

Messiah Lutheran Church  
1796-15 Avenue East  
Prince Albert, S6V 8A1

Website: [www.messiahluthpa.ca](http://www.messiahluthpa.ca)

Facebook and YouTube: MessiahLutheranChurchPrinceAlbert

Pastor Fran Schmidt

Cell: 1-306-716-3954

Email: [pastor.mlc@sasktel.net](mailto:pastor.mlc@sasktel.net)

Lisa/Office: 306-763-7374

E-mail: [messiah@sasktel.net](mailto:messiah@sasktel.net)

Messiah office: Closed December 24 – 31  
Messiah phone messages and emails will be checked daily.

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Worship for 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Christmas, December 26, 2021  
Service of Stories Behind the Carols

Sunday Worship Service: In person and live broadcast on-line, begins at 10:30am. The wearing of masks is mandatory, and Covid vaccinations and hand sanitizing are encouraged. Offering is collected at the entry into the Sanctuary. The service is taped for later viewing on the Messiah website.

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Prayers for Healing and On-Going Health Concerns:

We pray for comfort and healing for all those who are suffering in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their time of need.



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POINSETTIA'S HONORING THE MEMORY OF LOVED ONES

Ed & Trudy Bowen (Colleen Bowen's parents)  
Sulo Koivu (Pastor Fran's Grandpa)  
Jolene Mayer (Donna Deobald)  
Janet Wahn, John & Barb Meyers (Craig & Sue Meyers' parents)  
Judy Haight (Lisa Haight's Mother)  
Ervin Bauer (Myrtle Bauer's husband & Cheryl Bauer Hyde)  
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“Crossover”

Personal Discernment Retreat Day

Saskatoon Theological Union is hosting a “Crossover” Personal Discernment Retreat Day on Friday, January 7th from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. online and in person at Queen’s House Retreat Centre. As reflection on God’s calling naturally crosses denominational boundaries, we are hosting this retreat in a multi-denominational way. The three Saskatoon Theological Union Colleges are well represented in these proceedings: Chapel Deans, specific musical, art therapist and general support.

They will also have three to four people from Lutheran, United and Anglican churches sharing about how they share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Date: Friday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Location: Meeting Room “C” in Queen’s House Retreat Centre  
601 Taylor Street West. Saskatoon

Remote Delivery Option: Retreat House ZOOM Connection

Cost to Individuals: \$25 onsite and \$15 online involvement with option to book a local Spiritual Director for 45 minutes at \$30.

Lunch is Optional: bring a bag lunch (no onsite cook scheduled)

Questions or Registration: [trish.mccarthy@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca](mailto:trish.mccarthy@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca) / Cell: 306 370 8378

Final Deadline: Monday, January 3, 2022.



Saskatchewan Synod – 2021 Christmas Greeting Blessings to you all as you prepare to keep Christmas: to celebrate the birth of the Christ into our world—in the birth to Mary in Bethlehem, in coming to earth in a cloud of hope in a time unimaginable, and in the between time—in the many ways the Spirit moves among the people.

Last year, as I recall, my only in-person Christmas gathering to keep Christmas, was a brief gathering of immediate family behind our daughter and son-in-law’s house. We gathered around a campfire, coffee in hand, and listened to the Christmas story together. Looking back, our gathering last Christmas resembled the first Christmas more than our ‘normal’ Christmas celebrations. Like Mary

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This year, as we set out to keep Christmas, things are different . . . and not so different. We set out to keep Christmas this year less fearfully with a pandemic that our medical experts are teaching us how to live with. But we will still gather cautiously—following health directives. With the emergence of the latest variant, we may see COVID numbers in some areas of the synod leading us to keep Christmas even more cautiously.

But let me say this: Keep Christmas. It may be in a smaller in-person congregation. It may be by video conferencing. It may be that you will decide to gather in the family ‘bubble’ at home. But, in whatever circumstances, I urge the followers of Jesus to keep Christmas. With all the uncertainty of Mary and Joseph in a stable in Bethlehem, keep Christmas.

- Listen again to the story (Lk 2.1-20).
- Pray for the world and for each other (or simply say the Lord’s Prayer in unison).
- Offer gifts to loved ones (and to those in need beyond our own circles.)

Blessings to you all as you keep Christmas—in familiar and unfamiliar ways—this year of our Lord 2021.  
Peace, Bishop Sid

## GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

## WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING CAROL: ELW#289 "Angels We Have Heard on High" vs. 1 & 3

## OPENING PRAYER

Praise the Living God! Praise God from the heavens:

Sun and moon and shining stars, praise the Living God!

Praise God's Holy Name,

whose word speaks all things into being, who is present in the expanse of the universe,  
and in the voices of children.

Praise the Living God, our rescuer and deliverer,

whose wonder is found in the heavens and in all creation,

who comes in innocence, and with mercy.

O God, our light, our beauty, our rest: With the appearance of your Son,

you have brought us into your new creation.

Form us into your people, and root our lives in you; through Christ, the Living Light.

Amen.

## WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

A reading from Isaiah.

<sup>1</sup>The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus <sup>2</sup>it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God. <sup>3</sup>Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. <sup>4</sup>Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." <sup>5</sup>Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

and the ears of the deaf unstopped; <sup>6</sup>then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert; <sup>7</sup>the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. <sup>8</sup>A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it,

but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. <sup>9</sup>No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. <sup>10</sup>And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Word of God, word of life. Thanks be to God.

## STORY:

In 1865, the famous preacher and abolitionist Phillip Brooks rode on horseback from Jerusalem to Bethlehem and participated in the Church of the Nativity's Christmas Eve celebration. In response to his experience there, he wrote the now-famous carol "O Little Town of Bethlehem," which was first performed by the children's choir of his church a few years later. Unlike many Christmas carols, the lyrics of this reflective and hopeful song are set in the present tense rather than the past. The author's experience of wonder and awe are palpable and cover the seemingly great distance between the birth of Christ then and our experience of it now.

CAROL: ELW#279 "O Little Town of Bethlehem" vs. 1 & 4

## READING: Isaiah 11:1-9

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. <sup>2</sup> The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. <sup>3</sup> His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide 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; 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 around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins. <sup>6</sup> The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling 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 asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. <sup>9</sup> They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

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## STORY

Though the tune is taken from a much older madrigal, John Mason Neale's "Good King Wenceslas" (1853) is about a man who braves winter storms during Saint Stephen's Day (December 26) to help his poorer neighbours. The story it tells is based on a real person—Wenceslaus I, Duke of Bohemia—who was assassinated by his own brother and had been adored by his subjects. His charity and popularity eventually led to his being named the patron saint of the Czech Republic. This carol is beloved by many, in large part because of the evocative story images and the possibility for performance. Traditionally, the part of the Page (the king's assistant) is sung by a treble voice, while the King is sung by a bass voice. However, in a congregational setting, the same could be achieved by assigning a part to higher and lower voices, or children and adults, or one half of the church and the other, with everyone joining together for the non-dialogue parts. The whole thing is quite a bit of fun, especially since the opportunities to sing this simple Christmas story are so few.

CAROL: "Good King Wenceslas" vs. 1 & 5

## STORY

Written by Massachusetts Unitarian minister Edmund Sears, this pastoral-sounding carol carries a much deeper meaning than simply retelling the birth of Jesus. Sears hoped to offer an uplifting message amid the great poverty he was witness to and to remind people that God, in the form of a child, had entered a world sorely in need of love and peace. Richard Storrs Willis' tune, CAROL, paired with the words only a year later, gave the carol its lasting appeal and one of its two most common tunes, the other being NOËL. A

very fine movie made in 1992, *A Midnight Clear*, tells the story of American and German soldiers laying aside their weapons on Christmas Eve of 1944. The story ends tragically, as miscommunication causes hostilities to resume. Yet, the powerful third verse of the carol, with its invitation to hush the noise of battle in order to hear God's "love song" to the earth and all people, is a strong one. This carol speaks gently, yet powerfully, God's word of peace amid strife and weariness.

CAROL: ELW#282 "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" vs. 1 & 4

READING: Isaiah 63:7-9

I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD, the praiseworthy acts of the LORD, because of all that the LORD has done for us, and the great favor to the house of Israel that he has shown them according to his mercy, according to the abundance of his steadfast love. <sup>8</sup> For he said, "Surely they are my people, children who will not deal falsely"; and he became their savior <sup>9</sup> in all their distress. It was no messenger or angel but his presence that saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

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STORY

In 1816, Father Joseph Mohr wrote the poem "Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!" while stationed at a pilgrim church in Mariapfarr, Austria. Two years later, now at St. Nicholas' church in Oberndorf, he asked Franz Gruber to set the poem for guitar and choir, which the two performed on Christmas Eve of 1818. Since then, a legend has grown around the circumstances of this collaboration, beginning with a broken organ at St. Nicholas' and ending with a dramatic, last-minute musical setting for the now-familiar carol. To what extent the legend of the carol's origins is true is perhaps less important than its beauty and simplicity.

CAROL: ELW#281 "Silent Night, Holy Night"

PRAYER

God blesses us through prayer.

OFFERING HYMN: ELW #296 "What Child is This?"

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray, In the gifts of word and song, we hear the story of your gift of life, O God. Here, we offer what we can of ourselves, we who are part of that same story, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

As you have drawn us to your cradle of wondrous love, O God, draw us together in this place, that we might pray for your people and your world, praying, hear us O God, and responding, Your mercy is great.

...

We pray these things in the name of Jesus, who became the Christ, and who taught us to pray ... 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.

## SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

## 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 & always in the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.

Three-Fold Sung Amen.

SENDING SONG: ELW#298 "The Bells of Christmas" vs. 1, 3 & 6

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

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CAROL: ELW#281 "Silent Night, Holy Night"

PRAYER

God blesses us through prayer.

OFFERING HYMN: ELW #296 "What Child is This?"

OFFERING PRAYER

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

As you have drawn us to your cradle of wondrous love, O God, draw us together in this place, that we might pray for your people and your world, praying, hear us O God, and responding, Your mercy is great.

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We pray these things in the name of Jesus, who became the Christ, and who taught us to pray ... 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.

## SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

## 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 & always in the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠ and of the Holy Spirit.

Three-Fold Sung Amen.

SENDING SONG: ELW#298 "The Bells of Christmas" vs. 1, 3 & 6

## DISMISSAL

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