



OUR REDEEMER
LUTHERAN CHURCH
GRAND PRAIRIE

You are welcome here!
**We are disciples of Jesus, growing
in Faith, Hope, and Love.**

Address

4729 S. Carrier Parkway
Grand Prairie, TX 75052



Phone

972-642-5683



Website

www.OurRedeemerGP.org



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Worship Times

Sunday 10:15 am
Wednesday 7:00 pm



Pastor

Rev. Julio Cruz-Natal



December 17, 2023
Third Sunday of
Advent

Gathering

✘ INTRODUCTION

“Rejoice always,” begins the reading from 1 Thessalonians. Isaiah and the psalmist make clear that God is turning our mourning into laughter and shouts of joy. “All God’s children got a robe,” go the words of a spiritual. It is not so much a stately, formal, pressed outfit as it is a set of party clothes, clothes we are happy to wear. We receive that robe in baptism, and in worship we gather for a foretaste of God’s party.

✘ CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

C **Amen.**

P God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Everlasting God,

C **you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation’s bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.**

P Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of ✚ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God’s covenant is eternal, and God’s blessing rests upon us all.

C **Amen.**

✘ GATHERING HYMN – Awake! Awake and Greet the New Morn (ELW#242)

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✘ GREETING

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C **And also with you.**

✘ LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

P Praise to you, O God, who holds our joy and sorrow. You bring water to parched ground and life out of death. Bless us as this light grows, and send sorrow and sighing to flee away. Give us strength and patience, trusting that you are true to your promises. Transform the lives of all who suffer with your wonders near at hand.

C Amen.

✘ ADVENT HYMN – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW #257) verse 4

O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
Your own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell your people save,
And give them victory over the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

✘ PRAYER OF THE DAY

A Let us pray. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Word

✘ FIRST LESSON – Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

✠ RESPONSIVE READING – Psalm 126

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.

²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.**

Then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.”

³The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

⁵Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

✠ SECOND LESSON – 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil.

²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

L The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are able to welcome the gospel.

✠ GOSPEL ACCLAMATION – (ELW #519)

Open Your Ears, O Faithful People



1 O - pen your ears, O faith-ful peo - ple, o - pen your ears and hear God's word,
 2 They who have ears to hear the mes - sage, they who have ears, now let them hear;



O - pen your hearts, O roy - al priest-hood, God has come to you:
 they who would learn the way of wis - dom, let them hear God's word.

Refrain



To - rah o - ra, To - rah o - ra, hal - le - lu - jah!
 God has spo - ken to the peo - ple, hal - le - lu - jah!



To - rah o - ra, To - rah o - ra, hal - le - lu - jah!
 God has spo - ken words of wis - dom, hal - le - lu - jah!



To - rah o - ra, To - rah o - ra, hal - le - lu - jah!
 God has spo - ken to the peo - ple, hal - le - lu - jah!



To - rah o - ra, To - rah o - ra, hal - le - lu - jah!
 God has spo - ken words of wis - dom, hal - le - lu - jah!

Text: Hasidic traditional; Willard F. Jabusch, b. 1930, English version
 Music: YISRAEL VORAITA, Hasidic tune
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✠ GOSPEL – John 1:6-8, 19-28

P The Holy Gospel, according to John, the first chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” ²²Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ ” as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?” ²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

✠ SERMON

✠ HYMN OF THE DAY– All Earth is Hopeful (ELW #266)

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✠ APOSTLES’ CREED (ELW p. 105)

P With the whole Church, let us confess our faith:

C 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 catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

✠ PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

A Fill our mouths with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy as we bear witness to the great things you have done. Give your church a spirit of gladness as we gather and as we are sent. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A Let the trees of the field sing your praise. Protect forests, orchards, rainforests, and all wooded areas from disease and deforestation. Keep us grateful for their gifts of oxygen, food, shade, and shelter. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A You love justice and promise your favor to those who are oppressed, brokenhearted, and incarcerated. Grant wisdom and compassion to those who work for public safety and all who work within prisons, jails, and courts, that mercy may increase and violence wither away. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need, especially those we name before you now, silently or aloud. (*pause*) Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A Open our hearts to those who serve as truth-tellers in our church and in our society. Bless leaders in church and society in their task of proclamation. Amplify voices of peacemakers, advocates, and especially those whose voices are ignored or marginalized. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

A With gratitude we rejoice in the saints who witnessed to your life in all circumstances, in whom your Spirit was not quenched, even in death. Through them, teach us always to hold fast to what is good. Merciful God,

C receive our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

A Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

C Amen.

✘ PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you all.

C And also with you.

✘ OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, here and around the world.

After the offering is gathered, the gifts are brought forward to the altar.

As this happens, please stand as you are able for the offering prayer and meal.

✘ OFFERING PRAYER

A God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth.

Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C Amen.

Meal

✘ GREAT THANKSGIVING

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 our thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. 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 to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

✘ HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW #190)

**C Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full, full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest, Hosanna in the highest.**

✠ EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

P Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

C Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

P With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

C Come, Lord Jesus.

P Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

C Come, Holy Spirit.

P All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

✠ LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

✘ INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together.
Come, take your place at the table.

✘ DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

✘ COMMUNION HYMN – Now the Heavens Start to Whisper (ACS#901)

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✘ PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior.

✘ BLESSING

P The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✚ remain upon you now and forever.

C Amen.

✘ ANNOUNCEMENTS

✘ SENDING HYMN – Come to Be Our Hope, O Jesus (ACS #904)

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✘ DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Keep awake.

C Thanks be to God.

**This year's Christmas Eve Service will be held at
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church on Sunday evening,
December 24th, at 7 p.m.**

**Food to bring this holiday season for Grand Prairie Food and
Clothing Co-op:**

Canned soup (small cans and large cans)
Canned peas and canned mixed veggies
Canned meat (tuna, Spam, chili, ravioli, chicken)
Canned gravy and gravy packets
Dry beans and dry rice
Mac and Cheese (dinner box)
Spaghetti
Peanut butter

Any of the above items can be brought to the church and placed in the bin provided in the Narthex. **THANKS!!!** - for helping us be Disciples of Jesus by serving our community in this way.

✠ SERVING TODAY

Presiding Minister:	The Rev. Julio Cruz-Natal
Music Director:	John Zacharias
Altar:	Cindy Dolezal/Nina Wallace-Martinez
Assisting Minister:	Cindy Dolezal
Lay Reader:	Julie Schmidt
Usher:	Julie Bothun
Videographer:	Steve Curry
Communion Cup Holder:	Kyle Bennett

Children in attendance are welcome to break away during our services with our Sunday School teachers. Those teachers include Cheri Oertel (director), Julie Bothun, Katie Valencia and Phyllis Bell.

If anyone would be interested in volunteering once a month to teach Sunday School during the service, please contact the church office or talk to Cheri Oertel.

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