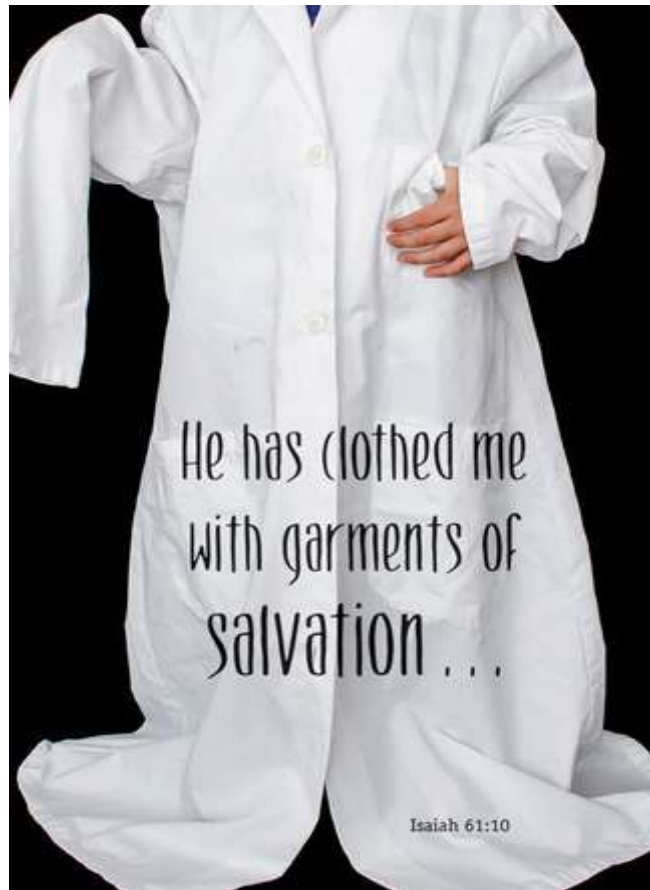




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## THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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DECEMBER 13, 2020

St. Matthew's Danube, St. John's Renville, and St. Matthew Flora Twp. MN (WELS)

*St. Matthew Flora Twp. - St. Matthew's Danube - St. John's Renville (WELS)*

*www.stmatthewsdanube.org | Pastor Mike Kuschel | home: 320-826-2280 | cell: 320-522-2428*

*Little Lambs Learning Center: 100 Main St. Danube, MN | office: 320-826-2340*

***Prayer Before Worship:*** Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Hymn: "Arise, O Christian People" CW # 14**

**Congregation sings stanzas 1 & 4**

*Pastor sings stanzas 2 & 3*

**1] Arise, O Christian people!**

**Prepare yourselves today.  
Prepare to greet the Savior,  
Who takes your sins away.  
To us by grace alone  
The truth and light were given;  
The promised Lord from heaven  
To all the world is shown.**

**[2] Prepare the way before him;**

*Prepare for him the best.  
Cast out what would offend him,  
This great, this heav'nly guest  
Make straight, make plain the way;  
The lowly valleys raising,  
The heights of pride abasing,  
His path all even lay.*

**[3] The humble heart and lowly**

*God raises up on high;  
Beneath his feet in terror  
The haughty soul shall lie.  
The heart sincere and right,  
That heeds God's invitation  
And makes true preparation--  
It is the Lord's delight.*

**[4] Prepare my heart, Lord Jesus;**

**Turn not from me aside,  
And help me to receive you  
This blessed Adventtide.  
From stall and manger low  
Come now to dwell within me,  
I'll sing your praises gladly  
And forth your glory show.  
Amen**

*Composers & Copyrights:*

*Text: Valentin Thilo, 1607-62 | Public Domain*

*Tune: New Catechismus Gesangbuchlein, Hamburg,  
1598, alt. | Public Domain*

## SERVICE OF THE WORD – CW page 38

**M:** The grace of our Lord + Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

**M:** We have come into the presence of God, who created us to love and serve him as his dear children. But we have disobeyed him and deserve only his wrath and punishment. Therefore, let us confess our sins to him and plead for his mercy.

**C: Merciful Father in heaven, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: Have mercy on me according to your unfailing love. Cleanse me from my sin, and take away my guilt.**

**M:** God, our heavenly Father, has forgiven all your sins. By the perfect life and innocent death of our Lord Jesus Christ, he has removed your guilt forever. You are his own dear child. May God give you strength to live according to his will.

**C: Amen**

### **Prayer of the Day**

**M:** Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **C: Amen.**

## THE WORD

### **FIRST LESSON - *Isaiah 61:1-3,10,11***

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, <sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.<sup>10</sup> I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. <sup>11</sup> For as the soil makes the sprout come up and a garden causes seeds to grow, so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and praise spring up before all nations.

**Verse of the Day: (spoken together)**

**Alleluia. I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.  
Alleluia. (Matthew 11:10 cf. NIV)**

**SECOND LESSON - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

<sup>16</sup> Be joyful always; <sup>17</sup> pray continually; <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.<sup>19</sup> Do not put out the Spirit's fire; <sup>20</sup> do not treat prophecies with contempt. <sup>21</sup> Test everything. Hold on to the good. <sup>22</sup> Avoid every kind of evil.<sup>23</sup> May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup> The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

***LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES***

**ADVENT 3**

**M:** We light three Advent candles remembering Jesus, the Light of the world. He came to defeat the prince of darkness.

**C:** We remember Jesus, who came in answer to his people's prayers. John proclaimed him the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.

**M:** We hear his call to see the light.

**C:** We light three Advent candles as a sign of our trust and confidence.

**M:** Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

**C:** Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.

***THREE ADVENT CANDLES ARE LIT***

*Our worship continues with the reading of the Gospel*

## THE GOSPEL - John 1:6-8,19-28

<sup>6</sup> There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. <sup>19</sup> Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. <sup>20</sup> He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup> They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup> Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" <sup>24</sup> Now some Pharisees who had been sent <sup>25</sup> questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup> "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. <sup>27</sup> He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." <sup>28</sup> This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

*The Holy Bible : New International Version. 1996, c1984 . Zondervan: Grand Rapids*

M: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

**C: Praise be to You, O Christ!**

### **Hymn: Hark, A Thrilling Voice is Sounding – CW # 15**

***Congregation Sings Stanzas 1 & 3***

*Pastor Sings Stanza 2*

***[1] Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding;***

***"Christ is near," we hear it say.***

***"Cast away the works of darkness;***

***You are children of the day."***

***[2] Lo, the Lamb, so long-expected,***

***Comes with pardon down from heav'n.***

***Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,***

***One and all, to be forgiv'n,***

***[3] That, when next he comes with glory***

***And the world is wrapped in fear,***

***He may shield us with his mercy***

***And with words of love draw near.***

*Composers & Copyrights: Text: Latin hymn, c. 6th cent. | Public Domain*

*Tune: William H. Monk, 1823-89 | Public Domain*

**Sermon Text: John 1:6-8, 19-28**

**Sermon: Listen to the Messengers of Light.**

**APOSTLES' CREED**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.**

**I believe 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 is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there 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.**

**Offering:**

*Please mail in your offering as we continue to support the work of spreading the gospel throughout our community and the world. Thank you for your continued support!*

**The Third Sunday in Advent**

O God, Shepherd of Israel, through all the long years of promise you led your people, nourishing and sustaining them with the hope of deliverance. Grant us also patient faith in your precious promises that we may rejoice in your salvation and give you thanks.

O Father, we your children bring our prayers and petitions with thanksgiving. According to the necessities of each of us, send such deliverance as will renew us in body and spirit. Forgive our sins and blot out all our iniquities.

Let your Holy Spirit descend upon us that our faith may not fail in that day when our Lord will come again to bring to light the hidden things of darkness and make known the thoughts of the heart.

Bless all who are gathered here this day in the fellowship of faith. Be with those of our number who are sick or under any affliction of body, mind or spirit. Comfort them that they may, through their trials, learn of your gracious power and readiness to help in every time of need.

***Special prayers of thanksgiving or intercession may be spoken here***

Finally, endow us all with your special graces, that we may daily show forth the light of your Name, and the divine excellencies of the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ our Lord. All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, we ask in his name. Amen.

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

**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.**

## **THE BLESSING**

**M:** Brothers and sisters, go in peace.  
Live in harmony with one another.  
Serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.  
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.  
The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

**C: Amen**

**Hymn: Hark, A Thrilling Voice is Sounding – CW # 15**

**All Sing Stanza 4**

**[4] Honor glory, might, dominion  
To the Father and the Son  
With the everlasting Spirit  
While eternal ages run!**

*Composers & Copyrights: Text: Latin hymn, c. 6th cent. / Public Domain  
Tune: William H. Monk, 1823-89 / Public Domain*

## **Announcements** - View our website and like us on Facebook for updated announcements.

### **Thank you for your continued support**

We thank you for your continued support of our efforts to share the good news of Jesus with our community and the world. Thank you for your mailing your offerings into the church the office.

**St. Matthew's Danube**  
**PO Box 67**  
**Danube, MN 56230**

**St. John's Renville**  
**209 Bryant Ave NE**  
**PO Box 416 - Renville, MN 56284**

**St. Matthew Flora Twp.**  
**PO Box 67**  
**Danube, MN 56230**

Please contact or write to us with any questions, concerns, words of encouragement or prayer requests. God be with you, and God willing we will be able to meet together in God's house soon. If you are in need of pastoral care and would like to have a visit over the phone please contact me. You can reach me either though my home number 826-2280 or cell phone 320-522-2428.

### **Stay Connected Wherever You Are:**

We realize that not everyone will be ready or ought to return to public worship as our congregations reopen. We would like to encourage all those who are unable to come to worship or unsure if they ought to come to continue to make use of local radio, television, and online ministries. Below is a listing of different ministries available on different forms of media.

#### **Television:**

- Watch *Time of Grace* at 10:30am on Kare 11 on Sunday mornings - visit [timeofgrace.org](http://timeofgrace.org) to learn more about Pastor Mike Novotny and other WELS pastors that contribute to Time of Grace and their varied resources.

#### **Radio:**

- Listen to St. John's Lutheran Church of Redwood Falls on 97.7 KLGR FM @ 8:00am Sunday mornings
- Tune in to Lutheran Chapel Services on KNUJ 97.3 FM or 860 AM @ 7:45 am Sunday mornings

**Online:** Join us for worship online in one of several ways: visit [www.stmatthewsdanube.org](http://www.stmatthewsdanube.org) or Search for St. Matthews Danube on YouTube for recorded services and livestreaming or follow us on Facebook.

**Other Online Resources:** [wels.net](http://wels.net), [timeofgrace.org](http://timeofgrace.org), [nph.net](http://nph.net) [forwardinchrist.net](http://forwardinchrist.net) & *Meditations online at nph.net*

Share this information with neighbors, friends, relatives, and fellow members of our congregation as we put our hope and trust in the living God and make his name known among the nations and our communities.

**New Worship Service Precautions:** Due to increased health concerns in our area we will ***not meet*** for worship at **St. Matthew Flora Twp this Sunday**. At **St. Matthew's Danube** and **St. John Renville** we ***will meet*** for worship according to our protocols that we have put in place. During this time we will be taking some extra steps to clean and sanitize our churches. As we monitor the situation in our congregations and in our area, will be reassessing our worship schedule from week to week. We will do our best to keep you up to date. Look for updates on our website and our Facebook page as we navigate the next few weeks, with the Lord's help. We would like to encourage you to carefully consider what is best in your particular situation. If you choose to stay home, please make use of the online services or stay connected to Christ and his Word by using the other resources shared above. If you choose to join us for worship at St. Matthew's please pay careful attention to the safety protocols that have been put in place. Remember to wash your hands, wear a mask for the entire service, watch your distance, and please stay home if you are not feeling well. Monitor closely any symptoms you might have. Don't forget that you can contact your pastor if you are in need of additional support and counsel. Above all, trust in the Lord and call on his name for he has graciously placed his name on you. ***The LORD bless you and keep you, the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, the LORD look on you with favor and give you his peace.***

#### **Sunday School:**

St. John's in Renville and St. Matthew's in Danube will be directing parents to online learning resources. Check out our Facebook page for more information. Please email [beth.kuschel@gmail.com](mailto:beth.kuschel@gmail.com) for more information about the remote learning resources or with any question about the lesson. Pastor is assisting Faye Schmidt and Cindy Hebrink, in putting together a Christmas Program as we are able. If you would like more information about this or would like to offer some assistance or support please contact Pastor Kuschel. May God bless these efforts to share the word of God in a variety of forms as we bring up the next generation in the training and instruction of the Lord.

***St. John's - Faye Schmidt 320-979-6663 St. Matthew's - Beth Kuschel 320-522-2428***

Follow the link for materials for children of all ages (teacher's guides also available) <https://online.nph.net/cl-ss-downloads>

**Thank You:** Thank you volunteers who came into to decorate our churches. Though we could not do this as a group this year, we thank you for your efforts. For your contribution of time and effort to bless our family of believers in this way, we thank you!

#### **Floral Arrangements at St. Matthew's:**

Given by Bernie Seehuesen in loving memory of Dale, George and Emma.

**Upcoming Meetings:** St. Matthew's Danube Council Meeting - December 14, 2020 @ 10:30am

St. John's Renville Council Meeting - December 21, 2020 @ 7:30pm

*At these meeting we will finalize our plans for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day services.*

**Volunteers Needed:** Volunteer janitors are needed for a few weeks in December at St. John's Renville.

#### **Prayers Requested for the Family of Rickie Westby and the Family of Tom Jones**

God in his wisdom called Rickie Westby (brother of Marleen Schroer) and Tom Jones (brother of Dorsey Breitreutz) to their eternal home this past week. May the Lord Jesus comfort those who mourn their loss with His precious promises. ***"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest."***

#### **Tri-Parish Ministry: Sunday Worship Schedule**

St. Matthew Flora Twp (no in-person worship) St. Matthew's Danube - 9:30 am St. John's Renville - 11:00am