



TRINITY MERRILL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Reverend Scott Gustafson
Reverend Jonathan Chapa



December 7, 2025 8:00 AM and 6:00 PM

The Second Sunday of Advent

Sharing the message with us today is Pastor Scott Gustafson with Pastor Jonathan Chapa as our Liturgist.

As We Gather: The problem with good works is not *that* we should do them but *why*. Our works reflect what it is we believe and hold dear. Works are the fruit of repentance and faith and do not add to what Christ has done in His mighty work of redemption. The call to bear the good fruit of repentance is not to work harder to be saved but to manifest in our everyday lives that we are saved, that we belong to the Lord, and that He has accomplished all things for our salvation. John faced a generation impressed with their works and empty of faith in God's mercy. We should know that doing works is not a choice. Hearts of faith will produce the good fruits of repentance. This is the calling of Christians and the mark of the work of the Spirit in our lives.

PRE-SERVICE: ***"Light Of The World (Sing Hallelujah)"*** (Praise Team)
 "Come Thou Long-Expected Jesus" (Praise Team)

WELCOME & GREETING

OPENING SONG ***"Light Of The World (Sing Hallelujah)"***

Vs.1 *Light of the World Treasure of Heaven
Brilliant like the stars in the wintery sky
Joy of the Father reach through the darkness
Shine across the earth send the shadows to flight*

Vs.2 *Light of the World from the beginning
The tragedies of time were no match for Your love
From great heights of glory You saw my story
God You entered in and became one of us*

Chorus ***Sing hallelujah Sing hallelujah
Sing hallelujah for the things He has done
Come and adore Him
Bow down before Him
Sing hallelujah to the Light of the World***

Vs.3 *Light of the world crown in a manger
Born for the cross to suffer to save
High King of Heaven death is the poorer
We are the richer by the price that He paid*

(Chorus)

Vs.4 *Light of the World soon will be coming
With fire in His eyes He will ransom His own
Through clouds He will lead us straight into glory
And there He shall reign forevermore forevermore*

(Chorus)

INVOCATION

Lector: In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION Psalm 72:2, 4, alt.; Philippians 1:6

Pastor: May God judge His people with righteousness and justice.

People: **May He defend the poor, deliver the needy, and crush the oppressor.**

Silence for self-examination

Pastor: Holy and gracious God

People: **I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but some is known only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ I ask forgiveness. Deliver and restore me that I may rest in peace.**

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

Pastor: He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

People: **Amen.**

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Stir up our hearts, O Lord, to make ready the way of Your only-begotten Son, that by His coming we may be enabled to serve You with pure minds; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

**MONTHLY VERSE Isaiah 7:14 "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."**

SONG "Sing We The Song Of Emmanuel"

Vs.1 *Sing we the song of Emmanuel
This the Christ who was long foretold
Lo in the shadows of Bethlehem
Promise of dawn now our eyes behold*

Vs.3 *Go spread the news of Emmanuel
Joy and peace for the weary heart
Lift up your heads for your King has come
Sing for the Light overwhelms the dark*

Chorus 1 *God Most High in a manger laid
Lift your voices and now proclaim
Great and glorious Love has come to us
Join now with the hosts of heaven*

Chorus 3 *Glory shining for all to see
Hope alive let the gospel ring
God has made a way He will have the praise
Tell the world His name is Jesus
(Repeat)*

Vs.2 *Come we to welcome Emmanuel
King who came with no crown or throne
Helpless He lay the Invincible
Maker of Mary now Mary's son*

Bridge *Gloria Gloria
Gloria Gloria
(Repeat 2X)*

Chorus 2 *O what wisdom to save us all
Shepherds sages before Him fall
Grace and majesty what humility
Come on bended knee adore Him*

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APOSTLES' CREED

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 11:1-10

There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And his delight shall be in the fear of the Lord. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. ⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. ¹⁰ In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of him shall the nations inquire, and his resting place shall be glorious.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SECOND READING

Romans 15:4-13

⁴ For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. ⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

⁸ For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, ⁹ and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles, and sing to your name." ¹⁰ And again it says, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people." ¹¹ And again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him." ¹² And again Isaiah says, "The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope."

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope.

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 3:1-12

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, ² "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." ³ For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah when he said, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"

⁴ Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" ⁸ Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. ⁹ And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

SONG OF THE DAY

"On Jordan's Bank"

Vs.1 *On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry
Announces that the Lord is nigh
Awake and hearken for He brings
Glad tidings of the King of kings*

Vs. 2 *Then cleansed be every heart from sin
Make straight the way of God within
And let each heart prepare a home
Where such a mighty guest may come*

Vs.3 *For You are our salvation Lord
Our refuge and our great reward
Without Your grace we waste away
Like flowers that wither and decay*

Vs.4 *To heal the sick stretch out Your hand
And bid the fallen sinner stand
Shine forth and let Your light restore
Earth's own true loveliness once more*

Congregation Please Stand

Vs.5 *All praise the Son eternally
Whose advent sets His people free
Whom with the Father we adore
And Spirit blest forevermore*

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MESSAGE

ATTENDANCE /CONNECT TIME / OFFERING (Instrumental) "On Jordan's Bank"

During this time, please sign the attendance book found in the pew or use your mobile device to fill out the Connect Card or submit prayer requests on our app or online at www.trinitymerrill.com/live. You can also visit our app or www.trinitymerrill.com/give to learn more about other ways to support the ministries at Trinity. (When filling out the attendance book – please include your last name and list the names of all in attendance in your family)

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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; and 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.

BENEDICTION

CLOSING SONG

“Angels We Have Heard On High”

Vs.1 Angels we have heard on high
Sweetly singing o'er the plains
And the mountains in reply
Echoing their joyous strains

Chorus *Gloria, In excelsis Deo*
Gloria, In excelsis Deo

Vs.2 Shepherds why this jubilee
Why your joyous strains prolong
What the gladsome tidings be
Which inspire your heav'nly song

(Chorus)

Vs.3 Come to Bethlehem and see
Christ whose birth the angels sing
Come adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord the newborn King

(Chorus)

Vs.4 See Him in a manger laid
Whom the choirs of angels praise
Mary Joseph lend your aid
While our hearts in love we raise

(Chorus)

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Today's radio broadcast is sponsored in loving memory of Wayne Teske who passed away 5 years ago by Marlene (Molly) Teske and family

The flowers on the altar are sponsored in loving memory of Robert Bonke's 88th birthday by his sister Barbara Bonke.



Make plans to invite your friends and family and neighbors to join your Trinity family at some of the wonderful events happening at Trinity over the next few weeks. We would love to see everyone in worship on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Join us in celebrating Jesus!

🎄 ✨ Advent at Trinity – Mark Your Calendars! ✨ 🎄

The Christmas season is almost here, and Trinity has a wonderful lineup of Advent events to help us celebrate the joy and hope of our Savior's birth! From music-filled worship to family gatherings and festive traditions, there's something for everyone to enjoy this December. Here's what's coming up — be sure to **mark your calendars** and **watch for more details** as we get closer to each event! Here's what's coming up — be sure to **mark your calendars** and **watch for more details** as we get closer to each event!

- 📅 **Sunday, December 8** – ELC Christmas Service (6:00 PM)
- 📅 **Wednesday, December 10** – Trinity Advent Series: Firm Foundation Ringers (6:30 PM)
- 📅 **Thursday, December 11** – 6th–8th Grade Christmas Service (6:00 PM)
- 📅 **Tuesday, December 16** – 2nd–5th Grade Christmas Service (6:00 PM)
- 📅 **Wednesday, December 17** – Trinity Advent Series: The Garms Family (6:30 PM)
- 📅 **Thursday, December 18** – 4K–1st Grade Christmas Service (6:00 PM)
- 📅 **Friday, December 19**– Middle School Youth Christmas Party (4-6:00 PM)
- 📅 **Friday, December 19**– High School Youth Christmas Party (7:00-9:00 PM)
- 📅 **Saturday, December 20** – Christmas Movie at the Cosmo (3:30 PM)

We invite you to enjoy some beautiful music, joyful fellowship, and meaningful worship await as we prepare our hearts for Christmas.

HAVEN GIVING TREE is in the Narthex. You are encouraged to grab a tag from the tree, purchase and wrap the gift, put the tag on top of the package and place the wrapped gift under the HAVEN tree prior to December 22nd. Gifts will be delivered on December 23rd.

Men's Bible Study: The Trinity Men's Breakfast and Bible Study will take a short break during the month of December. We look forward to resuming our gatherings in the new year, with our next meeting scheduled for **Saturday, January 17th**. We hope you'll join us then for a morning of fellowship, food, and time in God's Word.

YOUTH NEWS FOR DECEMBER -

Middle School Youth: Dec. 10, and 17th from 3:30-5:30 pm

Dec. 19 - Middle School Christmas Party 4:00-6:00 pm

High School Youth- Dec. 7th and Dec. 28th from 7-9pm

Dec. 19 - High School Christmas Party 7:00-9:00 pm

Have you purchased Scrip for the Holidays?

Scrip are available at all Worship Services and in the Church Office.

This is the time of the year that scrip is most readily used. Scrip can be used to purchase all your baking and Holiday menu needs. They make great Christmas presents for those who have everything. They are wonderful stocking stuffers too. Let your loved one, friend, boss, secretary (haha) pick out what they want themselves by getting a scrip gift certificate for them. Don't wait, buy now to be assured you get the cards you want. You won't be sorry and you will be helping the church and school!!

Trinity Children's Christmas Programs

Mon. Dec. 8 - ELC - 6:00 PM

Thurs. Dec. 11 - Grades 6-8 - 6:00 PM

Tues. Dec. 16- Grades 2- 5 - 6:00 PM

Thurs. Dec.18 -Grades 4K - Gr. 1- 6:00 PM

Bring your family, neighbors and friends as our children share the wonderful message of Jesus' birth.

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve: Wednesday, December 24

3:00 PM Contemporary Candlelight Service

5:00 PM Traditional Candlelight Service

7:00 PM Traditional Candlelight Service

Christmas Day: Thursday, December 25

9:30 AM Traditional Service with Communion

New Years Eve: Wednesday, December 31

6:00 PM Traditional Service with Communion



Church Office Holiday Hours

....Please purchase your scrip and handle any church office needs before the Christmas holiday. The church office will be closed on December 24th and December 25th to celebrate the Christmas holiday with our families. We will also be closed at noon on December 31st and all day January 1st for the New Year holiday. The church staff wishes you and your family a joyous Christmas and a happy New Year.

PASTOR GUSTAFSON 15 YEAR ANNIVERSARY AT TRINITY

Join us in celebrating Pastor Gustafson's 15 years of faithful service at Trinity Lutheran Church! We give thanks for the journey that brought him here—from his childhood in Tampa, Florida, to his studies at Concordia Chicago and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, to his years of ministry in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Through every step, God has shaped him into the caring, energetic, and Gospel-driven shepherd we are blessed to call "Pastor G." His passion for sharing Christ's love shines brightly in our worship, our school, and throughout the Merrill community.

Pastor Gustafson's journey into ministry has been filled with moments of faith, dedication, and God's unmistakable guidance. After spending his vicarage at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Spring Lake Park, MN, he completed his Seminary studies and Clinical Pastoral Education before beginning his first call at St. John's Lutheran Church & School in Norwood Young America, MN. He served faithfully there from 1996 to 2010, sharing the Gospel and nurturing a strong church and school community.

In 2010, the Lord led Pastor G to Trinity Lutheran Church in Merrill, WI—a call placed in part through Georgia's uncle, Alvin Pagel, who added his name to the list. And in a beautiful coincidence—or perhaps a divine nudge—a tree the Gustafsons had planted fell in the direction of Trinity soon after the call arrived. From that moment forward, Pastor G knew the Lord was leading him here.

We also celebrate the family that supports and surrounds him. Pastor G met his wife, Georgia, at Concordia University Chicago, and together they share five wonderful children—David, Caleb, Joshua, Sarah, and Rachel. We are deeply grateful for his leadership, compassion, and unwavering commitment to Trinity. Congratulations, Pastor G, on 15 years of ministry—may God continue to bless your service for many years to come!