



WHERE DO WE
BELONG

Advent Series

Homecoming

First Lutheran Church Kirkland

*First Lutheran Church - Putting Christ First
Kirkland, IL - Est. December 26, 1873*

*Saturday, December 16, 2023
(With Readings for the Third Sunday of Advent)*

First Lutheran Church – Putting Christ First

December 16, 2023 – with readings for

The Third Sunday of Advent

A WARM WELCOME TO ALL who are worshiping with us today! We hope that the service will be a joy and blessing to you. Please complete the black friendship register and pass it down the pew. Then after worship, you're encouraged to introduce yourself to anyone you haven't met.

THE SERVICE BEGINS

P We begin this service IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER:

C Dear heavenly Father, you comforted your people with the promise that you would send us a savior;

P AND OF THE SON:

C Come Lord Jesus, the Son of God! Come in power and glory and victory! Come quickly, and save your people;

P AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:

C Come upon us, O Spirit of power and might. Breathe on us your life-giving breath, that we may watch and wait for Christ's return.
Amen

SONG: "The King Shall Come"

LBW 33

WE CONFESS

P With the words of Isaiah and the Psalms, we confess our sins and our grief, and we hear the comfort of the Lord.

C All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field: the grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. *Isaiah 40*

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy. *Psalms 137*

WE HEAR THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION

P The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever! Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God! Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her punishment is over, that her guilt is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. Behold, the Lord is coming to you. He will feed his flock like a shepherd, he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. *Isaiah 40*

SHARING OF THE PEACE

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord Jesus Christ, give ear to our prayers, and lighten the darkness of our hearts by your gracious visitation; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹“The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to grant to those who mourn in Zion — to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he may be glorified. 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.

⁸“For I the LORD love justice; I hate robbery and wrong; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their offspring shall be known among the nations, and their descendants in the midst of the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge them, that they are an offspring the LORD has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul 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 like a priest with a beautiful headdress, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its sprouts, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to sprout up, so the LORD God will cause righteousness and praise to sprout up before all the nations.”

P The Word of the Lord. **C** Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

1 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 prophecies, ²¹but test everything; hold fast what is good. ²²Abstain from every form of evil. ²³Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.

P The Word of the Lord. **C** Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL

John 1:6-8, 19-28

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

¹⁹And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." ²²So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to 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." ²⁴(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) ²⁵They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, ²⁷even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." ²⁸These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

P The Gospel of the Lord. **C** Thanks be to God.

SERMON: "HOMECOMING"

SONG: "Comfort, Comfort Now My People"

NICENE CREED

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THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

God of light and life, by the power of your Spirit and the light of your Word, enable us to continue our Advent waiting in faithfulness as we prepare to receive the one who is the Light of the World.

Lord in your mercy ... hear our prayer.

Holy Lord, in these early days of winter the creation groans with change. Some places in your world will begin to experience snow and bitter cold. Fields will lay fallow, trees and plants will no longer blossom or bear fruit. In other places, more moderate weather allows for growth and food production. Bring to each region the moisture, sunshine, and time of regeneration that is needed. Allow your people to experience that same rest and regeneration so that we would have strength for each new day.

Lord in your mercy ... hear our prayer.

Holy Spirit, giver of faith, empower us to bear witness to your light and life in the wilderness places of your world – in war-torn countries, dilapidated neighborhoods, poverty-stricken lives, and in the empty and searching hearts that we encounter daily. Fill with your love and hope, those who are struggling with addiction and despair. Help us to be bearers of your Good News to all who need to hear a word of love.

Lord in your mercy ... hear our prayer.

God of strength, stir in us and make us aware of the needs of the whole human family. Help us to bring words of understanding, comfort, and hope to those who are unemployed, ill in body, mind, or spirit, or grieving. [We pray particularly for ...] Keep us mindful that while most of us experience this as a time of joyful expectation, for many it is a difficult time of the year. Bring light to those who are in darkness so that the coming Christ would lift their hearts in joy.

Lord in your mercy ... hear our prayer.

OFFERING

WE PREPARE FOR HOLY COMMUNION

P The Lord be with you. **C** And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts! **C** We lift them up to the Lord!

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give him thanks and praise.

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

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COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

CLOSING RESPONSIVE READING

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C Amen.

P People of God, stay awake and alert, and fight the good fight of faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you have been called, to which you have today borne witness in the presence of many witnesses. The Lord is coming soon!

C Amen! Come, Lord Jesus! Come quickly!

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

CLOSING SONG: "Prepare the Royal Highway"

LBW 26

P Go in peace! Serve the Lord!

C Thanks be to God!

Church Office: (815) 522-3886

Pastor: Tom Thorstad (716)990-6244(c)

Secretary: Dianna Wittwer (815)378-6654(c)

Pianist: Nancy Plote

Attendance last Saturday, 12/9:16

Website: www.kirklandflc.org

pastor@kirklandflc.org

secretary@kirklandflc.org

Host: Richard & Peggy Wince

Last Sunday, 12/10: 58 adults 19 children

BIRTHDAY BLESSINGS!

Everly Mielke 12/14/17

Jane Johnson 12/16

Debbie Rehn 12/18

Joseph Thorstad 12/22/17

Charles Peterson 12/26

Rick Schmidt 12/27

Natalie Norris 12/27/2019

Malcolm Anderberg 12/29

Nathan Watson 12/31

Happy 150th First Lutheran Church on Tuesday, December 26th.

ANNIVERSARY BLESSINGS!!

Ben & Amy Blobaum 12/29/2020

David & Laura Block 12/31/2020

SOCKS BOX

The socks are due to the church tomorrow.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL GARDEN

Poinsettias are \$10 each. Orders are due tomorrow.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHRISTMAS LIGHT POLE

Thank you to Mike & Sue Sester and Roger & Jean Bauer for finding a new nativity set, as our old one had seen better days. They also decorated the light pole. I hope you will take the time to look at it.



Thank you

The children's Christmas program was wonderful. Thank you to all who helped make it a success. It was so cute to see the children sharing Jesus' story.

Thank you!

Joanie Sanderson would like to thank everyone for their prayers for her son, David. He is now in a Rockford rehab after being in the hospital for 61 days. He has a new hip and will be starting physical therapy soon.

2023 END OF YEAR OFFERINGS – please have any offerings to be counted for 2023 to the office by Thursday, Dec. 28th by noon.

OFFERING ENVELOPES ARE READY!

The Offering envelopes for 2024 have been created and are ready in the Narthex. If you forgot to bring in your pledge envelope, please do so soon. This helps our budget committee plan for the next year. If you didn't receive offering envelopes last year and would like them, please let Dianna know.

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT OF ANNUAL MEETING: SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 2024

Reports due to Dianna on Thursday, Jan. 4th,

I would prefer reports be sent via email to

secretary@kirklandflc.org.

Booklets will be ready Jan. 13th.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday 12/17: Join us after the service for coffee, and Adult Forum.

Monday 12/18: Food Truck Delivery, 9:30am.

Clothes Closet Open 12-1:30pm

Tuesday 12/19: Food Pantry Set-up, 9:30-11am; dist., 12-2pm.

Saturday 12/23: **NO** Saturday service.

Sunday 12/24: Christmas Eve Worship Service, 9am

Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service, 7pm

Monday, 12/25: Join us for **Christmas Day with Communion**, and special music on December 25 at 9am.

PARISH CONCERNS:

- Lorraine Steinhorst, Gary Steinhorst's mother passed away on Sunday, Dec. 10th. Gary & Peggy Steinhorst
1524 15th St Baraboo, Wi 53913

May the promise of God's resurrection bring peace to the family of Lorraine Steinhorst

Please keep in your daily prayers all people in need, including those mentioned here:

- Beau Norris, 11, had a cardiac procedure. He is home, doing well.
- Fallon Mitchell is getting stronger every day!
- All those who are suffering physical or mental illness, and their families, caregivers, and medical teams, especially Chuck Schindler, Ina Koehler, James Klus, Jim Hetland, Emmaline Haag, David Sanderson, Susan & Jim Colgan, Mark Bernhardt and Shannon Daab.
- All those who are not able to worship with us because they are in health care facilities or homebound: Nancy Bakanas, George Vodden, Dale Johnson, and many others.
- Our church and its activities.
- All elected leaders, police officers, first responders, and military personnel, that they hear and receive God's guidance and protection.
- The NALC, NALS, the Great Rivers Mission District, and all Christian churches.

Next Week's Readings:

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-5 [19-29]; Romans 16:25-27;
Luke 1:26-38