

SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS AT HOME WORSHIP
THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 15, 2024



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Almighty God, we are always in need of your comfort and restoration. May we turn to you again and again, our source of strength and hope, no matter what we face or what each day brings. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 61: 1-11

The 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. ⁵Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, foreigners shall till your land and dress your vines; ⁶but you shall be called priests of the Lord, you shall be named ministers of our God; you shall enjoy the wealth of the nations, and in their riches you shall glory. ⁷Because their shame was double, and dishonor was proclaimed as their lot, therefore they shall possess a double portion; everlasting joy shall be theirs. 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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL: LUKE 4:16-21

¹⁶When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” ²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

Praise to you O Christ.

REFLECTION ON THE GOSPEL BY ASSISTING MINISTER TIM KIRCHOFF

The description of the ministry of the Messiah is written so well in Isaiah 61, Jesus himself reads from this scripture in the Nazareth synagogue as a means to proclaim who he is. It is believed this part of Isaiah was written shortly after the Babylonian exile. While the exile were certainly dark times, I can only imagine the return to Jerusalem wasn’t like entering a rose garden either. The people had to rebuild their community again, in smaller numbers with the poor and oppressed doing most of the manual labor. Business as usual right?

Try to think back to all your times of trial, when the workload piled up without respite, sad news kept coming in, or even when the winter weather gives you the blahs. When you are down, could this be the most opportune time to respond to some good news? Anything to lift your spirits, right? Well to me, that is precisely what this Isaiah text aims to do. Good news to the oppressed, bind the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor. The pep talk continues in verse 4 with the rebuilding of the ruins. Makes me wonder how this writing was received at that time.

But the good news isn’t really about buildings and cities, it is in how much God loves His children. Isaiah predicts there will be a Messiah sent by God to heal the sick and free the captives. He isn’t just speaking about the poorest among us, but all of us. We are all captives of sin, and Jesus will free us of that.

May this good news warm your heart as we prepare for the coming of our Lord, Amen!

[HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/WYeiQ4XCAK?FEATURE=SHARED](https://youtu.be/WYeiQ4XCAK?feature=shared)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Confident in your grace and truth, we pray for the church, the world, and all of creation.

A brief silence.

We pray for grateful hearts, ready to praise. Thank you for all you have done and will do. Open our hearts to receive your blessings, and may our lives reflect the very love you pour upon us. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who are dedicated to protecting the earth. Grant them the resources, knowledge, and support they need to carry out their important work. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are in positions of authority or hold power. Teach them humility and guide them to work towards a world free from oppression and violence. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are facing spiritual burdens. Grant them strength in their time of confusion and despair, and open their eyes to your love and grace. Comfort all who suffer in body, mind, or spirit. We pray especially for Rick and Kelly, Molly and her family, Terry Schreier, Lori, Pastor Phil, Kay, Jim and Sally, Dave, Dorothy, and all those we lift through our Prayer Chain. God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who are enduring natural disasters around the world. Bring new life and comfort, and be with those in need as they grieve and rebuild. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our ability to care for one another. Let us love, not in words or speech, but in truth and action. Strengthen and equip us to care for those in need through the ministries of our community: Pardes Levavot, the Community Infant Program, the Little Free Pantry, All Roads of Boulder, Rise Against Suicide, and the other acts of kindness we share with one another. Use us to share Christ's love with our neighbors in need, especially those who are lost, poor, abused, forgotten, silenced, or avoided. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the work of the Joshua School and organizations like them. Empower those who nurture the minds, bodies and spirits of children and adults living on the Autism Spectrum. Help us to help them reach their fullest potential. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the nations now engaged in war. In the steadfastness of your love, hasten the day of peace. Look with mercy on those exposed to hatred, conflict, and death. Show compassion to the dying and those who have lost loved ones and the safety of home. In your mercy, remove all causes and occasions of war. Incline the hearts of all people to follow the path to peace and justice, that war may cease and reconciliation may come. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

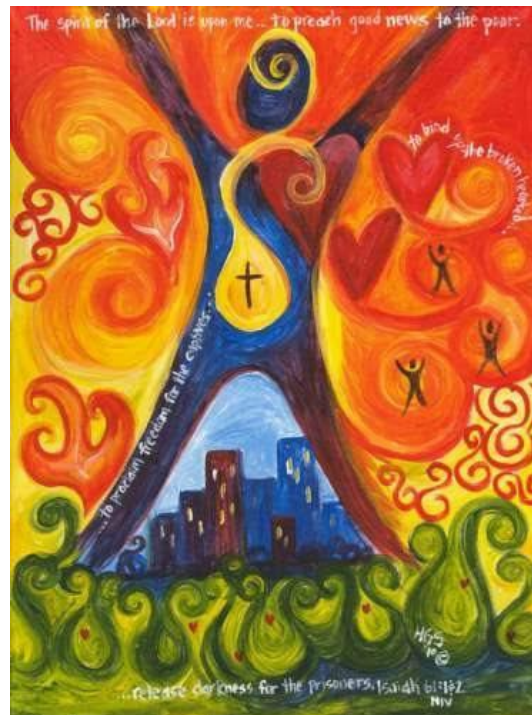
Here other intercessions may be offered.

We pray for the ability to properly honor and respect the great communion of saints. Their lives have enriched ours, and we are grateful for their examples of faith. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift up all of our prayers, spoken and unspoken to you. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

ADVENT BLESSING

God is love. God is with us. God will never leave us.
May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and forever.
Amen.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

This is Christ's church. There is a place for you here.

We are the church that shares a living, daring confidence in God's grace.
Liberated by our faith, we embrace you as a whole person—questions, complexities and all.
Join us as we do God's work in Christ's name for the life of the world.

SHEPHERD CALENDAR OF EVENTS

WEEK OF DECEMBER 15– DECEMBER 22, 2024

Sunday, December 15th – Advent III: Spirit of the Lord Upon Me

9:30 a.m. Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship with Holy Communion
Coffee and Conversation immediately following worship

Wednesday, December 18th

11:00 a.m. - Amazing Grace Bible Study

Friday, December 20th

7:00 a.m. – Men’s Zoom Breakfast Bible Study
5:00 p.m. – Friday Night Perspectives Gathering

Sunday, December 22nd – Advent IV: Jesus’ Birth Announced

9:30 a.m. – Hybrid In-Person/Zoom Worship with Holy Communion,
Coffee and Conversation immediately following worship

BIRTHDAYS

LAURA F. 12/10
KELLY M. 12/11
WILLIAM T. 12/13
CONNIE T. 12/19
CHRIS B. 12/27
DAN W. 12/30

DAILY NARRATIVE LECTIONARY READINGS: WEEK OF DECEMBER 15, 2024

Monday, December 16, 2024

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/isaiah-637-14-god-is-gracious2024>

Isaiah 63:7-14 God is Gracious

Tuesday, December 17, 2024

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/isaiah-6315-6412-prayer-of-repentance2024>

Isaiah 63:15 – 64:12 Prayer of Repentance

Wednesday, December 18, 2024

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/isaiah-6517-25-new-creation2024>

Isaiah 65:17-25 New Creation

Thursday, December 19, 2024

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/obadiah-11-21-edoms-betrayal-and-israels-restoration2024>

Obadiah 1:1-21 Edom’s Betrayal and Israel’s Restoration

Friday, December 20, 2024

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/zechariah-zechariah-121-131-narrative-lectionary-jeruselems-victory>

Zechariah 12:1 – 13:1 Jerusalem’s Victory

Saturday, December 21, 2024

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/malachi-31-7-the-coming-messenger2024b>

Malachi 3:1-7 The Coming Messenger

Sunday, December 22, 2024

<https://clergystuff.com/nl-devotions/luke-126-45-46-56-jesus-birth-announced2024>

Luke 12:6-45-56 Jesus’ Birth Announced