

Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. This Advent season, may our relationship with God and with one another grow as we celebrate Christ's coming. May we grow, not only in our appreciation for God's COVENANT, GRACE, EMPOWERMENT, and INTIMACY, shown to us through the Messiah, but also in our COVENANT, GRACE, EMPOWERMENT, and INTIMACY with one another.

*WELCOME WITH JOY AND A FEW SHORT ANNOUNCEMENTS
RINGING OF THE BELLS AND SILENT MEDITATION*

+ Please stand as you are able for these parts of the service

+ AN ANTIPHON OF EXPECTATION

(The first Advent candle urges you to be hopeful- FULL of Hope. "HOPE does not disappoint us" – Romans 5: 5)

P Lord, we come in this first week of Advent to await your coming--a coming promised thousands of years ago:

C A promise in the Garden: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." (Gen. 3:15)

P We come in expectation, assured that you, the great Promise-Keeper, will keep your promise:

C Just as St. Paul said, "... When the time had fully come, you sent your Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive the full rights of children." (Gal. 4:4-5)

P We come in joy, because your promises were kept, all of them, including the promise made outside of the Garden:

C "To destroy the devil's work." (1 Jn. 3:8)

P We come with joy, because Christmas announces the birth of the Savior, the promised Messiah:

C A Savior who would live, die and rise so that, as you promised, O Lord, "whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (Jn. 3:16)

All sing

Tune: LBW # 26

We come in expectation a covenant foretold.
The promise of a Savior, his kingdom now unfold.
Prepare our hearts to meet him; all nations now do greet
him:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's Word!

+ AN ANTIPHON OF CONFESSION

P Mark Twain once said, "To promise not to do a thing is the surest way in the world to make a body want to go and do that very thing." (*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, 1876*)

C Lord, as we come, we come to prepare.

P We prepare to more faithfully keep our promises to you and to one another.

C However, as we prepare and examine our hearts and minds, we recognize how we have failed to keep our promises.

P As St. Paul said, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." (*Rom. 7:15*)

C The promises we make are sincere, but they are short-lived.

P We don't make promises with intentions to break them,

C but so many circumstances get in the way, and what we wanted to do, we find ourselves not doing.

P Before we sinned, we hated those who did not keep their promises,

C but now we confess, we find ourselves doing the very things we hated in others.

P Your Word accuses us, showing us our sin:

C "For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do--this I keep on doing." (*Rom. 7:19*)

P We have pledged so many things to you as others, such as to love you above all things and our neighbor as ourselves,

C And yet we have not done so.

P We have been much too preoccupied with our own self-interest than with you and your will, with our neighbors' concerns and their needs.

C "Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living me that does it." (*Rom. 7:20*)

P Lord God, we promised that we would not let the unclean thoughts invade our minds,

C yet we have let them sneak back in and have entertained them as honored guests.

P We did not plan for our ears to hear the things they heard, our tongues to speak the words they spoke, our hands to participate in the evil they did.

C But too often throughout this week they did the very things we promised we would not participate in.

P These and so many other promises we have failed to keep, some of which we name before you silently

C Forgive us, Lord God. "How wretched we are! Who will rescue us from this body of death?" (*Rom. 7:24*)

All sing

A promise in the Garden you made so long ago;
You are the Promise Keeper, your love for us did show.
We come with joy this Advent, assured our Savior is
sent:
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's Word!

+ AN ANTIPHON OF FORGIVENESS

P "Thanks be to God--through Jesus Christ our Lord."

C There is forgiveness--forgiveness because God keeps his covenant of promise: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (1 Jn. 1:9)

P As your called and ordained pastor, it is my privilege, on this the beginning of a new church year, to assure you that all of your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

C His coming has brought us forgiveness. Amen.

All sing

You came to bring forgiveness; you came to live and die.
You rose as you did promise, eternal life supply.
God's promise will not fail you! No more shall doubt assail
you!
Hosanna to the Lord, for he fulfills God's Word!

+ GREETING

P Grace and peace be with you in the name of the Triune God,
who was, who is, and who is to come.

C And also with you. (*Greet one another in the pew around with the unity and peace offered through our Lord Jesus Christ.*)

+ PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.

C By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening

dangers of our sins, and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE OLD TESTAMENT LESSON, JEREMIAH 33:14-16, IS READ:
(A promise was made, hundreds of years before its fulfillment, of a Savior.)

The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: "The LORD is our righteousness."

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

THE EPISTLE LESSON, 1 THESSALONIANS 3:9-13, IS READ:
(It is St. Paul's prayer that we grow more in love with God and with others. May it especially happen this season.)

How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

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

SPECIAL MUSIC SUNG BY THE CHOIR

"Emmanuel"

Bob McGee

The Gospel Lesson, Luke 19:28-40, is read:

(Jesus comes this season just as he came to Jerusalem to be King of kings and Lord of lords.)

After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. When he had come near Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples, saying, "Go into the village ahead of you, and as you enter it you will find tied there a colt that has never been ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' just say this, 'The Lord needs it.'" So those who were sent departed and found it as he had told them. As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?" They said, "The Lord needs it." Then they brought it to Jesus; and after throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen, saying, "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!" Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, order your disciples to stop." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out."

P The Gospel of the Lord. C **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

THEME HYMN: STIR UP

Tune: LBW # 36

"Stir up your might, O God," we pray,
Then tremble at the words we say,
Full knowing that our fragile world

Could not withstand your might unfurled.

Stir up your might, O God, and ease
Our troubled minds. For you are pleased
To loose your mighty pow'r to save
From sting of death and grasp of grave.

Stir up, O God, your pow'r to free
Your children from sin's tyranny.
Protect us, Lord, by your great might,
And sin's grave dangers put to flight.

Stir up, O Christ, your saving might
That reaches into heaven's height,
Where with the Father, strong you reign
And Holy Spirit, e'er the same.

Stirring Up Advent Recipes For Relationships: Covenant

Today we begin an Advent series of messages on four stages present in God's relationship with humanity as well as human relationships with each other: 1) COVENANT, 2) GRACE, 3) EMPOWERMENT, 4) INTIMACY. These stages are most clearly seen in the coming of Christ at Christmas and is based on *THE FAMILY: A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE CONTEMPORARY HOME* (Baker Books, 1991) by Jack and Judith Balswick.

+ THE APOSTLES' CREED

P Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.
**ALL I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again 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.**

+ PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Response:

P Stir up your power, O God;
C **stir up your power and come.**

OFFERING IS GATHERED

+ DEDICATION OF PARAMENTS FOR THE ADVENT SEASON are given in memory of JoAnn Cross by the following:

Chris (daughter) and Tom Finland, Mike (son) and Betty Cross, Terri (granddaughter) and Scott Calleson, Jason (grandson) and Beth Finland, Javon (grandson) and Dawn Longeliere, Jaime (granddaughter) and John Emry, Jen (granddaughter) and Ky Thompson, Megan (granddaughter) and Jim McGinnis, Michelle Cross (granddaughter), June Livengood (sister), Fay Keck (friend), and JoAnne Cawley (friend).

+ OFFERING PRAYER

P God of faithfulness, we bring before you the precious gifts of your creation, and with them our very lives.

C **Teach us patience and hope as we care for those in need and prepare for your Son's advent into our hearts. Amen.**

SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION

+ PREFACE

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 Him thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right and good that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everliving God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel,

And ransom captive Israel,

That mourns in lonely exile here

Until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice!

Emmanuel Shall come to you, O Israel.

+ THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

+ LORD'S PRAYER

+ THE INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P Come, the table is ready. These are God's gifts for God's people.

DISTRIBUTION

What is this Bread? What is this Wine? At Messiah Lutheran Church, the Holy Supper of our Lord is celebrated in the confession and glad confidence that we receive “the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.” Our Lord welcomes to His table those who have faith in these words, “given for you” and “shed for you...for the forgiveness of sin.” Please extend hand out to receive the bread. Wine is offered from the Chalice or from individual cups. Grape juice (center ring, lighter color) is offered for those who choose not to receive wine. After the Pastor follows with the Chalice, place your empty cup in the rack on the communion rail. Children not yet prepared for the Sacrament may come forward for a blessing “that, living in the covenant of their Baptism and in communion with the Church, they may lead godly lives until the day of Jesus Christ.”

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

Join in singing the following selections from various resources:

LBW # 30

“COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS”

Come thou long-expected Jesus, Born to set thy people
free;

From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in
thee.

Israel’s strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth thou
art.

Dear desire of ev’ry nation, Joy of ev’ry longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver, Born a child and yet a king;
Born to reign in us forever, Now thy gracious king-dom
bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit Rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit Raise us to thy glorious throne.

LBW # 28

“SAVIOR OF THE NATIONS, COME”

Savior of the nations, come; Show the glory of the Son!
Ev’ry people, stand in awe; Praise the perfect Son of God.

Not of human seed or worth, But from God’s own mystic
breath,
Fruit in Mary’s womb begun When God breathed the Word,
his Son.

Wondrous birth! Oh, wondrous child Of the virgin undefiled!
Mighty God and man in one, Eager now his race to run!

God the Father's precious son Girds himself in flesh to run
For the trophies of our souls, Longer than this round earth
rolls.

Shining stable in the night, Breathing vict'ry with your
light;
Darkness cannot hide your flame, Shining bright as Jesus'
name.

+ PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P God for whom we wait, we give you thanks for this meal of life
that you have set before us.

**C May our sharing of this heavenly food, in which you are
present even now, nourish our faith, strengthen us for
service, and deepen our hunger for the coming of your reign
on earth as in heaven. Amen.**

+ THE BLESSING

P God our Father fill you with the light of divine love.
Amen.

P Jesus, our Emmanuel, bring you assurance he will come again.

C Amen.

P The Holy Spirit lead you until the dawning of the new day.

C Amen.

P Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now
and forever.

C Amen.

+ SENDING

BOB # 134

Jesus name above all names, beautiful Savior, glorious Lord
Emmanuel, God is with us, blessed Redeemer, living Word.

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Christ is with you.
C Thanks be to God.

MESSIAH MESSENGER

Messiah Lutheran Church, 500 Baytree Road, Valdosta, GA.
Announcements and news for the week of November 30 – December 07, 2008

EVENTS THIS WEEK

TODAY	Sunday Classes	9:15	AM
	1 st Sunday in Advent	10:30	AM
MONDAY	Special Church Council Meeting	7:00	PM
TUESDAY	Run-off Election	poll opens at 7 AM and closes at 7: PM	
	Access into the church is restricted from Monday noon until Wednesday noon		
WEDNESDAY	Jr. Confirmation Class	5:00	PM
	Choir	7:00	PM
THURSDAY	Baytree AA group	7:30	PM
SATURDAY	Decorate Church for Christmas	9:00	AM
	Christmas Program rehearsal	TBA	
	Baytree AA group	7:30	PM
NEXT SUNDAY	Sunday Classes	9:15	AM
	Second Sunday in Advent	10:30	AM

WE ARE DEVOTED TO OFFERING ... “God’s Love, Our Response”

2008 Budget Goal	\$ 134,716.00
Goal per week	\$ 2,591.00
Goal to Date	\$ 121,777.00
Offerings for 2008 Budget – as of 11/23	\$ 130,909.00
Offering Last Sunday 11/23	\$ 1,963.00
Weekly average for 47 weeks	\$ 2,785.00

Designated Offerings:

Building Fund	\$ 75.00
Organ Fund	\$ 0.00

“God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that ... having all that you need, you will abound in every good work” (2 Cor. 9: 8)

THE ALTAR FLOWERS are a gift and a warm reminder of God’s love to bloom where you are planted from **Mary Kinchen** in honor of son’s, **Mark**, birthday **Dec. 5**, and grandson, **Jimmy McIlmail’s** birthday **Dec. 6** and from **Kathy Lane** in memory of **Verne’s** birthday **Nov. 30**.

Thanks for the gift of flowers to enhance our worship, and to glorify the Lord our God and Savior. To order flowers, please use the registry located on the stand in the hallway toward the fellowship hall.

WE ARE DEVOTED TO PRAYER Acts 2: 42

CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK: Fran Sparks (Dec 3); Elizabeth Provance (daughter of John/Ellen Mitchell) (Dec. 6)..Missed **on this list? Please leave a note in the church office with name and birth date.**

ARMED FORCES AND THEIR FAMILIES deployed: Jeremy Christians in Korea; Dan Shannon, Paul Kannon deployed to Iraq also Kevin Sparks (Robins AFB, GA) Brian Sparks (Navy, VA) deployed to the middle east area.

NURSING HOME/ASSISTED LIVING PATIENTS/SHUT-INS

Rusty Hatcher at Heritage House Nursing Home
 Otto Peterson, Advent Village, FL. Nursing Home
 Mike Lagioia, Friendship Home
 Steve Keller, chronic kidney stones
 Vi Heidemann, heart condition

NEW JOYS & CONCERNS:

Deanese and Jeff Willis report that their friend Felton Tyson recovering from heart attack is home.

LIST OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Name	Concern/joy	Requested by	Relationship
Larry Ballowe	Lou Gehrig's disease	Rae Hubbard	friend's brother
June Orrison	cancer	Gloria Cook	cousin
Nancy Pieper	cancer	Lee & Sunny Schilly	friend
Belinda Judy	brain tumor	Dorothy Hauge	friend
Pr. Duane Hoyer	brain tumor	Warren Gee	friend
Kaylie Ellis (age4)	leukemia	Ellen Mitchell	friend
Gary Pasquino	chemo treatments	Bob Burns	uncle Mina Ark
Virginia Anderson	Alzheimer's	Betty Zipperer	sister
Mary Bennett	kidney removed	Susan Keller	friend
Roy McDanielle	lung disease	Duane Hauge	friend
Ricky Harrell	needs kidney transplant	Erin Jansen	uncle
Elizabeth Rabon	cancer	Erin Jansen	grandmother
Linda Brightwell	cancer	Tina Wright	friend/co-worker
Landon Adkins (age 5)	serious allergic reactions	Janie Jansen	friend
Diane McNamara	breast cancer	Pat Simpson	niece
Trudy Sigmon	radiation treatment	Nancy Stewart	friend
Ruth Eikelberg	Rehab	Nancy Stewart	mother in MI
Dr. Bradley Woodward	cancer	Pernell Jones	friend
Maebeth Gerisch	nursing home care	Ed Gerisch	wife
Charles Todd	tests on pancreas	Dana Black	friend
Melanie McDonald	brain seizures	Mary Kichen	cousin
Lisa Lane	cancer	Nan Boyd	coworker
Peter Dotlich	colon cancer	Bo Miller	friend
Suzanne Padgett	chemo pending	Kay Vincent	coworker
Will Parker	stroke, surgery pending	Dorothy Hauge	brother-in-law
Karen Lane	tests for tumor at Mayo	Kathy Lane	Vern's daughter
Teri Williams,	complications with pregnancy		
Vickie Johnson	health issues	Dana Black	mother
Bobby Joe Johnson	health issues	Dana Black	step-father
Jamie Barnhart (25)	kidney failure	Amber O'Quinn	friend
Roger	heart issues	Linda Klement	friend

Roxann Allen	foot amputation	Nancy Stewart	niece
Mike Patterson	chemo treatments	Jan Bristow	
Lisa Prince	pneumonia ICU	Montine/David Foutz	friend
Berry Shaffii	bone marrow transplant	Linda Welch	co-worker

WE ARE DEVOTED TO WORSHIP Acts 2: 42

Organ/Piano	Kay Vincent
Choir Director	Marjorie Fix
Reader	Jeff Moxley
Communion Assistants	Michelle Moxley
Acolyte	Brittany Nelson
Presenter, Children's message	Nancy Sult, Tina Wright
Greeters	Verna & Hobe Hodge
Nursery	
Ushers	Dick Rockey, Dennis Kluball

Altar preparation/Chancel care	Courtney Sheeley
Sound tech	Volunteer
Custodians	Bob & Valerie Behnke
Altar linen	Fran Sparks
Flower service	Helen Whitten
Flower beds	Whitten family
Grass cutting	Fred Daniels 245-0483
Floor Maintenance	Smith's Janitorials
	Laverne Smith 229 387-6060

Church Council.....	
Kay Vincent, president	Sandy Adams, v- pres/secretary
Jan Sparks, financial secretary	Kathy Lane, treasurer
Jeff Moxley, stewardship	Cindy Mitchell, youth
Bo Miller, worship	Vacant, evangelism
John Mitchell, property	Dana Black, Christian Ed.

WE ARE DEVOTED TO SERVICE

	Dec 7	Dec 14	Dec 21
Reader:	Children/	C Pieplow	L Welch
Com Assist:	youth	J Sparks	J Welch
Acolyte:	Christmas service	C Christians	A Sweeney
Chancel:	L Tinney	K Sheeley	C Pieplow
Nursery:	D Willis	T Wright	J Jansen
Greeters:	E Mitchell	C Sweeney	D Rockey
	C Pieplow	N Boyd	D Rockey
Ushers:	E Sheeley	W Tinney	S Davis
	J Sheeley	L Tinney	T France
	B Miller	G Klement	B France
	J Moxley	L Klement	M Dauphinais

Mission Statement

A place of worship for all to know Christ, be energized by the Gospel and share Christ's love.

GRACE AND PEACE BE YOURS from Pr. Richard

God bless Kevin Sparks (USAF) and Brian Sparks (USNavy) who both deploy today for up to 3 and 5 months in the middle east, divided by water and in different countries, so they can't visit each other.

LWML

"Christmas stockings"... jar in the narthex for you to empty your stockings by December 7.

Thank you from LWML for supporting all our mission projects throughout the year.

Due to the run-off election on December 2, and the Toys for Tots concert on December 9, the December meeting will be Monday, December 8, 7: PM. Joyful Noise lunch will be at the Red Lobster on December 8.

ANNUAL MEETING ON DEC. 14, ANOTHER BIG DECISION!!!

PROPERTY at 509 Pinetree (adjacent to the church property along the back fence), as announced last Sunday, is for sale. In order for the church to consider purchasing the property to expand our land area and our service to the community \$500 earnest money, refundable if the congregation does not approve buying the house at the Dec. 14th meeting, was submitted in order to hold the property while more information and details are gathered. Again, everything is contingent on congregation approval of this at our Dec. 14 meeting. The offer made was \$98,000. Asking price \$104,900. Questions and concerns may be addressed to any member of the church council. What would we use the property for? A daycare facility has been mentioned. Are there any other uses you can think of that will serve the Lord and His people?

PROPOSED BUDGET FOR 2009 REDUCED BY \$230

Please pick up a copy of the 2009 proposed budget of \$134,486. 2008 budget was \$134,716, or a net reduction of \$230 is proposed for 2009.

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