Jan. 3, 2020

Welcome  Welcome to God’s church on this the 2nd Sunday of Christmas. These communities of faith, North Beaver Creek and Blair Lutheran Churches have one great aim and purpose: to help people grow in life-giving relationships with their neighbors, their own selves, the earth and God.

Announcements

As we begin, remember that we are in the holy presence of God. Let us take a moment to prepare our hearts and minds for worship.

Opening Hymn  #289 - Angels We Have Heard on High

Confession and Forgiveness
Blessed be the Holy One of Israel,
the Word made flesh,
the Power of the Most High,
╯ one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Gathered in the name of Jesus,
let us confess our sin against God and our neighbor.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

Gracious God,
in Christ Jesus you come among us
as light shining in darkness.
We confess our failure to welcome this light.
Forgive us and renew our hope,
so that we may live in the light of your grace,
and welcome the truth of Christ the Lord. Amen.

I bring you good news of great joy for all the people:
To you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord.

Your sins are forgiven in Jesus’ name.

Amen.

Greeting The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the unity of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day
Almighty God, you have filled all the earth with the light of your incarnate Word. By your grace empower us to reflect your light in all that we do, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Readings and Psalms
First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-14
God promises to bring Israel back to its land from the most remote parts of exile. In Zion Israel will rejoice over God’s gifts of food and livestock. Young women will express their joy in dancing; God will give gladness instead of sorrow.
Thus says the LORD:
Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob,
   and raise shouts for the chief of the nations;
proclaim, give praise, and say,
   “Save, O LORD, your people,
   the remnant of Israel.”

See, I am going to bring them from the land of the north,
   and gather them from the farthest parts of the earth,
among them the blind and the lame,
   those with child and those in labor, together;
a great company, they shall return here.

With weeping they shall come,
   and with consolations I will lead them back,
I will let them walk by brooks of water,
   in a straight path in which they shall not stumble;
for I have become a father to Israel,
   and Ephraim is my firstborn.

Hear the word of the LORD, O nations,
   and declare it in the coastlands far away;
say, “He who scattered Israel will gather him,
   and will keep him as a shepherd a flock.”

For the LORD has ransomed Jacob,
   and has redeemed him from hands too strong for him.

They shall come and sing aloud on the height of Zion,
   and they shall be radiant over the goodness of the LORD,
over the grain, the wine, and the oil,
   and over the young of the flock and the herd;
their life shall become like a watered garden,
   and they shall never languish again.

Then shall the young women rejoice in the dance,
   and the young men and the old shall be merry.
I will turn their mourning into joy,
   I will comfort them, and give them gladness for sorrow.
14I will give the priests their fill of fatness,
   and my people shall be satisfied with my bounty,
says the LORD.

Psalm: Psalm 147:12-20
Worship the LORD, O Jerusalem; praise your God, O Zion. (Ps. 147:12)

12Worship the LORD, | O Jerusalem;
   praise your | God, O Zion,
13 who has strengthened the bars | of your gates
   and has blessed your children within you.
14God has established peace | on your borders
   and satisfies you with the finest wheat.
15 God sends out a command | to the earth,
   a word that runs | very swiftly. R
16God gives | snow like wool,
   scattering | frost like ashes.
17 God scatters | hail like bread crumbs.
   Who can stand against God’s cold?
18The LORD sends forth the | word and melts them;
   the wind blows, and the | waters flow.
19 God declares the | word to Jacob,
   statutes and judgments | to Israel.
20The LORD has not done so to any | other nation;
   they do not know God’s judgments. | Hallelujah! R

Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14
In Jesus, all of God’s plans and purposes have been made known as heaven and earth are united in Christ. Through Jesus, we have been chosen as God’s children and have been promised eternal salvation.
Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory.

Gospel: John 1:[1-9] 10-18

John begins his gospel with this prologue: a hymn to the Word through whom all things were created. This Word became flesh and brought grace and truth to the world.

[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being [4] in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. [5] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

[6] There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. [7] He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. [8] He himself was not the
light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified to him and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’ ”) 16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day  
#715 – Christ Be Our Light

The Apostles Creed
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.

Prayers of Intercession

The prayers are prepared locally for each occasion. The following examples may be adapted or used as appropriate.

Joining our voices with the song of the angels, let us pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

Redeeming God, you gather together your people from the farthest parts of the earth. Protect your church from stumbling. Let it not be overcome by sorrow, division, or despair. Make us radiant with goodness, that we might live always to the praise of your glory. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You bring together heaven and earth. All creation testifies to your splendor. Hold the ecosystems of this earth in delicate balance, from coastlands to farmlands, forests to wetlands, deserts to rainforests. Show us new ways to live in harmony with the world around us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.
You overflow with grace upon grace. Expand the imaginations of those who serve in positions of authority. Open their hearts to the needs of their nations and communities. Protect all those in harm’s way and those risking danger for the sake of others. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You bring consolation to those who weep. Embrace those who feel far-off, excluded, or defeated. Accompany those living with chronic and invisible illness. Sustain the weak and weary. Refresh those who labor under the weight of pain or sickness (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

You come to us in the beauty of darkness and of light. Bring justice and reconciliation to communities divided by oppressions and misuse of power. Guide us to speak holy words of advocacy and truth. Help us to honor your image in one another. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

You turn our mourning into joy. We give thanks for those who have died in faith (*especially*). With all the saints, give us our inheritance in Christ. In the fullness of time, gather us all together in your mercy. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of mercy, come quickly to us with grace upon grace as we lift these and all our prayers to you, in the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**

**The Offering Prayer**

God with us:

You came as a baby to a manger.

You slept on straw and greeted shepherds.

You come again in bread and wine.
Remind us how good you are at blessing ordinary things.
And then, through these gifts,
help us to bless the lives of others
in the strength of your holy name.
C: Amen.

The Lord’s Prayer

Blessing:
..May your life be a note in the very song of God—singing new creation into every nook and cranny of reality that your shadow graces. Be courageous. Be free. Prune that which needs pruning, and water that which thirsts for righteousness. You are the body of Christ, the light of the world. Pick up your hammer. Your brush. Your trumpet. Your skillet. Your pen. Lift up your head. Lift up your voice. And walk. Run. Dance. Fly. Sing. The great Composer calls you into being. So go into your world, your valley, your garden, and sing His grace and His peace. Amen.

Sending Song    290 -  Go Tell It On the Mountain

Dismissal
L : Glory to God in the highest!
C: Peace to God’s people on earth!
L: Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.
C: Thanks be to God.