



# 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***

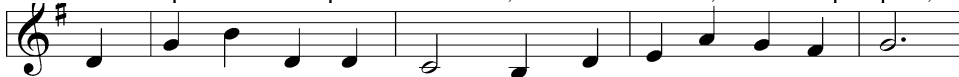
Sharing the message with us today is Pastor Scott Gustafson with Pastor Jonathan Chapa as the Liturgist and Mark Knorr assisting as the Lector. Polly Schneider will be the organist today.

### **OPENING HYMN “Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”**

LSB 515



1 Re - joice, re-joice, be - liev - ers, And let your lights ap - pear;  
2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain Pro - claim the Bride-groom near;  
3 The saints, who here in pa - tience Their cross and suf - f'rings bore;  
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



The eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, And dark - er night is near.  
Go forth as He ap - proach - es With al - le - lu - ias clear.  
Shall live and reign for - ev - er When sor - row is no more.  
A - rise, O Sun so longed for, O'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The Bride-groom is a - ris - ing And soon is draw - ing nigh.  
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; The gates wide o - pen stand.  
A - round the throne of glo - ry The Lamb they shall be - hold;  
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, We plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; At mid - night comes the cry.  
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; The Bride-groom is at hand.  
In tri - umph cast be - fore Him Their di - a - dems of gold.  
The day of earth's re - demp - tion That sets Your peo - ple free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907, alt. Tune: Swedish Text and tune: Public domain

### **INVOCATION**

**A** In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit

**C** **Amen.**

**A** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

**C** **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

*Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.*

## CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

A Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C **Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

P 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.

C **Amen.**

## KYRIE

A In peace let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

C **Lord, have mercy.**

A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C **Amen.**

## SALUTATION

A The Lord be with you.

C **And also with you.**

## COLLECT OF THE DAY

A 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.

C **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. <sup>2</sup>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, <sup>4</sup> 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. <sup>5</sup> Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. <sup>6</sup> 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. <sup>7</sup> The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

(8:00 AM) **SPECIAL MUSIC** “*Prepare*” by the Holiday Choir

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

### EPISTLE

### Romans 15:4-13

<sup>4</sup>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. <sup>5</sup>May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup>Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

<sup>8</sup>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, <sup>9</sup>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.” <sup>10</sup>And again it says, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.” <sup>11</sup>And again, “Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and let all the peoples extol him.” <sup>12</sup>And again Isaiah says, “The root of Jesse will come, even he who arises to rule the Gentiles; in him will the Gentiles hope.”

<sup>13</sup>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.

A This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

## ALLELUIA AND VERSE

LSB 156





words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

## HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 3:1-12

A The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the third chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, <sup>2</sup>“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” <sup>3</sup>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.’”

<sup>4</sup> Now John wore a garment of camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. <sup>5</sup> Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, <sup>6</sup>and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. <sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruit in keeping with repentance. <sup>9</sup> 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. <sup>10</sup> 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. <sup>11</sup> “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. <sup>12</sup> 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.”

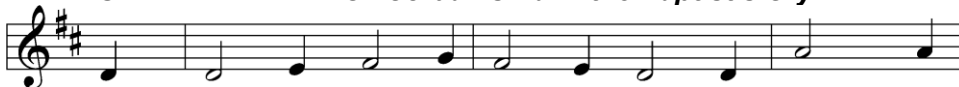
A This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

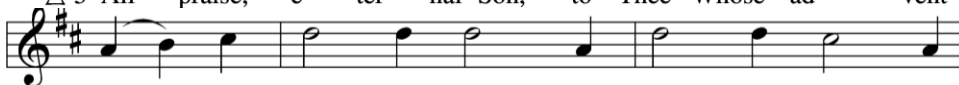
## HYMN OF THE DAY

*“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”*

LSB 344



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry An - nounc - es  
2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; Make straight the  
3 We hail Thee as our Sav - ior, Lord, Our ref - uge  
4 Lay on the sick Thy heal - ing hand And make the  
5 All praise, e - ter - nal Son, to Thee Whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; A - wake and hear - ken,  
way for God with - in, And let us all our  
and our great re - ward; With - out Thy grace we  
fall - en strong to stand; Show us the glo - ry  
sets Thy peo - ple free, Whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings Glad tid - ings of the King of kings!  
hearts pre - pare For Christ to come and en - ter there.  
waste a - way Like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.  
of Thy face Till beau - ty springs in ev - 'ry place.  
we a - dore And Ho - ly Spir - it ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676–1749; tr. Composite Tune: adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621 Text and tune: Public domain

## SERMON

### 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.

**(8:00 AM) CONNECT TIME MUSIC “When Will the Little King Come?” by the Holiday Choir**

**ATTENDANCE / CONNECT TIME & OFFERING** *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](http://www.trinitymerrill.com/live). You can also visit our app or [www.trinitymerrill.com/give](http://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 names and list the names of everyone in attendance in your family)*

### OFFERTORY



What shall I ren - der to the Lord for all His ben - e - fits to  
me? I will of - fer the sac - ri - fice of thanks - giv - ing and will  
call on the name of the Lord. I will take the cup of sal  
va - tion and will call on the name of the Lord. I will pay my  
vows to the Lord now in the pres - ence of all His peo - ple, in the  
courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Je - ru - sa - lem.

## PRAYER OF THE CHURCH & THE LORD'S PRAYER

- C 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

- P 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 T give you peace.
- C Amen.

## CLOSING HYMN

### *"Prepare the Royal Highway"*

LSB 343



- 1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; The King of kings is near!
- 2 God's peo - ple, see Him com - ing: Your own e - ter - nal king!
- 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen To greet your prom - ised king!
- 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; It comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley A lev - el road ap - pear!  
Palm branch-es strew be - fore Him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion Its trib - ute too should bring.  
His rule is peace and free - dom And jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of Glo - ry Fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
All lands, bow down be - fore Him! All na - tions, now a - dore Him!  
So let your praise be sound - ing For kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

*Refrain*



Ho - san - na to the Lord, For He ful - fills God's Word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. Lutheran Book of Worship, 1978, alt. Tune: Swedish, 17th cent. Text: © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110005698 Tune: Public domain

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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 her family.

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

**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 24<sup>th</sup> and December 25<sup>th</sup> to celebrate the Christmas holiday with our families. We will also be closed at noon on December 31<sup>st</sup> and all day January 1<sup>st</sup> for the New Year Holiday. The church staff wishes you and your family a joyous Christmas and a happy New Year.

## **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 Rings* (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.

**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.

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!

## 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



**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.

### **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 & school!!

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

#### **Trinity Children's Christmas Programs**

**Mon. Dec. 8** – ELC (Early Learning Center) - 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.

### **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!