

**Welcome to Worship in this
Season of Advent
A Storybook Christmas Pageant**



**December 17, 2023 ~10:00 a.m.
French River Lutheran Church, ELCA
Duluth, MN**

Reverend Kimberly Sturtz ~ Presiding
Worship Assistant: Loren Slette
Lector: Joanne Kronstedt
Altar Guild: Lynne Compton
Musicians: Organist – David Fiebiger, Riversong Rising

Welcome to all in Jesus' Name!

Please follow the current FRLC Preparedness Plan for COVID-19. Details are located under announcements in this bulletin. LARGE PRINT worship folders are available from an usher. A family restroom and nursery are to the left of the sanctuary; again, follow the Preparedness Plan for use. To contact the pastor or church office, you are invited to complete a pew card and return the information portion either to an usher or by way of the offering plate. Please keep the bookmark and worship with us again! We appreciate electronic devices set on "mute" during the service.

Bold print signals places where the assembly speaks in unity in worship.

*Indicates where to stand as you are able in body or in Spirit.

Prelude:

Riversong Rising

Welcome/Announcements:

-----GATHERING-----

The Holy Spirit gathers us together as people of God

***Greeting:**

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

***Gathering Song: *Angels We Have Heard On High*
(see big screen for lyrics)**

Riversong Rising

Lighting the Advent Candle: *Third Sunday of Advent: Love

***Candle Lighting:**

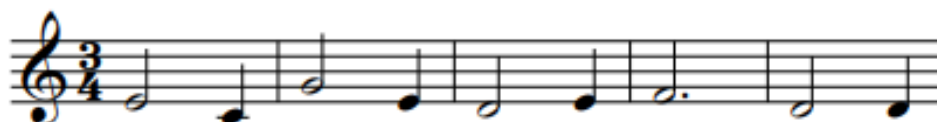
We are a people who seek to be brought together
by the love of Christ.
Our faith teaches us that God gives us
unconditional love and forgiveness.
Acknowledging God's free gift of grace,
we light the Candle of Love.
(Light the third (pink) candle)

***Advent Song: Verse 1,2,3
(See Insert)**

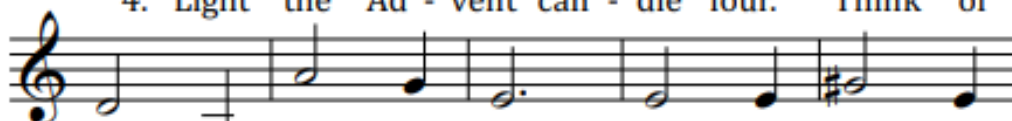
~Mary Lu Walker
Riversong Rising

Advent Song

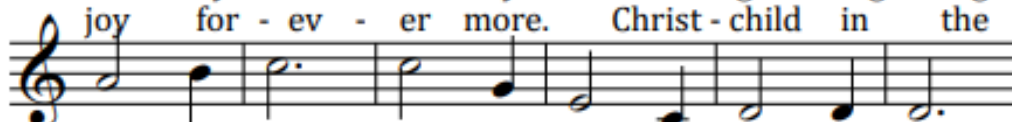
Mary Lu Walker



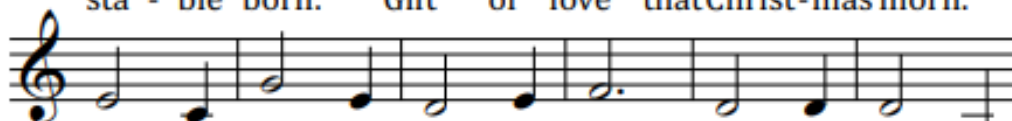
1. Light the Ad - vent can - dle one. Now the
2. Light the Ad - vent can - dle two. Think of
3. Light the Ad - vent can - dle three, Think of
4. Light the Ad - vent can - dle four. Think of



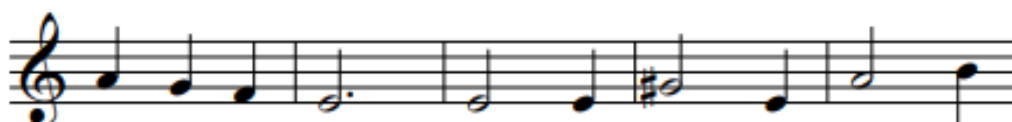
wait - ing has be - gun. We have start - ed
hum - ble shep - herds who filled with won - der
heav'n - ly har - mo - ny An - gels sing - ing
joy for - ev - er more. Christ - child in the



on our way, Time to think of Christ - mas Day,
at the sight of the Child on Christ - mas night.
"Peace on earth" at the bless - ed Sav - iors birth.
sta - ble born. Gift of love that Christ - mas morn.



Can - dle, can - dle burn - ing bright, shin - ing in the



cold win - ter night. Can - dle can - dle burn - ing



bright, fill our hearts with Christ - mas light.

Responsive Litany:

The fire, that Jesus will bring, the point that John the Baptist proclaimed in his fierce fashion is pointing to—making the way for—the One who comes. And this One comes not for the purpose of terrifying us but of loving us. Yet terror alone thrust forward by fear, is not enough to keep us from a relationship with Christ. Only love—the truest fire of the Holy Spirit—can do this.

In this season, we remember and celebrate this fierce and fiery love:

the love that created us; the love that garbed itself in our own flesh and came among us;

the love that beckons us to respond by discerning and doing what God formed and fashioned us,

and in all our particularity, to do; the love of that great fire-- that we will one day see and know with completeness.

Richardson, Jan. *Through the Advent Door: Entering a Contemplative Christmas* (p. 75). Wanton Gospeller Press.

***Prayer of the Day:**

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.

Amen.

— — — WORD — — —

God speaks to us through scripture, preaching, and song.

A reading from Isaiah:

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

First Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Joanne Kronstedt

The 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;
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,
and the day of vengeance of our God;
to comfort all who mourn;
to 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.
They 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.
Their 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.
I 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.
For 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.
The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm: Psalm 126

The LORD has done great things for us. (Ps. 126:3)

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

**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."**

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

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

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

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

A reading from 1 Thessalonians:

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.

Second Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

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

May 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. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

***Gospel Acclamation: Hallelujah**

(The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.)

Riversong Rising

Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

***Gospel: Luke 1:46b-55**

The Holy Gospel according to *Luke 1:46b-55*. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52)

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:
you, the Almighty, have done great things for me
and holy is your name.

You have mercy on those who fear you,
from generation to generation.

You have shown strength with your arm
and scattered the proud in their conceit,
casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.

You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,
to remember the promise of mercy,
the promise made to our forebears,
to Abraham and his children forever.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

A Storybook Christmas Pageant:

FRLC Youth

Sermon:

The Reverend Kimberly Sturtz

***Nicene Creed:**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and
glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

***Peace:** The Peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**
(Please share this peace with your neighbors.)

Prayers of the People:

Joanne Kronstedt

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.)

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,
receive our prayer.

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,
receive our prayer.

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,
receive our prayer.

Give us strength to pray for our world without ceasing and provoke us toward love and good deeds for all who are in need. Provide for all without adequate housing, food, employment, or access to health care. Empower us as helpers and advocates. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

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,
receive our prayer.

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,
receive our prayer.

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

***Offering Prayer:**

(Please stand as you are able as the offering is brought forward. If you did not place your offering in the plate as you entered the sanctuary, feel free to hand it to an usher upon dismissal. During the week, offerings may be placed in the secure lockbox by the lower doors [slot is right of the door]. Mail and online giving are also available. Thank you for your generous support of our ministry together!)

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.
Amen.

———MEAL———

God feeds us in goodness and grace with the presence of Jesus Christ.

All are welcome at the Lord's Table to receive the true presence of Jesus in the bread and wine. Communion will be distributed continuously using the form of intinction. After you have received the bread, you may "intinct" (dip) it in the wine or juice. Children not communing may come forward for a blessing. Commune with the pastor if you prefer a gluten-free wafer.

***Words of Institution and Blessing:**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

***Preface: Advent**

***Words of Institution:**

***Lord's Prayer:**

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

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

***Communion Song: When Love Was Born**

~Mark Schultz
Solo ~John Kronstedt

***Prayer After Communion:**

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.
Amen.

————SENDING————

God blesses us and equips us as disciples sent into the world

***Blessing:**

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.
Amen.

***Sending Song: Go Tell It On the Mountain**
(see big screen for lyrics)

Riversong Rising

Dismissal:

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.

(Please remain in your pew/chair until the pastor processes to the narthex and you are invited by an usher to depart.)

Postlude: Go Tell It On The Mountain

Riversong Rising

***Thank you for joining us from wherever you are.
Remember, you are beloved and blessed!***

Advent texts by Rev. Rich Davis, Senior Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, River Forest, IL.

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"Let every heart prepare him room!"

**FRENCH RIVER LUTHERAN
CHURCH, DULUTH**

**CHRISTMAS
EVE
CANDLELIGHT
SERVICE**

**DECEMBER 24, 2023
• 4 PM**

All are welcome to join us in person or online!

<https://youtube.com/c/FrenchRiverLutheranChurch>

A Storybook Christmas Pageant
French River Lutheran Church ~ Duluth, MN

Zechariah	~Finn W.
Elizabeth	~Lauryn K.M.
Mary	~Penny S.
Joseph	~Bo E.
Centurion	~Teddy B.
Ceasar	~Addi H.
Innkeeper Sister	~Pastor Kim
Innkeeper Sister	~Brette G.
Benjamin	~Elyce K.M.
Saul	~Cora E.
Angel	~Laynie B.
Angels	~Rozalyn M. & Dani M.
Magi 1	~Maria B.
Magi 2	~Elyce K.M.
King Herod	~Madi E.

****The FRLC Sunday School class will be playing the remaining parts.****



For unto us
a child is born!



ANNOUNCEMENTS

†Extending sympathy to the family & friends of Rita Cook who passed away on December 5. A Celebration of Life will be held in the Spring.

†Extending sympathy to the family & friends of Paul Bernard Peterson who passed away on December 3. A private service was held.

Covid-19 Preparedness

In the care and consideration of others,
the wearing of masks is optional for worship.
However, if you or a family member are experiencing
any fever, cough, stomach issues, or are recovering from an illness or other ailments
within 48 hours before gathering in worship,
we strongly advise the wearing of a mask while in worship.

A simple mask in these moments and places helps us protect loved ones,
especially the weak and elderly, front-line medical personnel and their families,
our faith community and larger communities.

Thank you for this kindness.

Coming Up:

12/10 Sun: 10a – 2nd Sunday of Advent; Blended Worship

Worship In-Person/Online: Rev. Kim Sturtz;

10:45a - Noon – Sunday School; 11:15a – Coffee Fellowship

12/11 Mon: 6p – Adult Bible Study; 7p – Finance

12/12 Tues: 9a – Bulletin Deadline; 7p – Council; 7p – AA

12/13 Wed: 7a – D/NSSD; 7p – Choir

12/14 Thurs: 10:30a – W&M; 1p – WOFR; 5p – Riversong Rising

12/17 Next Sun: 10a – 3rd Sunday of Advent; Christmas Pageant

Contemporary Worship In-Person/Online: Rev. Kim Sturtz;
11:15a – Coffee Fellowship

It's time to warm up those bells! Here is the link to sign up for the **Salvation Army Red Kettle Bell Ringing**.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B0D4CAA2EA7F85-45938771-2023#/>

FRLC will not be taking an entire day. Using this sign up to **ring at SuperOne—Two Harbors** allows you to pick and choose a time/day based on your availability. Don't wait to sign up! If you do not have Internet capability, call me and I'll look for an open spot for you.

Thank you for supporting the Red Kettle Campaign.
Sue Baker, 218-341-4181





Every Christmas, I help host a breakfast at CHUM with a group of volunteers. Our goal is to provide a hearty breakfast and much needed gifts to the folks using the overnight shelter. I've coordinated with CHUM to create a list of most needed items for the gift bags. If you can, please take a moment to look at the list and help where you can. Select the gift registry address (Heather Winesett) and items will be shipped directly to my house, and then our gift bag team will assemble 100 gift bags for Christmas morning.

Also please forward the link [Amazon Gift List](https://www.amazon.com/registries/gi/guest-view/MC71QQSFVIY9):

<https://www.amazon.com/registries/gi/guest-view/MC71QQSFVIY9>

to friends and family... it takes quite a community to bring this event together!

Thanks so much for your help, and blessings on your holiday season!

Heather Winesett

For more information or to volunteer contact:

Info@FeedingHearts.org

[218-391-0241](tel:218-391-0241), Heather Winesett

www.feedinghearts.org



Ever wonder why there are wicker baskets in the narthex?

The baskets are for receiving non-perishable food for CHUM (Churches United in Ministry) and for where needed most, gently used or new clothes and personal hygiene items.

Specifically for CHUM, we collect Ramen Chicken Noodle Soup.

Our goal is to bring 100 packages/month; lately, we've fallen short and haven't met that goal. Thank you for helping to remedy this situation, and remember to check expiration dates before placing edible items in the baskets. Thanks!



It's that time of year again, **Annual Reports are due!**

Please submit your FRLC Annual Reports (Microsoft Word document in Tahoma 12 pt font) to frlc5310@gmail.com **no later than Friday, December 29**. Submitting prior to the due date is greatly appreciated and I have already received the first report!

Thank you, Tiffany ~FRLC Secretary

Welcome to French River Lutheran Church

You are welcome; to keep this bulletin however, we recycle when possible so you may leave it on the ushers' stand.



Immediate: Family & friends of Rita Cook; Family and friends of Paul B. Peterson; Carol Pearson; Bonnie Smrstick; prayers for peace and comfort both as she travels to be with Dennis as he is nearing the end of his journey.; Deb Sodomka (cousin of Bill & Susie Lannon).

Long-Term: Phil Strom, for Parkinsons; Julie Moe-Hommerding; 5-year-old great niece of Susie Lannon (heart surgery 6/26/17, still not healthy); Kathy Johnson (Carol Leppala's friend); Bruce Sundberg; Angela Debelak, (niece of Gail Johnson) is currently in remission from for her brain cancer and recovering slowly; please continue to pray for no recurrence.; Alex Peterson – military service; David Peterson (brother of Paul Peterson); Todd Sironen.

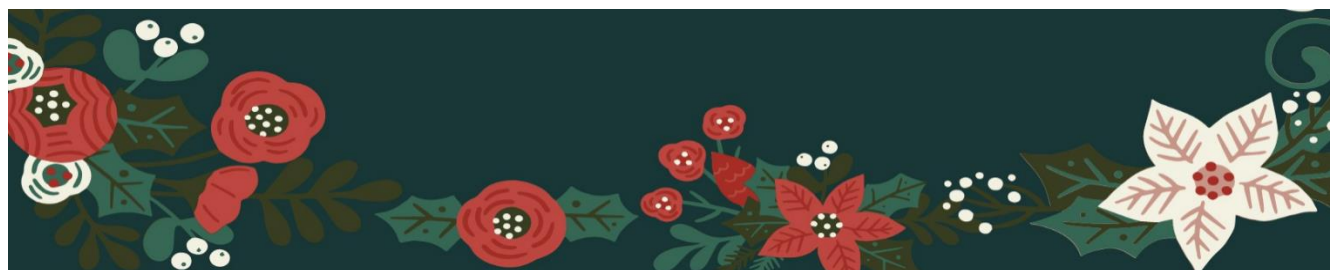
WHEN SUBMITTING A NAME TO THE TELEPHONE PRAYER CHAIN, PLEASE INDICATE IF IT IS PERMISSABLE TO LIST IN THE BULLETIN.

<i>Called by the Spirit</i>	<i>December 17</i>	<i>December 24 AM/PM</i>	
Worship Leader	Rev. Kim Sturtz	Rev. Kim Sturtz	
Lector	Joanne Kronstedt	Elda Hein	Haeli Pettis
Altar Guild	Lynne Compton	Lynne Compton	
Ushers	Kevin S. & Jacquie	Dick-Marilyn	Sue & Steve
Counters/Worship Assistant*	ArMand/Loren*	Sue Baker/Dave Edblom*	
Coffee Fellowship	Peggy/Sandy D.	Team Galilee	--
Prayer Chain	Babs Strom 218.525.6200		

French River Lutheran Church, 5310 Ryan Rd, Duluth, MN 55804
 Church: (218)525-5659; frlc5310@gmail.com
 Pr. Kim Sturtz: (218)393-7444; frlcpastorsturtz@gmail.com
 Office hours vary so please call ahead.
 FRLC webpage: www.frenchriverlutheran.org.
 FRLC Mission: *"To live and love as God commands, accept His grace, and share the Good News."*

Watch services at FRLC anytime! **YouTube live streaming of the service** at
<https://www.youtube.com/c/FrenchRiverLutheranChurch>
 This link is also found on our church homepage and Facebook group. If you are unable to watch it live, you can view it any time after the service by following the same link

✝ We're glad you worshiped with us today. Thanks be to God! ✝




Jesus is the light of the world. Do you see candles in your worship space? Each week, we light another candle on the Advent wreath as we wait for Jesus to come.

Which images provide light? Circle and color the things that give us light.



How can you tell people that Jesus is coming? Invite them to come to worship with you on Christmas Eve!

Decorate the invitation and give it to a friend or neighbor.

	<p>Jesus is Coming! Come to worship with me...</p>
	<p>Where: _____</p>
	<p>When: Christmas Eve</p>
	<p>What Time: _____</p>
<p>Let's get ready for the light!</p>	



PRE-READER

Advent 3

- Today is the 3rd Sunday in Advent.
- Jesus is the **light** of the world.
- The **candles** in the **Advent wreath** give us light.

A wreath's circular shape shows God's never-ending love for us. Find and color all the circles below.





"This is important! Jesus is coming!"



Jesus is coming! John the Baptist needs your help.

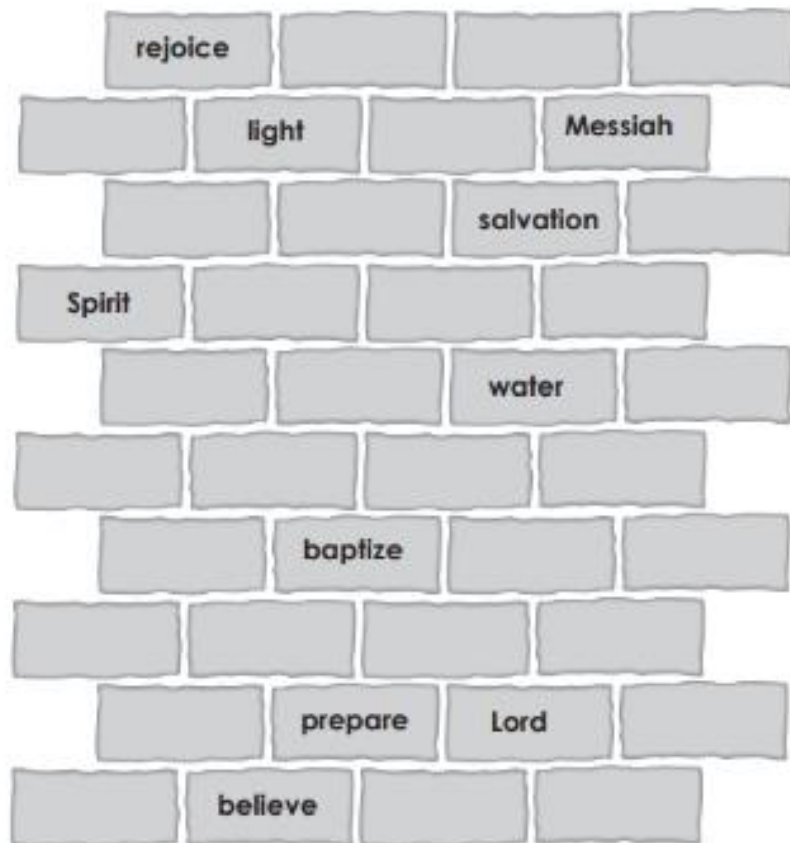
Share the message of Jesus with the people you meet. Don't forget to draw yourself!



Listen Up

As we wait for Jesus, we listen to God's word. God's words are the building blocks of our faith.

What words do you hear in worship today? Color in the brick if you hear the word. Fill the empty bricks with your own words about God.



READER

Advent 3

- Today is the **3rd Sunday in Advent**.
- **Jesus** is the light of the world.
- Advent **candles** and **luminaries** give us light.

John's Message

What was John the Baptist sent to do? Look at all the candles to figure it out! Find the candles that are near each other. Then unscramble the letters to decode this message.



Unscramble the words to complete these important Bible verses. Use your Bible if you need help. The first word is done for you.

Memory Verse

"I will greatly rejoice in the day, my whole being shall rest in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness."

"I will greatly rejoice in the _____, my whole being shall _____ in my God; for he has _____ me with the _____ of salvation, he has _____ me with the _____ of righteousness." Isaiah 61:10a

"[John] came as a witness to testify to the truth, so that all might believe through him"

"[John] came as a _____ to testify to the _____, so that all might _____ through him." John 1:7

"Among you stands one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to touch the hem of his garment."

"Among you _____ who is coming _____ me; I am not _____ to _____ the hem of his _____."

John 1:26b-27

Jesus' World

John the Baptist was born just a few months before Jesus. John spent most of his adult life in the desert between Jerusalem and the Jordan River. He baptized people and helped everyone get ready for Jesus. Take a look at the map.

Draw a manger by Bethlehem.

Draw John the Baptist by the Jordan River.

Draw a cross next to Jerusalem.

Color the bodies of water blue.

Draw a fishing boat by Lake Galilee.



Bible Tip!

Most Bibles have maps in the back to show where the events in the Bible happened. Do you recognize any of the places on this map? Circle the towns, rivers, and lakes you know. If you have your Bible, turn to the back. What other maps do you see?