

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

- ¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.
²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.
³A voice cries out:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.
⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.
⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."
⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field.
⁷The grass withers, the flower fades,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass.
⁸The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.
⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings;
lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,
lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!"
¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him;
his reward is with him, and his recompense before him.
¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms,
and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead the mother sheep.

Psalms: Psalm 85:1-2; 8-13

Righteousness shall prepare a pathway for God. (Ps. 85:13)

- ¹You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;
you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.
²You have forgiven the iniquity of your people
and blotted out all their sins.
⁸I will listen to what the LORD God is saying; for you speak peace to your faithful
people and to those who turn their hearts to you.
⁹Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you,
that your glory may dwell in our land.
¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together;
righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
¹¹Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth,
and righteousness shall look down from heaven.
¹²The LORD will indeed grant prosperity,
and our land will yield its increase.
¹³Righteousness shall go before the LORD
and shall prepare for God a pathway.

Second Reading: 2 Peter 3:8-15a

This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

⁸Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

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.

Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

P: The holy gospel according to Mark, the 1st chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

“See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,
make his paths straight,’ ”

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, “The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Service Announcements – December 10, 2023

Welcome Center - If you would like to serve as a Welcome Center host, please reach out to Linda Mertz (lindamertz46@aol.com and 484-447-2024) to get on the list. We are now scheduling for the fall Welcome Center hosts, starting with September 3, 2023, through the end of the year. We currently are scheduling for 2024.

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY - Pastor Amy will lead a bible study group on Wednesday evenings during the Advent season. Each of the four weeks will focus on the different themes of Advent as we prayerfully await the arrival of the Christ child. This group will take place online using Zoom to bring us together. To register for the class, simply send an email to Pastor Amy (StLukes.pastoramy@gmail.com) and she will send you the Zoom link for each session.

We will be decorating the church with poinsettias again this year. If you would like to sponsor a poinsettia for Christmas Eve, please fill out the envelope in the narthex and put it in the offering plate. The cost of each plant (red or white) is \$7.25 per 6" pot. Orders are due today.

Decorating the Church for Christmas – The Confirmation Class will be decorating the church for Christmas after the service today during Faith Formation time. Volunteers are welcome and encouraged to assist.

BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE - St. Luke's will offer a Blue Christmas service on Sunday, December 17th at 2:00. As Christians, we know the promise and hope that the Christmas season brings for us. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5) It is a blessing for us to celebrate that joy together. Let us be a blessing for each other as we acknowledge the challenges we have, and currently, face as well. Join us in the sanctuary for this message of hope during a season that may not be joyful for everyone. Prayer and candle-lighting included.

The next Community Dinner is Thursday, December 21st, at 5:30 PM. It will be indoors again! The menu will be Chili, salad, rolls and desserts. There are hands on the bulletin board in the narthex if you'd like to contribute some of the ingredients to help make the meal. If you would be willing to help, please reach out to Marty Jordan.

On December 24th, we will have three worship services. There will be the normal 9:30 AM communion service in the sanctuary, celebrating the 4th Sunday in Advent. We will also have two Christmas Eve communion services (one at 4:00 PM and the other at 7:00 PM) in the sanctuary. Our friends from Peace in Zion UCC will be joining us for our Christmas Eve services. All of the Christmas Eve services will have special music and candlelight.

Good news! We are working on an update of our prayer partners list. Please email, text, or call Gwen Semmens at hawksmer@comcast.net or call 215-872-1046 if you would like to continue as a prayer partner or become a new prayer partner. Please provide your preferred method of receiving information- email, text, or phone. Thank you!

You may visit the church website at www.stlukeslutheran.church for more information.

PRAYER REQUESTS – December 10, 2023

Members Of Saint Luke's Church

Spencer Brothers, John & Maureen Founds, Lily Greer, David Imes, Greg Incollingo, Barry & Linda Mertz, Merrill Mest, Robert Pulcher, Chris Quigg, Joseph Reiter, Roger Rhoads, Fern Richard, Al Sassaman, Nancy Schodde, Sharyn & Herb Seddon, Ron Sekellick, David Semmens, Jeff & Julene Steigelmann, Henry Stetler, Dave Swank, Debbie Swank, Carol Welch, Stewart Young

Friends Of Saint Luke's Church

Barbara Adams
Friend of Judy Moyer
Gen Adams
Great-grandson of Judy Hunsberger
Dan Bair
Friend of Marty & Laurie Jordan
Charlie Bates
Nephew of Brenda Foose
Dennis Barchak
Cousin of Judy Hunsberger
Matt Beam & family
Friends of Sharon Killough
Matt Brady
Caterer for BBQ fundraiser for Daily Bread Food Pantry
Rose Brendlinger
Friend of Merlyn Jordan
Lorie Carroll
Mother of Paula Bickelman
Garrett Coyne
Friend of Ian Kratz
Crawford family
Family of sister of Connie Panepinto
Patricia Davenport
Bishop of SEPA Synod
Tim Davidheiser
Friend of Ron and Dawn Sekellick
Toni Faust
Sister-in-law of Dennis & Gail Faust

Mike Fili
Friend of Marty & Laurie Jordan
Malcolm Gealt
Chris Quigg family member
Geri & Cathy
Friends of Chris Quigg
Grandmother
Grandmother of Michelle Bergman
Ken Hunsberger, Jr
Step-son of Judy Hunsberger
Art Hunter
Friend of Cars, Coffee, & Christ visitor (Karl McClelland)
Jackie
Sister of Kay Badman
John & Cindy
Friends of St. Luke's
Bob Kelly & family
Stepfather of Brendan Greer
Lucy & Bob Kern
Friends of Nancy Schodde
Linda Keyser
Former member of St. Luke's
Tyler Kline
Nephew of Pat Stonerook
Lois Killough
Sister of Doug Killough
Sue Labbe & family
Aunt of Nicole Greer
Lila
sister of Jerry Jordan
Marilyn
Friend of David and Mary Imes

Linda McLaughlin
Friend of Carol Langton
Cindy Naile
Friend of Michelle Bergman
Emily Neeld
Daughter of Allison Neeld, friend of Nancy Schodde
Larry Newberry
Co-worker of Cindy Fields
John N.
Co-worker of Cindy Field
Patty
Relative of Michelle Bergman
Galen Smith Perseco
Friend of Judy Moyer
Lucille Powell
Friend of Nancy Schodde
Robert Quigg
Brother of Jack Quigg
Calvin Dietrich Savage
Grandson of Dennis & Gail Faust
Chris Savage
Son-in-Law of Dennis & Gail Faust
Patricia Smith
Mother of Pastor Amy
Theresa Sharp
Friend of Pastor Amy
Wendy Speilman
Friend of Deneen Kratz
Tina
Friend of Pat & Dick Stonerook

Persons In Military Service

Joseph P. Breidor, John P Carmelo, IV, Lt. Darby Driscoll, Capt. Ian Driscoll, Ens. Leah Duff, Jared Kirk, JD & his Unit, Trey Knepp, Greg Kunkle, Dan Marchiano, Andrew Matsko, Guy Row, Kevin Row, Preston Schoenly
Person in Peace Corps – Jonathan King (nephew of Cindy Fields)

Prayer Ministry: Gwen Semmens is the Prayer Ministry Coordinator. Please call Gwen (215-872-1046) or send an email (hawksmer@comcast).