

Welcome to Worship at
Trinity Lutheran Church, Osceola, WI
Advent 3 - December 13, 2020

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 #7 - "Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"

**Rejoice, rejoice, believers,
And let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing,
And darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising
And soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle;
At midnight comes the cry.**

**The watchers on the mountain
Proclaim the Bridegroom near;
Go forth, as he approaches,
With alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting;
The gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory;
The Bridegroom is at hand.**

**You saints, who here in patience
Your cross and suff'rings bore,
Shall live and reign forever
When sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory
The Lamb you shall behold;
In triumph lay before him
Your shining crowns of gold.**

**Arise, Desire of nations;
O Jesus, now appear,**

**The Hope and Expectation
Of ev'ry Christian here.
With hearts and hands uplifted
We plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption
That sets your people free.**

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: Isaiah 61:1-3, 10-11

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the afflicted. He sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release for those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance for our God, to comfort all who mourn, to provide for those who mourn in Zion, to give them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, a cloak of praise instead of a faint spirit, so that they will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord to display his beauty. I will rejoice greatly in the Lord. My soul will celebrate because of my God, for he has clothed me in garments of salvation. With a robe of righteousness he covered me, like a bridegroom who wears a beautiful headdress like a priest, and like a bride who adorns herself with her jewelry. For as the earth produces its growth, and as a garden causes what has been sown to sprout up, so God the Lord will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up in the presence of all the nations. (EHV)

Psalm 71:

Refrain: Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

**In you, O LORD, I have taken ‘refuge;
Let me never be ‘put to shame.**

**Rescue me and deliver me in your ‘righteousness;
Turn your ear to me and ‘save me.**

**Be my rock of refuge to which I can ‘always go;
For you are my rock and my ‘fortress.**

Refrain: Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

**Since my youth, O God, you have ‘taught me,
And to this day I declare your mar’velous deeds.**

**Even when I am ‘old and gray,
Do not forsake ‘me, O God.**

**Till I declare your power to the next gener’ation,
Your might to all who ‘are to come.**

**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: Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.

Second Lesson: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks. For this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not extinguish the Spirit. Do not treat prophecies with contempt. But test everything. Hold on to the good. Keep away from every kind of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it. (EHV)

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

Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28

There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. This is the testimony John gave when the Jews from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?" He confessed and did not deny. He confessed, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "Who are you then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" "No," he answered. Then they asked him, "Who are you? Tell us so we can give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' just as Isaiah the prophet said." They had been sent from the Pharisees. So they asked John, "Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Christ, or Elijah, or the Prophet?" "I baptize with water," John answered. "Among you stands one you do not know. He is the one coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie." These things happened in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. (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 #14 - "*Arise, O Christian People*"

**Arise, O Christian people!
Prepare yourselves today.
Prepare to greet the Savior,
Who takes your sins away.
To us by grace alone**

**The truth and light was given;
The promised Lord from heaven
To all the world is shown.**

**Prepare the way before him;
Prepare for him the best.
Cast out what would offend him,
This great, this heav'nly guest.
Make straight, make plain the way:
The lowly valleys raising,
The heights of pride abasing,
His path all even lay.**

**The humble heart and lowly
God raises up on high;
Beneath his feet in terror
The haughty soul shall lie.
The heart sincere and right,
That heeds God's invitation
And makes true preparation -
It is the Lord's delight.**

**Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus;
Turn not from me aside,
And help me to receive you
This blessed Adventtide.
From stall and manger low
Come now to dwell within me;
I'll sing your praises gladly
And forth your glory show.**

**The Sermon: Isaiah 61:10-11
 "Rejoice Greatly In The LORD"**

Snowfall - This year it started already back on October 16th - as early as I think I've ever seen it - and we received even more **after** that, although right **now** it's all gone. Today I'd like to ask you to think about how you will **feel** the morning after our first really **big** snowfall of the season. My guess is that your feelings will cover a pretty **broad** spectrum - ranging from **worried** (for those who have been through a serious winter **accident**), to **not too** thrilled (for those who

have to **remove** the snow from your driveways and sidewalks), all the way to **ecstatic** (for the children who love to **play** in the snow). My reason for asking the question in the first place, is simply to illustrate that different things bring **joy** to different people, for a **variety** of different reasons. And with that in mind, I'd like each of you to take just a few seconds right now, to think about the things which make **you** a **happy** person ... (pause) ...

What kind of things did you **think** of? If you're like **most** people, your first thoughts probably centered around your **physical** blessings - things like your **family** and **friends**, or your **home** and **car** and earthly **possessions**. Maybe you're happy because it wasn't so **busy** at work this past week; or because you finished all your **homework** and still had time left over to **play** your favorite video game. Maybe it was because your children **listened** and **behaved** especially well yesterday; or because you finally got some much-needed extra **sleep**; or because you ate your favorite **meal** on Wednesday night. Or maybe, you're happy today because **Christmas** is coming soon, with all the **multiple** joys that it brings. But I wonder how many of you thought of the fact that being in **church** makes you happy! That's one of the things which **King David** thought of. He said in Psalm 122, "*I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the **house** of the **LORD**.'*"

That's also the direction in which the Prophet **Isaiah** would point us. Our text says, "*I will rejoice **greatly** in the Lord,*" literally that means, "I will **rejoice** to **rejoice** in the LORD!" Interestingly enough, the two reasons which Isaiah lists for his rejoicing are both **spiritual**, and they both apply to **us**. So, as we consider our sermon text for this morning, let's **Rejoice Greatly In The LORD** - because He has clothed us with the garments of **salvation**, and He will faithfully **keep** all His **promises** to us.

I'm sure you've all heard the old saying, "**Clothes** make the **man**." It reminds me of the story of The Prince and the Pauper - a story about two boys who looked enough alike to be **identical twins**. One was the heir to his father's **throne**, while the other was a poor, starving **peasant**. Disney even did their own version of the story called Mickey and the Prince. At any rate, these two boys exchanged **positions** in life for a while, simply by exchanging **clothes**. So, at least in that case, "clothes really **did** make the man."

There are also cases **today** where "clothes make the man." For example, if you go in for a job interview, and you dress in your everyday "**grubbies**," you probably won't make a very good **impression** on the interviewer. And so, even though you may be a very hard **worker**, and even though you may in fact be the

best person for the job, you probably wouldn't **get** it. **First impressions** are sometimes very **important**, and often in those cases "clothes make the man."

Our text reminds us that **God** is concerned about our clothes **too**, but **not** in the ways which I just described. Rather, God wants us to be clothed with the garments of **salvation**, and with the robe of **righteousness**. These are some very **special** clothes. Where can you **find** a robe of righteousness? You would probably get some pretty strange **looks** if you walked into a department store in the Twin Cities, and told them you wanted to buy a robe of **righteousness**! Such a thing can't be bought in a department store, and you won't find it **online** either.

In fact, you can't even **make** one. People in the past have **tried**. Do you remember the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector? When the Pharisee prayed to God, he enumerated all the good things which **he** had **done** - like **tithing** of all his goods, and **fasting** more often than was necessary. He seemed to be **especially** thankful to God because he was **not** like the miserable **tax collector**, who was also praying in the Temple. That Pharisee felt confident that he had **made** an impressive robe of righteousness for himself out of his own **deeds**. But God was **not** impressed. In fact, God accepted the prayer of the **tax collector** instead of the prayer of the Pharisee. Why? Because that tax collector was very much **aware** of the fact that he was a **sinner**, and that he needed **help**. On the other hand, the **Pharisee** thought he could save **himself** through his own **works**.

God makes it clear to us that that is **not** possible. Man is born in **sin**, and the imagination of man's heart is **only** evil **all** the time. Paul said, "*I fail to do the good I want to do. Instead, the evil I do not want to do, that is what I keep doing.*" We **want** to do what is **right**, but all too often our Old Adam wins out, and we end up doing what is **wrong** instead. If we try to weave a robe of righteousness for **ourselves** out of our **own** works, we will end up with nothing but filthy **rags**!

And so, if we are ever going to **have** a robe of righteousness, it must come from somewhere **else**. Our text says, "*(God) has clothed me in garments of salvation' With a robe of righteousness he covered me.*" All the action is on **His** part. We do **nothing**. That's the way it always **has** been, and that's the way it always **will** be. **God** clothes us with the robe of righteousness - and that robe is **Christ**. What God actually does here, is to paint a rather vivid **picture** for us. When God puts **Christ** on us - like a **robe** - He **covers** our vile, sinful, human bodies with a perfect and holy garment. Then He no longer sees how **sinful** we are. Rather, He sees only the perfect **righteousness** of **Christ** - the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

That fact should mean a great deal to us, because if God had **not** given us that robe of righteousness, we would still be under His **wrath**. God **hates** sin, because it **destroys** the beauty of His creation, including even the **peak** of that creation - mankind. About mankind God says, *“Every one of them has **turned away**. Altogether they have become **rotten**. There is **no one** who does good. There is not even **one**.”* When man turns away from God and wallows around in the **mud** of sin, he gets covered with its **filth** and **grime**, and is truly **ugly** in God’s sight. But God has taken care of our needs. He has given a robe of **righteousness** - to **us**, and to **all** people. These garments of salvation which God has provided for us are truly beautiful. Isaiah compared them to the clothes which a bride and groom would wear on their **wedding** day. What could be more beautiful than that? But, think of all the **expense** which a bridal couple and their attendants go through in order to look **just right** for that wedding day. Quite often it amounts to **thousands** of dollars! Thank the LORD that while the garments of salvation are even **more** valuable, because they bring us back to **God** - nevertheless, they **cost** us **nothing**. God **gives** them to us. And that in itself is a tremendous reason to **Rejoice Greatly In The LORD**. But there’s also **another** reason.

Rejoice Greatly In The LORD because He will faithfully keep all His **promises** to us. It’s difficult to find a **“sure thing”** in this world. Just about the time we figure some football team, or some politician can’t **lose** - what happens? They turn around and lose **miserably**! Our world is full of **changes** and **surprises** - and they’re not always **pleasant** ones either. But our **God** is a **sure thing**. He doesn’t keep any **tricks** up His sleeve, but rather, He’s always **honest** and **faithful** in dealing with us. Isaiah compares God’s faithfulness with the **soil** of the earth. He says, *“As the **earth** produces its **growth**, and as a **garden** causes what has been sown to **sprout up**, so God the **Lord** will cause **righteousness** and **praise** to sprout up in the presence of all the nations.”*

Isn’t it interesting that Isaiah chose the one portion of the growth process which doesn’t **change**, to compare with our unchangeable **God**? There may be many factors which will **prevent** a seed from sprouting - things like faulty **seed**, or a lack of **sunshine**, or a lack of (or overabundance of) **rain**; or even an overabundance of **weeds** due to a lack of **care**. But the soil itself does **not fail** to do its part. Likewise, our **God** is continually **faithful**. He has **proven** His faithfulness over and over again in **carrying out** His promises. And that includes the promise of **Advent** - the promise that He would send His own dear **Son** into the world, to **redeem** all mankind from their lost condition.

We currently have numerous reasons to **Rejoice Greatly In The LORD**. So, let's **rejoice** gladly and willingly. Let's **rejoice** to **rejoice** as Isaiah did, because we too have received **Jesus Christ** as our perfect robe of **righteousness** - a beautiful and certain **salvation** which will not fade away. And in addition, God faithfully continues to sow His **Word** among us, so that righteousness and praise will continue to **spring up** and **grow** among all the nations. May we **use** that Word of God as **faithfully** as God sends it, and thus be truly fruitful laborers in His vineyard. Amen.

Prayers:

Holy Redeemer, Prince of Peace, although 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 carry out 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 #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.**

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 #21 - "*Hosanna to the Coming Lord*"

**Hosanna to the coming Lord!
Hosanna to the incarnate Word!
To Christ, Creator, Savior, King
Let earth, let heav'n hosanna sing.**

**O Savior, with protecting care
Abide in this your house of prayer,
Where we your parting promise claim,
Assembled in your sacred name.**

**O Advent King, our sins forgive;
Come in our lives and hearts to live,**

**And let our humble souls become
A temple worthy of your name.**

**Then in the last and dreadful day,
When earth and heav'n shall melt away,
Your flock, redeemed from sinful stain,
Shall swell the sound of praise again.**