

Christ Connection

LINKS to ZOOM Worship

Empowered by God's love and following in the ways of Jesus Christ, we Live, Grow and Share as disciples of Christ.

For the Week Beginning December 20, 2020 Fourth Sunday in Advent

THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE

"Good-ish News"

The angel Gabriel was sent by God ...to Mary. He came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. - Luke 2:26a, 29

I often wonder what I would do if an angel appeared to me in this way. I suspect I too would be perplexed. Probably I would also be terrified. (Mary might have been terrified too - since the angel's first words were "Do not be afraid."). If I knew that the being in front of me was, in fact, an angel, I think I would be tempted to run away. I cannot recall a single biblical example where an angel came with good news that was actually *only* good news. Mary will bear the Son of God - but she will also be an unwed mother whose fiancée intends to leave her, and whose son is killed before he reaches old age. Zechariah received news of a baby to be born to his wife - the baby to become John the Baptist - but he was unable to speak for 9 months following this angelic encounter. Way back in the story of Abraham and Sarah, Sarah will inconceivably bear a son - but she will also experience the kind of rage and jealousy that only deeply embedded fear can cause. Angels regularly appear to send prophets with messages from God - and inevitably, these messages upset people with power and influence... and often result in prophets running in fear for their lives. So, as holy and angelic and wonderful as meeting an angel of God might be, given the opportunity, I suspect I might pass.

Throughout the Bible, angels bring promises from God and instructions to share those promises. God promises Abraham and Sarah they will create a covenanted people of God. The angels send the prophets to remind the people of this covenant. The son of Zechariah and Elizabeth will prepare the way for the Messiah. God's covenant becomes incarnate in Mary's son. Thus the message of the angels over and over and over again rings of God's faithfulness, love, grace, and hope for the world. These messages also ring of challenge to the status quo, upending social constructs like wealth and race, and letting loose those whom society has deemed dangerous like prisoners or people with mental illness.

The angels bring good news for all people. But these promises of good news *feel* most like good news when we are the beneficiaries. When we are the downtrodden, poor, indigenous, persons of color, imprisoned and sick or struggling, we rely on the hope and promise of God's covenant. Yet when we are the satisfied, rich, dominant culture, civilized and healthy, God's covenant threatens to upset the apple cart. The good news of the angel isn't *only* good news. Or at least, it doesn't feel like it.

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Sunday Worship

9:00 am and noon on ZOOM
www.yourchrist.org

Faith Formation

Watch for new schedule in
2021!

Christ Lutheran Staff

Rev. Erin Clausen, Pastor

Rachel Krohn, Pastoral Assistant

Jon Ball, Dir. Contemporary Music

Bonnie Bucholz, Dir. Traditional Music

Jo Chiko, Handbell Choir Director

Dan Cramer, Director of Social Media Marketing

Kristina Dickens
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Contact Information

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THE PASTOR'S MESSAGE

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However, if we believe what the angel says - as a messenger from God - this change is good news, whether it feels that way or not. If this is true, it means that God desires not only all the good that might come from being lifted out of challenge. God also desires all the good that might come from discovering humility. God desires all the good that comes from people having enough and not too much. God desires all the good that comes from unity and inter-connection. God desires good beyond that which I can imagine.

I take it as a spiritual practice to consider what it would take *from me* to stay in the presence of an angel. I consider often what I need to give up or prepare for so that I might be able to answer 'yes' when I am entrusted with a message of good/bad/good news. As a pastor, I am entrusted with this news every day - and it often feels not-so-good. But it's not just me. As people of faith, Christian people, we are ALL entrusted as messengers of God's good news.

I invite you to join me in this spiritual practice, as we prepare for Jesus to come again. What kind of courage will it take to look at and listen to an angelic messenger from God? What do you imagine you would do, faced with such a being? What good/bad/good news might the angel bring to you, in this time? And what might you need to do, or say, or pray for, or practice that would enable you, too, to say 'yes.'

Pastor Erin



We are delighted to invite families (up to ten members) to spend time in the church sanctuary during the days leading up to Christmas. The space has been decorated by a team of volunteers and familiar Christmas music will be playing. There will be an opportunity for your family to offer holy communion to each other; a place to light a candle for loved ones, and an opportunity for confession. If this sounds like something you would find meaningful, we hope you will participate.

Our 20-minute time slots on December 23rd and 24th are almost full, so we have opened up the evening of December 22nd in order to allow as many families as possible experience this time at the church. You may go to our website at www.yourchrist.org to reserve your family's place.

In order to keep everyone safe, the following guidelines need to be followed:

- Definition of "family" means a group of up to 10 people who are part of your "bubble"; meaning those in your household or extended family that is healthy, where there is no concern of the virus.
- Groups will be asked to gather on certain sides of the church (band or pulpit side) alternately by the volunteer in charge to minimize contact with the previous group, although space will be sanitized after each visit.
- You are asked to enter and exit through the north doors (unless handicapped accessibility is an issue), minimizing areas that will need to be sanitized. **Masks must be worn by all.**
- Each participant will need to sign a form indicating that they are feeling well and have no knowledge of having COVID or having been exposed to COVID.

We are thankful to the Worship Team and the COVID Resiliency Team for working to make it possible for each of us to have some time to pray, reflect, and dwell in the worship space that we miss so much, especially during Christmastime.



Christ Craft Corner

The Christ Craft Corner with Ms. Tricia and Ms. Kristina is THIS Sunday, December 20th at 10:00 a.m. for all Youth Ministry Sunday School children and Confirmation Class children. We will have crafts for all to enjoy.

Brookfield Zoo Community Tree Trim

Don't forget to check out the Holiday Magic at the Brookfield Zoo. Check it out here: <https://www.czs.org/holidaymagic> for tickets and time. Check out the Youth Ministry Christmas Tree on the West Mall, number 546. Take a picture of the family by the tree and send it in to Ms. Kristina!



The Agape Ringers are featuring a free (unless you want to donate!) Christmas concert,

"Sounds of the Season" which premiered on Saturday, December 12, but **remains online through December!**

Our own handbell director Jo Chiko is a member of this very well known group. Please see the link below! You won't be sorry you tuned in!!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yCk4IrrmFYU&ab_channel=AgapeRingers



Christmas Zoom Worship Schedule

Christmas Eve at 5 p.m. and 11 p.m.

Christmas Day at 9 a.m.

[Click here for Zoom link](#)