth in great **humility**, and He remained **kind** and **gentle** throughout His life. He **helped** those who were **sick** or in **need**. He didn't **strike back** against those who put Him on **trial** and sentenced Him to **death**. He didn't even **complain** about His **intense suffering**, or about the **crucifixion** that loomed before Him. Instead, our Lord **willingly** carried all our sins to the cross, where His **blood** washed us **clean**.

Since we have been **Touched By The Savior**, and we know that He will be returning again **soon** to **judge** the world and to take His **believers** to our heavenly home, Jesus wants us to show that same kind of **patience** and **gentleness** toward

others. We can return **rudeness** with **courtesy** - we can turn the other cheek to those who fight **against** us - we can take opposition and strife in **stride** - and we can be **patient** and **forgiving** with the people around us, because our heavenly Father has been **patient** and **forgiving** with **us**. As John said in his first letter, "*We love because he **first** loved us.*"

The **final result** is that we will be blessed with a life which is **free** from **worry**, and **filled** with **prayer**. We know all about **worry**, because we have to **deal** with it pretty much **every day**. We worry because of **health** issues - we worry because of **financial** issues - we worry because of **job** issues - we worry because of **relationship** issues. And **because** we worry about **these** things and so many **more**, we lose **sleep**, we develop **ulcers**, and we become **depressed** - perhaps even to the point of a nervous **breakdown**.

Wouldn't it be **great** if we could just **get rid** of worry? If we follow the advice found in today's text, we **can**. Again, Paul tells us, "*Do **not** worry about **anything**, but in everything, by **prayer** and **petition**, with **thanksgiving**, let your requests be made known to **God**. And the **peace** of God, which **surpasses** all understanding, will **guard** your hearts and your minds **in Christ Jesus**.*"

The simple **solution** to **worry** is to take all of our troubles to **God** in **prayer**. He knows where we **are**, and He **sees** all of our circumstances. **Nothing** is too **great** or too **small** for Him to handle. He always **hears** our prayers, so we can present our prayers to God **boldly** and **confidently**. We can even **thank Him** in **advance**, because we know that the **help** which He will provide will always be **exactly** what we **need**. God has **proven** that to us by giving us His **Son** to be our **Savior** from sin.

Jesus has given us **peace** with God - peace which **surpasses** all understanding. The **world** just doesn't **understand** this peace, because it's only found in **Jesus**, God's eternal **Son**. Nevertheless, God's peace is **precious** to us, because it **assures** us of God's **love**. All the **changes** of life and unsettling **events** in the world can't snatch God's love **away** from us. So, with His **peace** dwelling in our hearts, **each** and **every** day we can bring all of our **needs** and **cares** to the **Lord** in **prayer**. And we can **thank** Him in those prayers too. We can **thank** Him that we have been **Touched By The Savior**, and for the **happiness** we enjoy, the **gentleness** we can share, and the **worry-free lives** that we are privileged to live.

These gifts of **happiness**, **gentleness**, and lives free from **worry** are **not just** for the seasons of Advent and Christmas. And they're not just for **us** either. **All** of

those things applied to the Apostle **Paul**, even as he was **imprisoned** in Rome. Yet, not only did Paul **rejoice**, but he urged the **Philippians** to rejoice right along **with** him. That's what **we** need to do. We need to take all of our **cares** and **worries** which continue to **torment** us, and drop them at the foot of the cross of our Savior. Our lives are far too short to even **consider** shortening them further by **worrying**. Those sins have been **paid** for, so we can take our cares and worries to the LORD in **prayer** - it's our Christian **privilege**. And then we can **rejoice** with Paul and the Philippians, and we can encourage **others** to rejoice along **with us**. We have been **Touched By The Savior** with His **forgiveness** and **love**, and that enables us to have exceptional **happiness** every day, exceptional **gentleness** toward everyone, and to live lives which are **free** from worry and filled with **prayer**, as we eagerly wait for our Lord to **return**. Amen.

Prayers:

Holy Redeemer, Prince of Peace, though You appeared here in **lowliness** to free us from our **sins**, and to establish **peace** between us and God, we have Your promise that You will come again in great **power** to **judge** all hearts, and to fill Your Church with eternal **glory**. We wait for Your **second** Advent with **eagerness** and **joy**. Come **quickly** to take us to the place in our Father's house, which You have **prepared** for **all** who love You. Help us to be prepared at **all times** for Your coming. Keep our hearts filled with true **contrition** and **faith**. Overcome our **doubts**, cast **sin** out of our lives, and keep us from embracing the **treasures** and sinful **pleasures** offered by the **world**. Fill us with **humility**, that we may **never** trust our **own** works to merit heaven, but rather depend on the robe of righteousness which You **earned** for us and **gave** to us. To this end, cause the Holy Spirit to work powerfully in us with His **grace**, through Your holy Word and Sacrament.

Lord Jesus, with the **bright** hope of Your coming, cast the **dark** shadows of sorrow and care out of our hearts. As we wait for Your **return**, help us in all our **needs**. Teach us all to do the work of **witnesses**, which You have given us the **privilege** to do. Because You are the **Light** of the Gentiles, **enlighten** the hearts of people everywhere with the **Gospel**, calling them to saving faith. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (sung to "Away in a Manger")

**Our Father in heaven all praise to Your name!
Your kingdom among us, Your will done the same**

**By mortals and angels. Come, Lord reign alone;
Oh, hear us and bless us from heaven's high throne.**

**The bread that we yearn for provide us each day;
As we forgive others, our sins take away;
In times of temptation, to lead us; be near.
From evil deliver Your children most dear.**

**For Yours is the kingdom, o'er all things You reign.
And Yours is the power; all things You maintain.
To You be the glory, resounding again
From all of creation, forever! Amen.**

Hymn #443 - *"Rejoice, My Heart, Be Glad and Sing"*

**Rejoice, my heart, be glad and sing;
A cheerful trust maintain,
For God, the source of ev'rything,
Your treasure shall remain.**

**Why spend the day in blank despair,
In restless thought the night?
On your Creator cast your care;
He makes your burdens light.**

**Did not his love and truth and pow'r
Guard ev'ry childhood day?
And did he not in threat'ning hour
Turn dreaded ills away?**

**He always will with patience chide;
His rod falls gently down,
And all your sins he casts aside
In ocean depths to drown.**

**His wisdom never plans in vain
Nor falters nor mistakes;
All that his counsels did ordain
A happy ending makes.**

**Upon your lips, then, lay your hand,
And trust his guiding love;
Then like a rock your peace shall stand
Here and in heav'n above.**

P: Lord, now let Your servant depart in peace, according to Your Word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel. 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.

The Blessing:

P: The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: **Amen.**

Hymn #467 - "May the Mind of Christ My Savior"

**May the mind of Christ my Savior
Live in me from day to day,
By his love and pow'r inspiring
All I do or say.**

**May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through his pow'r.**

**May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in ev'rything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.**

**May the love of Jesus fill me
As the waters fill the sea,
Him exalting, self abasing -
This is victory!**

**May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.**

**May his spirit live within me
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only him.**