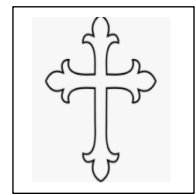


Perley Lutheran Parish
January 3rd, 2021
Second Sunday of Christmas



Gathering Hymn: Your little ones, dear Lord

Your little ones, dear Lord, are we and come your lowly bed to see

Enlighten every soul and mind that we the say to you may find.

Oh draw us wholly to you Lord and to us all your grace accord

True faith and love to us impart, that we may hold you in our heart.

Welcome and Announcements

Beautiful Advent season/services – thanks to all who helped

Newsletter mailed out – January still online – expect a call

Confirmation numbers – please let me know if you have a child in confirmation

Annual Congregational meetings moved to February

Howard Rensvold laid to rest prior to Christmas at Nora

Help our Digital Light Shine – if you can't do go fund me you can drop check (go fund me in the subject line)

Continue to reach out if you need something

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, +one God, who was in the beginning, who makes a dwelling among us, who covers us with justice and mercy. **Amen**

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

God of goodness and lovingkindness,

We confess that we have sinned against you and our neighbors. We have turned away from your invitation to new life. We have turned away from the lowly and downtrodden. In your abundant mercy, forgive us our sins, those we know and those known only to you, for the sake of the one who came to live among us, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen.

Hear the good news of peace and salvation! God forgives us all our sins, not through our own work, but through + Jesus Christ, made known to all people. With all who come to the manger, rejoice in this amazing gift of grace. **Amen**

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

Psalm 147:12-20 (Read Responsively)

Praise the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! **For he strengthens the bars of your gates; he blesses your children within you.** He grants peace^[a] within your borders; he fills you with the finest of wheat. **He sends out his command to the earth; his word runs swiftly.** He gives snow like wool; he scatters frost like ashes. **He hurls down hail like crumbs—who can stand before his cold?** He sends out his word, and melts them; he makes his wind blow, and the waters flow. **He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes and ordinances to Israel.** He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know his ordinances. Praise the LORD!

First Reading Jeremiah 31:7-14

For thus says the LORD: Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob, and raise shouts for the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise, and say, "Save, O LORD, your people, the remnant of Israel." See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north, and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, those with child and those in labor, together; a great company, they shall return here. With weeping they shall come, and with consolations I will lead them back, I will let them walk by brooks of water, in a straight path in which they shall not stumble; for I have become a father to Israel, and Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, "He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd a flock." For the LORD has ransomed Jacob, and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him. They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion, and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD, over the grain, the wine, and the oil, and over the young of the flock and the herd; their life shall become like a watered garden, and they shall never languish again. Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old shall be merry. I will turn their mourning into joy, I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow. I will give the priests their fill of fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty, says the LORD.

Holy Gospel according John 1:1-18, **Glory to you O Lord**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'") From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known. The Gospel of our Lord, **Praise to you, O Christ**

Children's Message

Object: A gift you received for Christmas; heart stickers; a box; wrapping paper; tape; scissors

Before the sermon, put the heart stickers inside the box and wrap it.

This gift I am holding was one of my Christmas gifts. Did you receive gifts for Christmas? (Pause.) What was your favorite gift? (Give the children an opportunity to tell you about their favorite gifts.)

There's one thing I've learned about Christmas gifts. No matter how much you enjoy receiving them, they just don't last forever. If you got nice, new clothes, eventually they'll wear out, go out of style, or you'll outgrow them. Even if you got a fun toy you really enjoy, eventually it could break or you'll grow tired of it. Maybe you got candy in your stocking, but when you eat it, it's gone.

But there's one Christmas gift that's different. (Show the wrapped box.) It never wears out. It never goes out of style. You'll never grow out of it. It's the true gift that Christmas is all about. It's God's gift to us: His Son, Jesus. (Have kids pass the box around, each making one rip until the whole gift is unwrapped. Open the box and give each child a heart sticker to represent God's gift of love, Jesus.)

The Bible tells us that all who receive Jesus and believe in His name become the children of God! When we become the children of God, we have all of the rights and privileges of being His child. God will love us, protect us, and provide everything that we need. The best part is that it never ends. In Psalm 23:6, the Bible says that kindness and love will be with us every day of our life and we will live forever in God's house.

I enjoy giving and receiving gifts at Christmas, but I think it's important to remember the greatest gift of all was God's gift to us. It's the gift that keeps on giving!

Dear God, we thank You for loving us so much that You gave Your Son so we too can become Your children. In Jesus' name, amen.

Message

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world."

The light – we all need and respond to light. I don't know about you but the Candlelight service for Christmas Eve was simply beautiful. It was amazing because of all that glowing and flickering candle light. It really brought a true sense of wonder and calmness to the service and made it much more bearable for me us to worship together apart. As humans we not only respond to light but we need light. Things happen – we work and we play – when we have sunlight and daylight. The sun's light gives us energy and a desire to be active – it literally gives life to plants and for our bodies it lifts the production of Vitamin D and other hormones that can help boost your mood, alleviate depression, increase endorphins and improve your mental outlook. And we can't forget the moonlight and the stars in the dark sky. Of course we know the importance of the star on that first Christmas but for us every day – moonlight and stars give us something to watch and study in the darkness.

Think about it – there are other kinds of lights as well in our lives and in our world. We of course have electricity – the power behind all of those Christmas lights we've been seeing, the reason that our homes are warm and our lights are lit. We just have to flick a switch and things turn on and light up – we're actually pretty spoiled with our ease of it all. Or what about lights from chemicals – like the power we get from batteries, or candles, or matches or oil and gasses? Things can be lit and burned to give us more light – and light in different colors even. And what about techy people and lasers – did you know that we get laser light by squeezing a rock material with electricity? All of these things will light and stay lit as long as they have fuel – something to burn or create power.

It's really just been days since we heard of the amazing light – that radiant star in the sky that led everyone to Bethlehem. Go to the stable, look in the manger and see for yourself. There he is, the Son of God, born to ordinary people like Mary and Joseph. Actually the whole thing IS pretty ordinary to those who don't know. Had the messengers, the angels not have come to tell the good news – no one would have known just by what was going on – oh except for that star. That star that pointed the way for the wise-men.

In the beginning, Jesus really was pretty ordinary. He was just like you and I – flesh and blood – and even though some knew what they had been told about his purpose – there wasn't anything really early on that would lead anyone to believe this baby would be the Light of the World. But wait, that's another form of light that I forgot to mention in the beginning of this message. A person can be a light – we all know of those people who can enter into a room and just have a sense of presence and light about them. They bring a calmness, or they can bring an excitement, or they can even bring a sense of wonder to a space but they do so in a manner that just seems to fill the space and the moment with light. They have an inner beacon of purpose and service to others – the kind of people that I love to be with and really miss these days when we aren't with other people much.

John in this passage is John the Baptist. John has been baptizing those who come and gather with him in hopes that they can be washed in the river of Jordan. People saw John – despite his horrific and rough and rugged appearance – as a Prophet sent from God. He too thought was really pretty ordinary, flesh and blood

moved by God to do for others and to teach people about the true light of the world. Many came to see John - came to be baptized – even Jesus came to be baptized. Jesus at this point wasn't much different than the rest of those that had come to see John – he too was pretty ordinary until John set them all straight. God would move John to tell everyone that Jesus is the Light of the World. That Jesus would be the savior of us all.

John wasn't the only one who was called to see Jesus – there were a variety of messengers that God sent – Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the angels, the wise men. All heard the Word of God and came to see this baby, to stand before Jesus, the light of the world in a manger in a stable. All came to see and some perhaps came wondering not only what they would see but what they would experience.

Sure, initially they saw a baby – one that didn't look any different than any other baby they had seen before. But as he grew and learned and began to teach those that were with him learned that he was so much more than ordinary. There was a light within him – God's light that drew people to him, that helped people to believe his teaching and that filled them with the love of God. They all left Bethlehem – the shepherds, the wise men and all that had come to see knowing that there was something more to this baby. Something that wasn't going to disappear that night but rather would bring them a faith and joy that only a great light could give them.

God sent Jesus to be ordinary – to be like us. He did this so we could relate to him, we could get close to him and we could learn from him. He would be ordinary like a baby that we hold in our arms, like a friend we walk and talk with, like someone you share a meal with and someone you may laugh with and cry with. Someone who is a good friend – a person that we could believe in. And yet, Jesus is so much more than that – Jesus is the Son of God. Through his love for us – no matter who we are or what we do or do not do – he wants us to shine in our life. He wants to provide us with an everlasting hope, a never-ending peace, an abundance of Joy and a forever love that only God can give.

I'm always reminded when we come to this Gospel about one of my favorite verses in Scripture. It is a verse that has now been incorporated into the Baptism service and it is done after the blessing of the child with water "in the name of the Father, and the +Son and the Holy Spirit." A candle is lit and the following verse is spoken from Matthew 5 – verse 16: "*Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*" We are marking the baptized with the sign of the cross, naming them as children of God and sending them – and their light – out to do God's work in order to glorify Him.

We sure can't know what 2021 is going to hold for us. We clearly can hope and pray that it will be better than 2020 was. What we can know however is that God is a God of love. God loves us no matter what the situation may indicate or what we may feel or do or not do. We also know that we are children of God and that we are filled with a light and a relationship with God that he created for us to live in. Spend time with God. Discover God's love for you in the scriptures or in your actions loving and serving others. Talk to Jesus and pray to him. Walking in a relationship with Him, He becomes our light and life. He is what we need and he moves in our lives so that we may experience life in its fullness. Through all this we can discover that our life is changing as Jesus meets our every needs. Only a Great Light can do this. Amen

Hymn of the Day: Love Has Come

Love has come a light in the darkness! Love shines forth in the Bethlehem skies.
See all heaven has come to proclaim it. Hear how their song of joy arises
Love! Love! Born unto you a Savior! Love! Glory to God on high.

Love has come and never will leave us! Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us, Love is peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas. Love! Praise to you, God on high!

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 Christian/catholic Church, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen***

Prayers of the people: (Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**)

Joining our voices in the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need. Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**

You bring together heaven and earth. All creations testify to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**

You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm's way. Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**

You come to us in the beauty of darkness and light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**

Healing God, even when we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us, deliver us, and fulfill your purpose for us. According to your steadfast love, grant healing and wholeness to those who are mourning as they deal with tremendous loss, we ask that you continue to send healing to those dealing with illness and recovery. We lift up those within our congregation and those that have reached out to us for prayers, like Jeff and Kirk, Brent & Lisa, Paxley and Deb, Veronica and all of those that we now name silently in our own hearts. Hear us, O God, **your mercy is great**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we live these and all our prayers to you, and be with us now as we pray together the prayer you taught us

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.
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

Blessing

Almighty God, who sent the Holy Spirit to Mary, proclaimed joy through the angels, sent the shepherds with good news, and led the magi by a star, bless you this day +through the word made flesh. Amen

Sending Hymn: Joy to the World

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive its King
Let every heart prepare him room and heaven and nature sing,

And heaven and nature sing, And heaven and heaven and nature sing.

He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness
And wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonders, wonders of his love.

Dismissal – Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus. **Thanks be to God.**

Mark Your Calendars:

Sunday, January 10th – Sunday Services 9am live streamed from Kirkebo. Kirkebo Council meeting at 9:45am.

Sunday, January 17th – Sunday Services 9am live streamed from Nora. Nora Council meeting at 9:45am.

Tuesday, January 19th – Joint Council meeting at 6:30pm, Nora.

Pastor Michele Jenson: Phone: 701-261-0998 Email: mjenson001@luthersem.edu Web Page: www.perleyparish.org Email: perleyparish@gmail.com



Is Christmas Really Over?

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12 (NIV)

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
M	L	I	V	A	Y	B	C	X	R	K	Z	G	T	J	O	N	Q	H	P	F	D	W	S	U	E

1. 13-10-5-8-26 _____
2. 23-16-10-2-22 _____
3. 21-2-26-24-19 _____
4. 7-16-10-17 _____
5. 17-5-1-26 _____
6. 14-10-25-14-19 _____
7. 7-26-2-3-26-4-26 _____
8. 23-16-10-22 _____
9. 13-2-16-10-6 _____
10. 8-19-3-2-22-10-26-17 _____

FLESH	BELIEVE	GLORY	WORLD	BORN
GRACE	NAME	CHILDREN	WORD	TRUTH

Is Christmas Really Over?

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

John 1:12 (NIV)

Based on John 1:10-18



X I A I E R R S D W E L L G L
 G N Z M J E E T Q J E S U S Q
 R S A P H O H C E C H V S S X
 A N E T A G D N E S N H T V T
 C B A E I W E Z Y I T M O J R
 E F N R N R O Z R L V I B C U
 K L W L D C E R G K T E F B T
 A A F L Z V E E L X N M B Y H
 I M I B G N N D V D O O Y O W
 E H B L E S S I N G W R W S F
 C B G O D L C U B M O Y F N L
 W Q R O B Y I W F L E S H B G
 O O D F M O A E G J X M A N C
 X Y R Q T N R Q V X S G U R C
 I B W D V Q X N H E G R H X G

JESUS	GLORY	DWELL	FATHER	RECEIVE
KNOWN	BLESSING	BELIEVE	WORLD	TESTIFY
FLESH	SEEN	CHILDREN	WORD	GOD
BORN	TRUTH	NAME	GRACE	RIGHT

Is Christmas Really Over?

Fill in the missing words from the word list. Check your answers in John 1:1-18 (NIV).



1. He ____ in the world, and though the world was made _____ him, the world did not recognize _____.
A. was B. him C. through
2. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed ____ his name, he gave the _____ to _____ children of God.
A. right B. become C. in
3. The Word _____ and _____ his dwelling among us.
A. became B. made C. flesh
4. We have seen ____ glory, the _____ of the One and _____, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.
A. his B. glory C. Only
5. No one has ever seen _____, but God the One and Only, _____ is at the Father's side, has _____ him known.
A. made B. God C. who