

**YOU ALSO
ARE AMONG THOSE GENTILES
WHO ARE CALLED TO BELONG TO JESUS CHRIST!**



BEREA LUTHERAN CHURCH

BRINGING GOD TO PEOPLE AND PEOPLE TO GOD

CHRIST ACADEMY 10:15 A.M. ✦ WORSHIP CELEBRATION 11:30 A.M.

Worship Center: 2999 Belair Rd. ✦ Baltimore, Maryland 21213 ✦ 410-732-5160
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The Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 18, 2022

THE CALL TO WORSHIP

We are called away from all distractions to focus on God

Leader: Church, I greet you in the very precious name of Jesus!

People: Soon and very soon, we're going to see the King!

Leader: Amen. Today in this final Sunday of the Advent season. Christmas is just a week away! No doubt, our hearts and minds are focused on guests and gift-giving and all the other details of our preparation for that BIG day. But we gather today to remember the true focus of our Christmas celebration and, hopefully, the true focus of each day of our lives: the Lord Jesus!

He came to earth in a manger over 2000 years ago. He comes to us TODAY in His Word and in our communion meal. And He will come again at God's own appointed day and time! Today we gather in person and online so that the Holy Spirit of God can minister to our minds, our hearts and our spirits to PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE LORD! Brothers and sisters in Christ, let's sing our processional hymn with all our hearts as we prepare to receive Him!

Processional Hymn: LIFT UP YOUR HEADS

Lutheran Worship #23

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.
HE BRINGS SALVATION DOWN TO EARTH! GREET HIM WITH SHOUTS OF HOLY MIRTH!
OUR HIGHEST PRAISE WE BRING, OUR GOD CREATOR KING!

THE RIGHTEOUS KING IS BRINGING PEACE; HE COMES THE PRISONERS TO RELEASE.
HIS ROYAL CROWN IS SELF-SACRIFICE; ITS JEWEL IS MERCY WITHOUT PRICE,
HE BRINGS OUR SORROWS TO AN END. SHOUT OUT YOUR JOY TO GOD, OUR FRIEND!
OUR HIGHEST PRAISE WE BRING TO GOD, REDEEMER KING!

O HAPPY TOWN, O BLESSED LAND THAT KEEPS OUR GRACIOUS KING'S COMMAND,
AND BLESS THE HEART WHEN HE COMES IN HIS HOLY REIGN THERE TO BEGIN.
HIS ENTRANCE IS THE DAWN OF BLISS! HE FILLS OUR LIVES AND MAKES THEM HIS!
OUR HIGHEST PRAISE WE BRING, GOD, COMFORTER AND KING.

CHRIST JESUS, LORD AND SAVIOR COME; I OPEN WIDE MY HEART, YOUR HOME!
OH, ENTER WITH YOUR RADIANT GRACE. ON MY LIFE'S PATTERN, SHINE YOUR FACE;
YOUR HOLY SPIRIT GUIDE US ON UNTIL OUR GLORIOUS GOAL IS WON!
OUR GOD WE PRAISE YOUR NAME, FOREVERMORE THE SAME!!

INVOCATION

Recognizing and Celebrating God's Presence Among Us

Leader: Church, you are in the presence of the Lord God Almighty! Our God is in his holy temple—not just in a building but in us!

People: GLORIFY THE LORD WITH ME. LET US EXALT HIS NAME TOGETHER!

Leader: The Lord is in his holy temple! Wherever you are, you have God's undivided attention!

People: LORD, KEEP THE EYES OF MY HEART FOCUSED ON YOU ALONE!

Leader: Our God is in his holy temple! He is eager to be in sacred fellowship with you!

People: LORD, FILL MY HEART WITH SINCERE PRAISE.

Leader: The Lord is in his holy temple! He is in us and with us!

People: LORD, LET ME HEAR YOU SPEAKING THROUGH EACH AND EVERY MESSENGER.

Leader: We ask it in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Opening hymn: HARK THE GLAD SOUND

The Lutheran Hymnal 66

HARK THE GLAD SOUND! THE SAVIOR COMES, THE SAVIOR PROMISED LONG;
LET EV'RY HEART PREPARE A THRONE AND EV'RY VOICE A SONG.

OUR GLAD HOSANNAS, PRINCE OF PEACE, YOUR WELCOME SHALL PROCLAIM
AND HEAVEN'S ETERNAL ARCHES RING WITH YOUR BELOVED NAME.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

We own up to our disobedience and seek and receive God's forgiveness

Leader: Have YOU ever wondered why Jesus, the Son of God, would leave the perfection and tranquility of heaven to endure the chaos of our sinful earth, and suffer and die for ordinary people like you and me?

The answer is strange but simple. Our almighty wise and just God requires that the person who refuses to obey Him, who corrupts the

earth with greed and rebellion, must die. That doesn't mean an instant physical death, but something much worse: being cut off from God's love and protection forever. Eternal damnation instead of eternal life!

But that holy and just God is also our loving and merciful Father. He chose to save us from ourselves and came Himself to and die in our stead. He became the once and for all perfect sacrifice. Friends in Christ, thanks to Jesus, we can confess our sins with confidence that we will receive God's complete and loving forgiveness. So let's prepare to receive that precious gift that Jesus bought for us on the cross with the words of our hymn of confession.

Hymn of Confession: CREATOR OF THE STARS OF NIGHT Lutheran Service Book 351

CREATOR OF THE STARS OF NIGHT, YOUR PEOPLE'S EVERLASTING LIGHT;
O CHRIST, REDEEMER, SAVE US ALL AND HEAR YOUR SERVANTS WHEN THEY CALL.
YOU, GRIEVING THAT THE ANCIENT CURSE SHOULD DOOM TO DEATH A UNIVERSE
BECAME THE HEALING, FULL OF GRACE, TO CURE AND SAVE OUR RUINED RACE!
O YOU, WHOSE COMING IS WITH DREAD, TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD;
PRESERVE US FROM THE ANCIENT FOE WHILE STILL WE DWELL ON EARTH BELOW.
TO GOD THE FATHER AND THE SON AND HOLY SPIRIT, THREE IN ONE,
PRAISE, HONOR, MIGHT AND GLORY BE FROM AGE TO AGE ETERNALLY!

Leader: Church, God's Word calls us to examine our lives in the light of his truth and to recognize and repent of our failures. He instructs us to humbly confess our sins to Him and to one another. Therefore, I ask you, in the presence of God who searches the heart: do you confess that you have sinned against God and deserve his anger and punishment?

People: I DO. IF I SAY I'M NOT A SINNER, I'M DECEIVING MYSELF AND THE TRUTH IS NOT IN ME.

Leader: Do you sincerely repent of your sins of thought, word and deed?

People: I DO SINCERELY REPENT.

Leader: Do you cling to God's promise of forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus Christ?

People: YES. GOD PROMISED THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN JESUS AS SAVIOR AND LORD WILL NOT PERISH BUT WILL HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. AND I BELIEVE GOD'S PROMISE!

Receiving Our Lord's Forgiveness

Leader: People of God, our heavenly Father reminds us once again that Jesus paid it all! So "Sing! Shout aloud, Church! Be glad and rejoice with all your heart! The LORD has taken away your punishment! He has defeated your enemy! Saints of God, I announce to you that your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the Son ✠ and of the Holy Spirit. The LORD is with you! Don't ever be afraid! God takes great delight in you. He rejoices over you with singing! And He will quiet you with his love!

People: THANK YOU, LORD GOD! THE SAVIOR WHO DIED FOR US NOW LIVES US! HELP US, HOLY SPIRIT TO LIVE FOR HIM!

Hymn of Celebration: CHRIST THE LIFE OF ALL THE LIVING

CHRIST THE LIFE OF ALL THE LIVING, CHRIST THE DEATH OF DEATH, OUR FOE;
CHRIST, YOURSELF FOR ME ONCE GIVING TO THE DARKEST DEPTHS OF WOE:
THROUGH YOUR SUFFERING, DEATH AND MERIT, LIFE ETERNAL I INHERIT.
THOUSAND, THOUSAND THANKS ARE DUE, DEAREST JESUS UNTO YOU!

YOU HAVE SUFFERED GREAT AFFLICTION AND HAVE BORNE IT PATIENTLY,
EVEN DEATH BY CRUCIFIXION, FULLY TO ATONE FOR ME;
FOR YOU CHOSE TO BE TORMENTED THAT MY DOOM SHOULD BE PREVENTED.
THOUSAND, THOUSAND, THANKS ARE DUE, DEAREST JESUS UNTO YOU!

ALL YOU DID TO BRING MY PARDON; FOR YOUR SORROWS DEEP AND SORE,
FOR YOUR ANGUISH IN THE GARDEN, I WILL THANK YOU EVERMORE!
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GROANING, SIGHING, FOR YOUR BLEEDING AND YOUR DYING,
FOR THAT LAST TRIUMPHANT CRY, I WILL PRAISE YOU, LORD, ON HIGH!

Sharing Congregation News & Announcements

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD
We hear and respond to the Word of God

Leader: What the gospel-writer, John, said about his book is true of all of the Scriptures. John 20:31 says "...These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. Hear now the precious and powerful Word of God.

The First Lesson: ISAIAH 7:10-17

The Second Lesson: ROMANS 1:1-7

God's Word in Song : I BELONG TO YOU

The Temple Singers

The Gospel Lesson: MATTHEW 1:18-25

The Sermon: TWO MIRACLES

Rev. Stephen Funck, Guest Proclaimer

OUR PRAYERS

Sharing with our Heavenly Father our thanks, our needs, and our desires

Leader: Listening to God's Word helps us to see how much we need Him. His ways are not our ways. His thoughts are not our thoughts. But He can transform our hearts and minds to become more and more like His. And He gives us His Holy Spirit through whom we can do all things! So let us seek God's strength, guidance and encouragement through the gift of prayer. Lord, God...

People: HEAVENLY FATHER, MAKER OF HEAVEN AND EARTH...

Leader: You are the most powerful being in the universe. You alone are God. It is You who created us and loves us and provides for us. And we were made in your image! Forgive us when we look to other things and other people to give us the joy and peace which only You can give. Have mercy on us and correct us when we give others the credit for what You have done!

People: YOU CAME DIRECTLY INTO OUR LIVES AS THE MAN JESUS. YOU WERE CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY AND SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE. YOU WERE CRUCIFIED, DIED AND WERE BURIED. YOU DESCENDED INTO HELL!

Leader: Lord, You came to show us the beauty and the wisdom and the security of the kingdom of heaven. You showed us the selfless and sacrificial and compassionate love of God. You showed us a love that goes a lot further than turning the other cheek and You call us to do likewise.

People: ON THE THIRD DAY, YOU ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND RETURNED TO HEAVEN. YOU SIT EVEN NOW AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER.

Leader: Lord, You defeated death! You demonstrated your power and holiness for the entire world to see. Help us to see and celebrate your victory and your living presence in our lives each day.

People: YOU HAVE GIVEN US YOUR HOLY SPIRIT. YOU HAVE CALLED US, THE HOLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH, INTO BEING. YOU HAVE MADE US A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY OF SAINTS. YOU CONTINUE TO FORGIVE OUR SINS. WE KNOW THAT YOU WILL COME AGAIN TO JUDGE---BOTH THE LIVING AND THE DEAD!

Leader: Lord the days are evil and so much is at stake. There are millions of people who do not know You as Lord. Help us to see the urgency of the mission that You have given us: to lift You up, to show your love to friend and enemy alike. Deliver us from the temptation to live for our own pleasure rather than to serve You. Help us to love, appreciate and encourage each other, each as vital parts of your body, the Church. And as your ambassadors, bless and compel us to care about the plight of *all* people all over the world. Remind us that the entire universe is the mission field to which You have called us.

People: OUR LIVES WITH YOU ARE EVERLASTING.

Leader: Lord, You are with us on earth and will continue to be with us in heaven; and through it all, You never change. You are always compassionate, always generous, always understanding. In our fellowship with you, heaven has already begun. Help us to be like You---one act at a time.

ALL: IN JESUS NAME, WE PRAY. AMEN.

OUR OFFERINGS

Returning to God with thanksgiving a small portion of what He's given to us

Leader: As we come with our offerings, we joyfully respond to God's unmatched gift of a Savior and friend with gifts of our own. We can never pay God back nor should we try; but we can love God back by gratefully offering the God who needs nothing what His heart eagerly desires: the meager offering of our lives, our talents and our loving obedience. So we ask ALL in the sanctuary to come. Even if you are tired or weary, weak or ill, you are still a very precious offering to God. Come now and present yourselves and your offerings to the Most High God.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

The Communion Hymn: NOW BEHOLD THE LAMB

This Far By Faith #128

NOW BEHOLD THE LAMB, THE PRECIOUS LAMB OF GOD.

BORN INTO SIN THAT I MAY LIVE AGAIN: THE PRECIOUS LAMB OF GOD.

HOLY IS THE LAMB, THE PRECIOUS LAMB OF GOD.

WHY YOU LOVE ME SO, LORD, I SHALL NEVER KNOW; THE PRECIOUS LAMB OF GOD.

THANK YOU FOR THE LAMB, THE PRECIOUS LAMB OF GOD.

BECAUSE OF YOUR GRACE, I CAN FINISH THIS RACE; THE PRECIOUS LAMB OF GOD.

Leader: People of God, our Savior Jesus comes to us in this sacred communion meal. Communion means "together with". In this special meal, Jesus strengthens and encourages us to remember that we are together with him and in fellowship with one another. He instructed his first disciples, and he instructs us now to know that he actually comes to us in the bread and wine of the communion meal and blesses us with his healing forgiveness. Saints of God, do you remember that very special communion meal?

People: YES! JUST BEFORE HE WAS ARRESTED, HE ATE A MEAL WITH HIS DISCIPLES. DURING THE MEAL HE TOOK BREAD, GAVE THANKS AND OFFERED IT TO HIS DISCIPLES SAYING:

Leader: "This is my body given for you. Do this in remembrance of me".

People: AFTER HE HAD EATEN, HE TOOK THE CUP OF WINE, GAVE THANKS AND OFFERED IT TO HIS DISCIPLES, SAYING:

Leader: "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Saints, the Holy Scriptures says:

People: "IS NOT THE CUP OF THANKSGIVING FOR WHICH WE GIVE THANKS A PARTICIPATION IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST? AND IS NOT THE BREAD THAT WE BREAK A PARTICIPATION IN THE BODY OF CHRIST?" (1 Corinthians 10:15-17)

Leader: We invite all who can honestly answer "YES" to those questions and who have become one with the body of Christ through holy baptism to share in the communion meal. But do not accept the Lord's invitation lightly.

People: FOR THE HOLY SCRIPTURE ALSO SAYS: "A PERSON OUGHT TO EXAMINE HIMSELF BEFORE HE EATS OF THE BREAD AND DRINKS OF THE CUP. FOR ANYONE WHO EATS AND DRINKS WITHOUT RECOGNIZING THE BODY OF THE LORD EATS AND DRINKS JUDGMENT ON HIMSELF. THAT IS WHY MANY AMONG YOU ARE WEAK AND SICK, AND A NUMBER OF YOU HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP." (1 Corinthians 11:28-30)

Leader: Those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord and who know themselves to be forgiven and repentant members of the body of Christ are invited to participate in the communion meal. But ALL are welcome at God's altar to receive His blessing and encouragement.

THE DISTRIBUTION: *The ushers will direct you*

THE BENEDICTION

God sends us back into the world with his blessing

Leader: Friends in Christ, as you leave this worship celebration, don't forget that we are only here temporarily. Our Lord Jesus is coming to take us home. Until he comes, go out into the world in peace. Have courage; hold on to what is good. Return no one evil for evil. Be a friend and encourager to those who are weak and misguided.

People: HELP US, LORD JESUS, TO BE THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS AROUND US. REMIND AND COMPEL US TO PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACHED!

Leader: Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit!

People: WHATEVER WE DO, IN WORD AND DEED, WE WILL DO IN THE NAME AND
POWER OF THE LORD JESUS. HOLY SPIRIT, PLEASE GUIDE US.

Leader: Almighty God, Father, Son † and Holy Spirit, bless you as you go,
now and forever. Amen.

Closing Hymn: COME, YOUR HEART AND VOICES RAISING

The Lutheran Hymnal #90

COME, YOUR HEARTS AND VOICES RAISING,
CHRIST THE LORD WITH GLADNESS PRAISING;
LOUDLY SING HIS LOVE AMAZING,
WORTHY FOLK OF CHRISTENDOM.

SEE HOW GOD, FOR US PROVIDING,
GAVE HIS SON AND LIFE ABIDING;
HE OUR WEARY STEPS IS GUIDING
FROM EARTH'S WOE TO HEAVENLY JOY.

FROM THE BONDAGE THAT OPPRESSED US,
FROM SIN'S FETTERS THAT POSSESSED US,
FROM THE GRIEF THAT SORE DISTRESSED US,
WE, THE CAPTIVES, NOW ARE FREE.

OH, THE JOY BEYOND EXPRESSING
WHEN BY FAITH WE GRASP THIS BLESSING
AND TO THEE WE COME CONFESSING,
THAT OUR FREEDOM THOU HAST WROUGHT!

† † †
To God be the glory!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WELCOME! We extend a warm Berea welcome to Rev. Steve Funck. We look forward to the message from our heavenly Father than he will share with us today!



BEGIN CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

AT HIS HOUSE! No CHRIST ACADEMY next **Sunday, December 25th** but our Christmas Day worship celebration will begin at **11:30 a.m.** Not only will we be celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus, we also plan to celebrate some

rebirths! We're baptizing next Sunday! That will make our Christmas celebration all the more special! Please be sure and begin your Christmas celebration at God's house with us!

KWANZAA'S COMING! On **Saturday, December 31st (New Year's Eve) at 7:00 p.m.,**

Berea will have our annual Kwanzaa celebration of African American heritage. We'll have the candle lighting ceremony, a talent show and storytelling. We'll have vendors offering great bargains AND the

Karamu feast (a.k.a soul food potluck)! Please let Mrs. Tricia Fuqua know what you will be willing to bring for the Karamu feast (443-631-7319) and let Mr. Eric Monroe know if you are want to be in the talent show or want a vendor's table (443-256-2125).



AND THEN THERE'S WATCH NIGHT SERVICE at

10:30 p.m. immediately following the Kwanzaa celebration! Bring the New Year in in God's house. Rev. Andrew Okai will be our guest proclaimer! Mark your calendars, stock up on NO DOZ and join the celebrations!

STAY IN TOUCH WITH TONY...



connection between Berea and our incarcerated member, Antonio Gross. Any of us may use the church laptop to send a message to Tony after service on Sunday. Let's show Tony God's love especially during this Christmas season which may be especially stressful and lonely for inmates! Please see

Bettie to get some time on the laptop. For those who are willing to write, Tony's new address: Mr. Antonio Gross #468391 2300434

18701 Roxbury Road

Hagerstown, MD 21746

PLEASE CHECK OUT KERITH MINISTRY!

Not only do we have cards on sale at a ridiculously low price (50¢ each or 3 for \$1!), we have FREE cards, calendars, puzzle books and other goodies. Visit Kerith Ministry before you leave today. And remember, any card to be sent to a Berea member is FREE! So be sure and remember our sick, shut-in and those who work on Sunday mornings. Check your church directories for contact info for:



♥ Ann Gogovan

♥ James Hughley

♥ Joyce Nyathi

♥ Ruth Young

♥ Sam Tucker

♥ Sheila Ashley-Jones

♥ Victoria Ashley

THIS WEEK AT BEREA...

- ❖ **TEMPLE SINGERS** choir rehearsal after today's worship service
- ❖ **TEMPLE ROCK** resumes in January
- ❖ **THE PAIN CLINIC** resumes in January