

Advent 2 - Life Expectancy

December 4th, 2022

9:15am - Hybrid Worship



Lutheran Church of the Living Christ

2725 Concord Dr, Florissant, MO 63033

Find us online: www.lc-livingchrist.org

Every year we enter Advent as a season of expectation and promise. We spend four weeks waiting and watching, with wonder building as we hear of God's expected transformation of the world.

Through this Advent and Christmas season, we are invited into a time of great expectation. We are invited to wrestle with our own expectations of God and God's expectations for us. Where is God calling us to be willingly watchful? Where is God delighting us with unexpected peace? Where is God filling us with unexpected abundance? Where is God meeting us with the divine in our midst?

Welcome to Lutheran Church of the Living Christ

Welcome! If you came as a guest today, we hope you leave as a friend. May this worship service surround you with the love of God through Christ and fill you with the Holy Spirit.

Invitation to Communion: We welcome all to commune at LCLC. It is not our table, nor this congregation's table, nor our denomination's table. It is the table of Jesus Christ. By his invitation there is a place for everyone. We believe that Jesus is present in the bread and wine that forgives sin, nourishes faith, and calls us to be witnesses to the gospel.

Notes about our worship service: Guidance is printed in *italics* throughout. "P" indicates the speaking part of the presiding minister; "L" indicates a speaking part of a lay leader; "C" and parts in **boldface** indicate speaking parts of the whole congregation. You may also follow along with the service by looking at the screen in the front of the sanctuary. Liturgical pieces are set to familiar Christmas tunes. This liturgy is provided by the Eastern Missouri Conference of the Central States Synod.

Please be mindful of others' comfort with touch. Ask before giving a handshake or hug.

PRELUDE Hark, the Glad Sound by C.S. Lang

WELCOME

The assembly is invited to stand as worship begins.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

C: Blessed be God's name forever. Amen.

P: Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep. Let us confront our sins, and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God of great expectations,

C: We confess that we have been closed off to your reign of justice.

We have strayed from your paths.

We expect war instead of peace.

**We lower our expectations for life,
dishonoring one another and your creation.**

**Purify us with your refining fire
and set us again on your expectant way of love,
that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance,
and welcome your coming among us. Amen.**

P: People of God, expect the unexpected.

God gives us living signs:

New things are growing in our midst and tender branches spring forth.

This is our life expectancy.

By water and the Spirit we are joined to this wonder.

We have put on ☩ Christ,

and our sins have been washed away.

Rejoice in the way of our God, where and when we least expect it.

C: Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

L: Sometimes we see endings – axes razing trees and vines;
predators stalking prey.

**C: Yet, God still calls us to expect life,
even from what once seemed beyond hope:**

L: a shoot springs forth, fresh and new

C: the ash of a fire nourishes seedlings

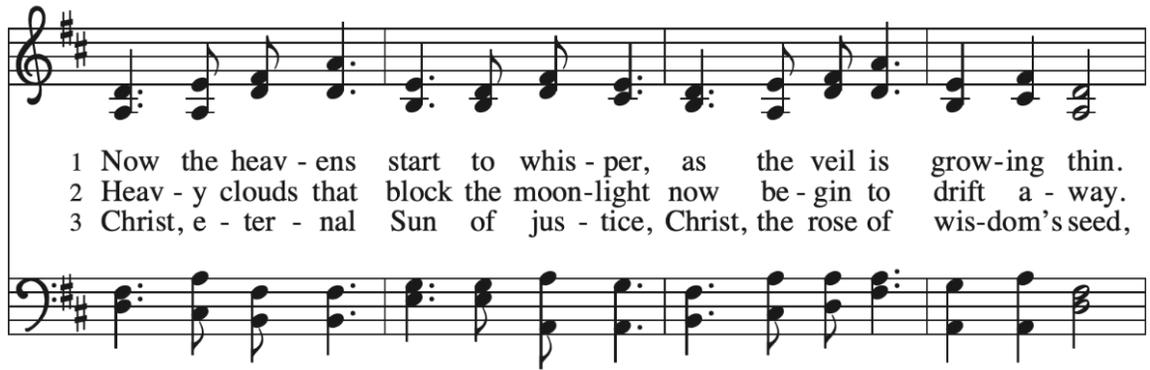
L: the wolf and the lamb can rest together

**C: for a peaceable world emerges,
life expectant even from our hearts of stone.**

L: And so we light this candle to shine forth with peace,
for we know a new day is dawning even if the timing is unexpected.

C: We live in anticipation, awake to divine possibilities.

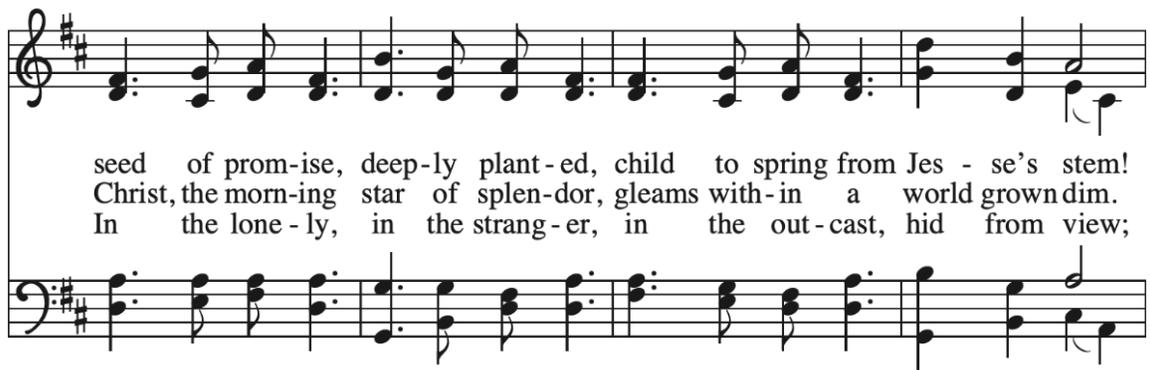
GATHERING HYMN Now the Heavens Start to Whisper, ACS #901



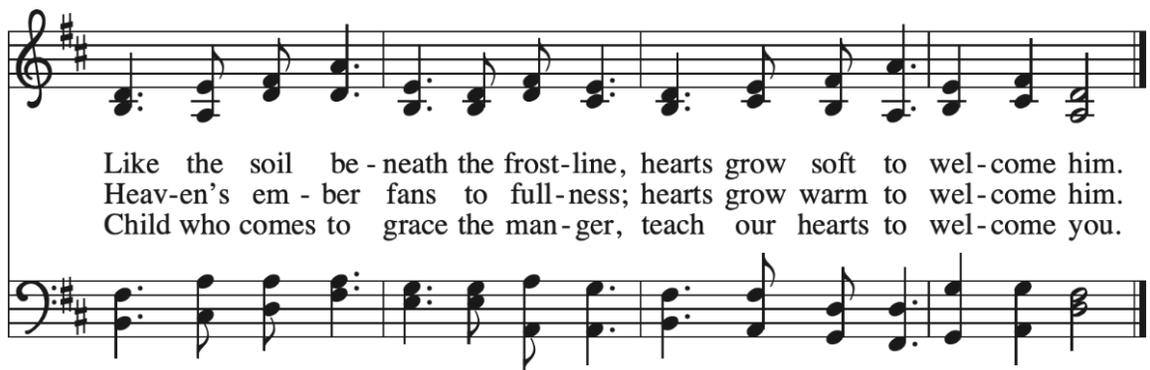
1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:
Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.
come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.
In the lone - ly, in the strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
Child who comes to grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.

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.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Stir up your power, Lord Christ (*holy pause*).

Make lifeless stones a living people (*holy pause*).

Prepare us for reconciliation (*holy pause*).

Fill us with joy, peace, and hope (*holy pause*).

We ask this in the name of the One who brings salvation near.

C: Amen

The assembly is seated.

FIRST READING - Isaiah 11:1-10

Isaiah describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line. Gifted by the spirit, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peace.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The 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.

³His 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;

⁴but 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.

⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist,

and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The 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.

⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together;

and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp,

and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹They 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.

¹⁰On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

L: The Word of God still speaks.

C: Thanks be to God.

CHOIR ANTHEM Prepare the Royal Highway

PSALM - Psalm 72:1-7

The psalm is read responsively.

L: Give the king your justice, O God,
and your righteousness to the king's son;

**C: that he may rule your people righteously
and the poor with justice;**

L: that the mountains may bring prosperity to the people,
and the hills, in righteousness.

**C: Let him defend the needy among the people,
rescue the poor, and crush the oppressor.**

L: May he live as long as the sun and moon endure,
from one generation to another.

**C: Let him come down like rain upon the mown field,
like showers that water the earth.**

L: In his time may the righteous flourish;
and let there be an abundance of peace till the moon shall be no more.

SECOND READING - Romans 15:4-7, 13

God's promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God's blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Christ has welcomed them into God's family.

Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. ⁵May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ¹³May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

L: The Word of God still speaks.

C: Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (to the chorus of "The First Noel")

Voice

A - le - lu - ia! A -

4

le - lu - ia! Pre - pare - us for Your -

8

com - ing, O Lord.

GOSPEL READING - Matthew 3:1-12

Just before Jesus begins his public ministry, John the Baptist appears, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" ⁴Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, ⁶and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? ⁸Bear fruit worthy of repentance. ⁹Do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at 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 one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Following the reading the assembly is seated.

SERMON Pastor Tina Reyes

The assembly is invited to stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus, ELW #254



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev-'ry na - tion, joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer-it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

C: We believe in God,

who in greatness created with a Word
all that is and continues to be.

We believe in God,

who is Word made flesh, Emmanuel, born of Mary,
come to fulfill the expected promise: justice, mercy, peace, love;
who was executed because our expectations were worldly, not divine;
who rose to break the expectation that death has the final word.

We believe in God

who fills us with expectations;
who pushes us to change;
who moves us with her joy and gladness
that we might be united
to proclaim the Word full of grace and truth
for an expectant people.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers reflect the wideness of God's mercy: for the church; for the well-being of creation; for peace & justice; for the poor, oppressed, suffering, & sick; for the congregation & other concerns.

Anticipating the coming of God's redeeming love, let us pray for a world in longing expectation. *A brief silence.*

God, you renew the church in every age. We give thanks for hymn writers and theologians (especially John of Damascus, whom we commemorate today). Inspire teachers, writers, and musicians to delight and instruct your people. God of expectant life, **hear our prayer.**

You give us a vision of creation in harmony, when hurting and destruction will be no more. Teach us to be stewards of the earth and companions to its creatures. Restore to balance and wholeness what human greed has harmed. God of expectant life, **hear our prayer.**

You defend the cause of all who are poor and oppressed. Raise up leaders who will govern with equity and serve the common good. Guide judges, lawmakers, and public officials to protect the rights of those who cannot advocate for themselves. God of expectant life, **hear our prayer.**

You deliver those in need from suffering and fear. Come to the aid of any who are exploited or abused, especially children, elders, and victims of human trafficking. Provide safety and help to our neighbors without shelter, refugees, and those fleeing violence. God of expectant life, **hear our prayer.**

You urge your people to welcome one another as you have welcomed us. Nurture ministries of hospitality and care in this and every congregation (local examples may be named). We pray for people who are homebound, hospitalized, or separated from loved ones (especially). God of expectant life, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

You embrace all who have died trusting in your promises, and we give thanks for their faithful witness. Sustain us in hope until we are united with them in the joy of your eternal presence. God of expectant life, **hear our prayer.**

Trusting that God hears us and knows our deepest longings, we offer our prayers with great expectation. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Share a sign of peace by waving, flashing a peace sign, or another form of greeting.

OFFERING PRAYER

We continue to be the church together through prayer and financial support. Tithes and offerings can be dropped off in the narthex, mailed, sent through the bank or our online giving platform.

P: God of peace, as we have received your abundance, so we welcome one another to the feast you spread. Use what we have gathered here for the flourishing of life. C: Amen.

COMMUNION LITURGY

(to the tune of *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

Largo

Voice

L: The - Lord - be with you. C: And al - so with you.

3

L: Lift up your hearts . C: We lift them to the Lord. L: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

5

to the Lord our God. C: It is right to give God praise.

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. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth, the hosts of heaven and all creation, we praise your name and join their unending hymn: (to the tune of *In the Bleak Midwinter*)

Voice

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, God of pow'r and might. Heav'n and earth are

6

full of Your glo - ry, O Lord. Bless - ed is the one who comes in the Lord's name. Ho -

14

san - na in the high - est

Illuminating God, source of creation, our salvation and our hope, we praise you for your creative labor, bearing expectations for life and love. When we strayed from your path and chose cruelty and despair, you spoke to us through unexpected prophets: Isaiah envisioned a blossoming desert; Mary proclaimed a world turned upside down; John the Baptist cried out for repentance. At this expectant hour, your Son Jesus came to bring us extraordinary love and to heal all the suffering world.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his life among us, his death as one of us, and his resurrection, the first of all of us, we anticipate his coming in righteousness and peace. Send your Spirit on us and on this meal we share: that we may work for justice, build hope for your already but not yet reign, and share the anticipated love and joy of your Son. All glory and honor is yours, in your holy creation, both now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as Jesus taught us.

C: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Unexpected and mysterious, Christ comes to us in this feast of grace. Eat, drink, and be filled. The body and blood of Christ given and shed for you. **C: Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

LAMB OF GOD (to the tune of Cradle Song)

Voice

O Christ thou Lamb of God you
take a - way the sin of the world. Have
mer - cy on us. O us. O Christ thou Lamb of
God you take a - way the sin of the
world. Grant us thy peace.

4
8
12
16

1. 2.

DISTRIBUTION

Time is given for the sharing of bread and wine. You may come forward to receive communion at the altar or partake with prepackaged elements at your seat. However communion is given and received, we trust Jesus is present in the bread and cup we share as a gathered community.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN All Earth is Hopeful, ELW #266



To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra, al Sal - va - dor
1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



y el sur - co a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el
Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
"A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -
la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.
God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

BLESSING

P: May this sign of God's presence, this shared feast between us, strengthen us and give us peace.

C: Amen.

PRAYER

P: In this meal we have experienced God with us,
ordinary made extraordinary: familiar made holy.

As we are called forth from the table,
may we awaken to divine justice
that these expectant days may be alive with peace.

We pray this in the name of the one who has promised to come again,

C: Christ Jesus, our Savior. Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

LITANY OF BLESSING

P: The shadows are long...

C: but we await the light.

P: The ax threatens judgment...

C: but we work for justice.

P: The mighty seek power...

C: but we labor for mercy.

P: The powerful resist transformation...

C: but we see the world about to turn.

P: The wait drags on...

C: but the angels stir in anticipation.

P: The faithful labor in darkness...

C: and the expected child is born among us.

P: May the God + of Great Expectation be with you through Advent,
that you may find hope, peace, joy and love.

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN Freedom is Coming, ACS #903

1 Free-dom is com-ing, free-dom is
 2 Je - sus is com-ing, Je - sus is

com - ing, free-dom is com - ing, oh, yes, I
 com - ing, Je - sus is com - ing, oh, yes, I

know. Free-dom is com - ing, free-dom is
 know. Je - sus is com - ing, Je - sus is

com - ing, free-dom is com - ing, oh, yes, I
 com - ing, Je - sus is com - ing, oh, yes, I

know. Oh, yes, I know, oh, yes, I
 know.

know, oh, yes, I know, oh, yes, I

know. Oh, yes, I know, oh, yes, I

know, oh, yes, I know, oh, yes, I know.

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace and in hope-filled expectation.
 Watch; wait; pray; dream.

C: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE Hark, the Glad Sound by Paul Manz

Announcements for the week of 12/04/22

1. Join us after worship for a reception to celebrate the ministry we have shared with Pastor Melissa.
2. Christmas decorating on 12/10. Please see sign up sheet on the bulletin board.
3. We are collecting diapers, pullups and monetary donations for the Saint Louis Crisis Nursery. See Doris Stoechner, Kathy Endorf, or Laurie Brown.
4. We join St. Rose in midweek Advent services using Holden Evening Prayer. LCLC will host 12/07 and St. Rose will host 12/14.
5. Upcoming Pulpit Supply
 - a. 12/11 - Rev. Tina Reyes, LuMin
 - b. 12/18 - Rev. Callista Isabelle, Washington University
 - c. 12/24 - Rev. Christopher Yanker
6. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church invites the EMC churches to our Bible study, Faithful - Christmas through the eyes of Joseph by Adam Hamilton. This is a four week study beginning Tuesday, November 22 at 6:30pm via Zoom.
 - a. Meeting ID: 703 164 9775; Passcode: r1HDde
7. FIFTY PLUS CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON Sign up for the Fifty Plus Christmas Luncheon. It is Wednesday, December 21, in the lower level social hall. There is no charge for members, \$15 for nonmembers. We will gather at 11:30 for a social time prior to the meal. Sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.
8. **Congregational Meeting December 11(after worship) - regarding an interim pastor.**
9. The Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet Thursday, December 8, at 11:30 at Ferguson Brewing Co., 418 S. Florissant Rd. in Ferguson. For reservations contact Judy Holmes at 314-355-1125 or mickey.holmes@att.net.
10. In order for your contributions to be counted in 2022 please have them to the church by December 29. Thanks Jeanne Calderwood, Financial Secretary
11. LADIES LUNCH BUNCH FOR DECEMBER The Ladies Lunch Bunch will meet Thursday, December 8, at 11:30 at Ferguson Brewing Co., 418 S. Florissant Rd. in Ferguson. For reservations contact Judy Holmes at 314-355-1125 or mickey.holmes@att.net. All are welcome.
- 12.

Worship Leadership

December 4, 2022 *Advent 2*

Preaching/Presiding: Pr. Tina Reyes

Assisting Minister: Randy Henning

Lector: Laurie Brown

Zoom and Slides: Laurie/Gary Brown

Musician: David Eggers

Ushers: Jim & Doris Stoechner

Greeter: Judy Holmes

December 11, 2022 *Advent 3*

Preaching/Presiding: Pr. Tina Reyes

Assisting Minister: Angela Bennett

Lector: Terry Calderwood

Zoom and Slides: Erle Craig

Musician: Greg Ott

Ushers: Dave Endorf & Randy Henning

Greeter: Kathy Endorf

This Week at Living Christ

Monday 12/05: 5pm Noble Guard Martial Arts Class (LL); 7pm CVT

Tuesday 12/06: 11am Exercise (LL);

Wednesday 12/07: 6:30pm Girl Scouts (LL); 7pm Holden Evening Prayer @ LCLC

Thursday 12/08: 11am Exercise (LL); 11:30am Lunch Bunch (offsite)

Friday 12/09:

Saturday 12/10: 5:30pm Noble Guard Martial Arts (LL)

Sunday 12/11: 8am Vocal Choir (UL); 9:15am Worship; 11am True Vine Church of God

Lutheran Church of the Living Christ

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