

Central Lutheran Church

**Third Sunday of Advent
December 17, 2023**

**Rev. Veronika Czutor, Pastor
Harold Knight, PhD, Music Director
Rachel Brown, Administrative Assistant**

Central Lutheran Church, ELCA

1000 Easton Rd., Dallas, Texas

God calls us to proclaim the Gospel and demonstrate Christ's love for all.

Please turn off your cell phone.

This service is being livestreamed to our neighbors near and far on Facebook.

Most of the sanctuary- including all leaders and worshippers- is on camera.

BELL PEAL (10:30 am)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

MUSICAL MEDITATION

CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

The assembly stands. All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P In the name of the Father, and of the ✚ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.

P Most merciful God,

C we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

The assembly stands.

GATHERING HYMN

ELW 249

On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
 way for God with - in, and let us all our
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
 has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

LIGHTING OF THE THIRD ADVENT WREATH CANDLE

P Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand.

C Amen.

GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

KYRIE

In peace let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



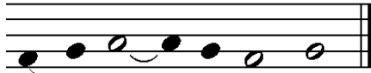
Lord, have mer - cy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise.



Lord, have mer - cy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.



A - men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

FIRST LESSON: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

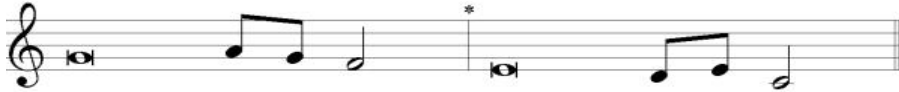
⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

L Word of God, Word of Life

C Thanks be to God

PSALM 126

Sung responsively.



¹When the LORD restored the for- | tunes of Zion,
then were we like | those who dream.

²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with | shouts of joy.
Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great | things for
them.”**

³The LORD has done great | things for us,
and we are | glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our for- | tunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses | of the Negeb.**

⁵Those who | sowed with tears
will reap with | songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed,
will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves.**

SECOND LESSON: Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

L Word of God, Word of Life

C Thanks be to God

CHILDREN’S SERMON

Pastor Veronika

He Came Down

He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;

He came down that we may have love; hal-le-lu-ia for-ev-er- more.

P The Holy Gospel according to John, the first chapter.

C **Glory to you, O Lord**

READING OF THE GOSPEL: John 1:6-8, 19-28

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” ²²Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ ” as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” ²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to you O Christ**

SERMON

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

Pastor Veronika

HYMN OF THE DAY

ELW 255

There's a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod:
Prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God!
The valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places where God, our God, may go!

O Jerusalem, herald good tidings, ascend to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people the coming of their king.
Like flow'rs of the field we perish, like grass our works decay;
the pow'r and the pomp of nations shall pass like a dream away.

But the word of our Savior is faithful, the arm of our God is strong,
who stands in the midst of the nations and soon will right the wrong.
Lord, feed your flock like a shepherd, the lambs so gently hold;
in pastures of peace now lead them, and bring them to your fold.

APOSTLES' CREED

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

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and
the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the
forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

THE PRAYERS

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people
according to their needs.

Please sit or kneel for prayer.

The response to each spoken petition is:

P Merciful God

C Receive our prayer.

People with prayer needs: **Lydia** Landfair, **Selena** Dybdahl, **Paul** Chambers, **Eloy** Aguirre, **Robin** Holland, and **Ruth** Steiner.

The prayers conclude:

P ...through your son Jesus Christ, our Lord
C Amen.

THE PEACE

The peace we share is a sign of God's mission of reconciliation among us and the reconciliation we have with one another in Christ Jesus. Please offer a symbol of reconciliation to one another.

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C And also with you.

THE OFFERING

*We give thanks for what God has first given us. Our ministry to the people of East Dallas is supported by your offering. An offering plate is available in the narthex after worship. You may also use our online giving through **Vanco, PayPal, or Givelify** (available in the App Store) or continue to mail your offerings to our office.*

MUSICAL OFFERING: Comfort, My People

Sung by the choir

*Comfort, my people, and calm all your fear;
the day of salvation is quickly drawing near.
The One you long to see will soon set you free.
O come, Lord Jesus, come. O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

*Silence the thunder, silence sounds of war;
End all destruction and comfort those who mourn.
Your dreams draw near; your vision is here.
O come, Lord Jesus, come. O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

*Light in the darkness be truth for our lives.
Be strength for the helpless, the poor and lost who cry.
O saving voice, O living choice.
O come, Lord Jesus, come. O come, Lord Jesus, come.*

OFFERING PRAYER

P God of all goodness, generations have turned to you, gathered around your table, and shared your abundant blessings. Number us among them that, as we gather these gifts from your abundance, and give thanks for your rich blessings, we may feast upon your very self and care for all that you have made, through Jesus Christ, our Sovereign and Servant.

C Amen

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed our duty and our joy . . . we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and
might, heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER AND WORDS OF INSTITUTION

P Holy One, ...

P Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

P With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

C Come, Lord Jesus.

P Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

C Come, Holy Spirit.

P All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together. Come, take your place at the table.

C Thanks be to God

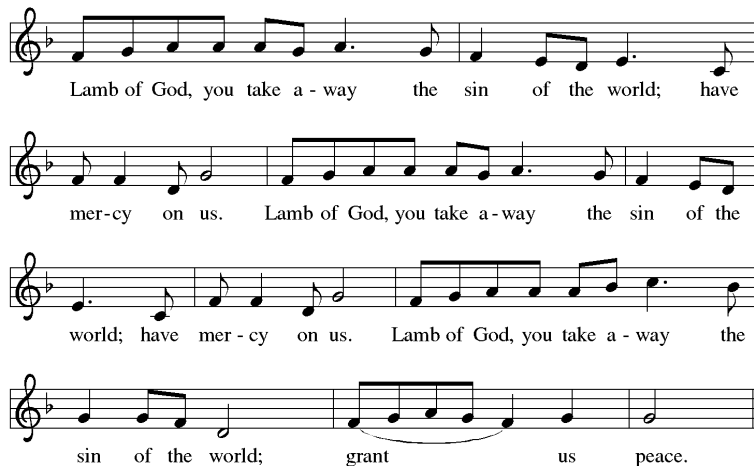
COMMUNION

As you come forward for the Sacrament, please sanitize your hands with the sanitizer found on the first pew. Communion will be distributed at the altar rail. You may kneel or stand. The host will be dipped in the chalice and placed in your hand. If you prefer to receive only the host, please tell the ministers. If you would like to receive a blessing instead, please fold your arms in front of your chest. At this time there is no consecrated grape juice.

The body of Christ, given for you
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

Follow the guidance of the ushers if you decide to walk up to the Altar to receive the Sacraments.



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

Meditative organ music is played as the congregation receives the Holy Communion.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

C Amen.

BLESSING

P The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✠ remain upon you now and forever.

C Amen.

Prepare the Royal Highway



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
 Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
 Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
 His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
 God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
 All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
 So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Keep awake.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Acknowledgments:

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Gathering Hymn: *On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry*

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite

Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621

Hymn of the Day: *There's a Voice in the Wilderness Crying*

Text: Henry Hugh Bancroft, 1904-1988

Music: ASCENSION

© Estate of Henry Hugh Bancroft

Musical Offering: *Comfort, My People*

Text and Music: Ian Callanan, b. 1971

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Sending Hymn: *Prepare the Royal Highway*

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772-1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*

Music: BEREDEN VÅG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.

Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

Central Lutheran Church



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

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www.facebook.com/CentralLutheranDallas

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Visitors, we are glad to have you with us and invite you to come again!

Pr. Veronika's Office Hours: Tuesday – Friday 10 am - 2 pm; other days/times by appointment.

Serving in Worship today: Ushers: Anne Monson, and David Hopson; Lector: Paul Chambers. Flowers courtesy of the Bethany CDC.

Ushers & Lectors needed: Please sign up on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Advent Vespers & Soup Supper: Join our Advent Vespers & Soup Supper during this Advent season! On Wednesday (**December 20**), we're coming together to prepare for the arrival of Jesus. **We start at 6:00 pm with a soup and sandwich dinner. At 6:45 pm, we'll transition into vespers, an intimate and reflective time.** This gathering is in partnership with Emanuel Lutheran Church, extending an open invitation to all who seek a midweek reprieve from the holiday hustle. Embrace the spirit of the season with us!

If a daytime service suits you better, First United Lutheran has you covered with a noon service on Wednesdays throughout Advent. Find them at 6202 E Mockingbird Ln, Dallas, TX 75214. Everyone is welcome to find solace and joy in these moments of reflection and community.

Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service is at 7:00pm next Sunday. We'll come together in celebration of Jesus's birth, on Christmas Eve– December 24– in a beautiful candlelit service.

Morning services will be provided by First United Lutheran (10:30 am) and Gloria Dei Lutheran (10:00 am) for those averse to driving in the dark.

Poinsettia Orders: You may honor friends and family by purchasing poinsettias, which will decorate the altar during Christmas Eve. You may **purchase a poinsettia plant for \$15** (cash, check, or online donations are all acceptable). If you purchase a poinsettia, please fill out a pink order form so we know whom you are honoring with your purchase. You may take your poinsettia(s) home after the worship service on Christmas Eve, December 24.

Selling Christmas Cards: Caring & Sharing will be selling packets of **10 assorted Christmas cards for \$5 outside the parlor.** Proceeds will go towards supplies for blessing bags. Thank you to the generosity of our church family for donating the cards.

Caring & Sharing is moving to the last Sunday of the month. On December 31st we will send cards to people with anniversaries and birthdays in January. Then, on January 28 we will meet again

to send cards for February, etc. There will be breakfast treats and coffee for everyone. Hope to see you there.

Staff Christmas Gift Donations: As we approach the end of the year, it is time for us to think about Christmas gifts for our church staff members. If you would like to donate funds for these gifts, please provide your donations no later than the Christmas Eve Service. Also, please mark your checks or cash in envelopes as “Staff Gift Donation”. Thank you, in advance, for your generosity.



Scan this QR code (or go to linktr.ee/centrallutheranchurch) to connect with us, join our mailing list, or donate online.

Our Prayer List: Please submit your prayer requests to the church office via email (central.lutheran.dallas@gmail.com) or via phone (214-327-2222).

PRAYERS FOR HEALING & COMFORT

For healing

Ruth & Eddie Steiner

Charlotte Breedlove

Irisz Gonda

Tracee Bond

Paula & Robin Holland

Michael DuCote

Eloy Aguirre

Selena Dybdahl

Relationship

Sister & Brother-in-law of Susan

Wrobbel and Judy Koble

Neighbor of Harold Jones

Friend of Pastor Veronika

Friend of Charlotte Danielson

Friends of Anne Monson

Friend of Rachel Brown

Friend of Pastor Veronika

Sister of Mary Glenn

Church Members

Lydia Landfair

Don Smith

Mario Montejo

Kris McDowell

Yuvonne Muirhead

Paul Chambers

Those We Mourn

Vivian Curry