

1. \_\_\_\_\_!

What is freedom? How can we understand freedom?

What helps us appreciate the freedom that Jesus gives us?

How does the picture of a prison help you understand the freedom Jesus has given to you?

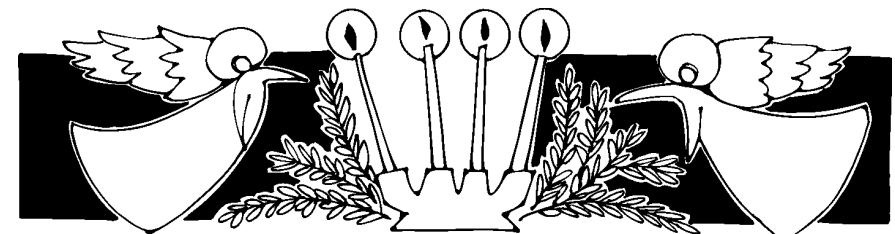
2. \_\_\_\_\_!

What pictures of nature does Jesus use to teach us about our Christian life? What does each teach us?

Why have we been planted? How do I “display his splendor” in my life?

*“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20).*

**During the week:** Celebrate God’s gift to you this Christmas. Rejoice in the miraculous birth of our Savior who declared you free. Live in the joy that this freedom brings.



**Fourth Week In Advent**

**DECEMBER 21, 2008**



**TREE OF LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
A member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)  
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**YEAR OF JUBILEE: CELEBRATE THE  
JUBILEE OF OUR ANOINTED ONE!**

**Good morning!**

As we finish our special emphasis on the Year of Jubilee, we see Jesus as the one who comes this Christmas to proclaim freedom and release from sin. As we enjoy this Christmas week, may we marvel at the gift of salvation that Jesus brings to us. May God bless our time of worship this morning!

**CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY**

Choir .....“We Wait in Hope”  
*Words & Music by Joel Raney*

All creation lies in waiting, in the stillness of the night,  
with hope anticipating the Advent of Eternal Light.

*LITANY- SPOKEN RESPONSIVELY*

M Advent is a time to praise.

**C: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.**

M: During Advent we remember God's past faithfulness.

**C: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.**

M: During Advent we remember God's present goodness.

**C: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.**

**MESSAGE NOTES  
DECEMBER 21, 2008**

**“REJOICE IN THE YEAR OF THE LORD’S FAVOR!”**

What causes joy and happiness in your life?

**READ: Isaiah 61:1-3,10-11**

- 61** 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,
- 2** to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,
- 3** 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.
- 10** 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.
- 11** 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.

## Welcome to Tree of Life!

*The members of Tree of Life extend to you a hearty welcome! We are a congregation of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS: [www.wels.net](http://www.wels.net)).*

*As congregation of this synod we are striving to be a family where God is glorified and his saving message is shared with all people.*

*We don't claim to be the only saving church, but we do strive to preserve and pass on the truth as it's found in the Bible. We at Tree of Life believe and teach that...*

1. The Bible is the inspired Word of God, with no mistakes and no errors, his unchanging message to all people of all times: **"Men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit." (2 Peter 1:21)**
2. God created people holy and without sin, but by their own choice they disobeyed God and brought sin upon the whole human race: **"Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned." (Romans 5:12)**
3. The final result of sin is not only the end of our earthly life, but eternal death and separation from God in the agony of hell:  
**"The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)**
4. The main and central message of the Bible is the gospel - the good news that:  
**"God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him will not perish, but has eternal life." (John 3:16)**
5. Jesus lived a perfect, sinless life in the place of every human being, and Jesus suffered the punishment of hell for the whole human race when he died on the cross: **"The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23)**
6. God the Holy Spirit creates and strengthens saving faith in Jesus Christ through the message about him in the Bible, in Baptism, and in the Lord's Supper:  
**"Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the words of Christ." (Romans 10:17)**
7. Christians do good works, not in order to earn a place in heaven, but out of love and thanks to God who has already given them eternal life as a free gift through Jesus: **"I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free." (Psalm 119:32)**
8. Christians will want to gather together regularly around the Word of God for the strengthening of their own trust in Jesus and for encouraging each other in the faith: **"Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the (final) Day approaching." (Hebrews 10:25)**
9. Christians want to carry out the Lord's great commission to spread the good news about Jesus to others: **"Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." (Mark 16:15)**
10. When the Lord returns in judgment on the last day, he will raise all the dead and give the full glory of everlasting life in heaven to all who trusted in him as Savior:  
**"When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (Colossians 3:4)**

*We invite you to worship with us again and we sincerely hope that you will accept this invitation. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.*

M: During Advent we remember God's future promises.

**C: Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.**

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### FOUR ADVENT CANDLES ARE LIT

M: This morning we light four candles. The **first candle** reminds us that during Advent we wait upon the promises of the Lord. The **second candle** reminds us to watch for God's presence with expectant eyes and anxious hearts. The **third candle** reminds us to prepare ourselves to receive the gift of the promised Savior. As we light the **fourth candle**, we are reminded that Advent is a time to give praise for what God has done, for what God is currently doing and for what God will bring to completion. As the light of the Advent grows brighter, it reminds us that we move closer to receiving the gift of a Savior.

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“Choir We Wait in Hope” (*Refrain*) ..... Choir & Congregation

We praise with hope for the morning Light,  
for the love of Christ to illuminate the night.  
We praise with joy for the Savior's birth;  
we praise with hope for Peace on earth, Peace on earth.

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M: (*spoken*) God in heaven, we look to you amidst a world filled with darkness. Help us to seek the light of your truth, as we remember your promises and offer our praise to you. Amen.

**Opening Song** ..... “Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel”  
*Christian Worship Hymn 23*

Oh, come, oh, come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Oh, come, O Dayspring from on high,  
And cheer us by your drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
And death's dark shadows put to flight.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Oh, come, O Root of Jesse, free  
Your own from Satan's tyranny;  
From depths of hell your people save,  
And bring them vict'ry o'er the grave.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Oh, come, O Key of David, come,  
And open wide our heav'nly home.  
Make safe the way that leads on high,  
And close the path to misery.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel!

Text, Tune, Setting: public domain.

**Closing Hymn** ..... “Jesus Came, The Heavens Adoring”  
*Christian Worship Hymn 26*

Jesus came, the heav'ns adoring,  
Came with peace from realms on high;  
Jesus came to win redemption,  
Lowly came on earth to die;  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Came in deep humility.

Jesus comes to hearts rejoicing,  
Bringing news of sins forgiv'n;  
Jesus comes with words of gladness,  
Leading souls redeemed to heav'n.  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Hope to all the world is giv'n.

Jesus comes again in mercy  
When our hearts are worn with care;  
Jesus comes again in answer  
To an earnest, heartfelt prayer,  
Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Comes to save us from despair.

Jesus comes on clouds triumphant  
When the heav'ns shall pass away.  
Jesus comes again in glory;  
Let us, then, our homage pay,  
Alleluia! ever singing  
Till the dawn of endless day.

**CONFESSIO**

**M:** As we continue in this season of Advent and continue our remembrance of the Year of Jubilee, we confess our sins asking our gracious God to forgive the debt our sin has created and thus empower us to live in his Word and work until he returns again.

**C:** **Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.**

*Silence for reflection.*

**M:** God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit.

**C: Amen.**

**DISTRIBUTION**

STAND \_\_\_\_\_

“Thank The Lord” ..... *Christian Worship* page 36

*Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.*

*Let all who seek the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.*

*He re-news his prom-is-es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy with shouts of thanks-giv-ing.*

*Al-le-lu-ia! Al-le-lu-ia!*

M: Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C:** *(sung)* Amen.

**BLESSING**

*Christian Worship* pages 37

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:** *(sung)* Amen. Amen. Amen.

M: In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

**Song of Praise** ..... “Let All Together Praise Our God”

*Verses 1, 5 & 6*

*Christian Worship Hymn 41*

Let all together praise our God Before his highest throne;  
Today he opens heav'n again And gives us his own Son,  
And gives us his own Son.

He serves that I a lord may be -- A great exchange indeed!  
Could Jesus' love do more for me To help me in my need?  
To help me in my need?

For us he opens wide the door Of paradise today.  
The angel guards the gate no more; To God our thanks we pay,  
To God our thanks we pay.

Text, Tune, Setting: public domain.

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

M: Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the burden of our sins and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C:** *(spoken)* AMEN.

**FIRST LESSON**

**1 THESSALONIANS 5:16-24**

*“Live joyfully, thankfully, prayerfully and spiritually as we wait for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*

16Be joyful always; 17pray continually; 18give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

19Do not put out the Spirit's fire; 20do not treat prophecies with contempt.

21Test everything. Hold on to the good. 22Avoid every kind of evil.

23May 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. 24The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it.

PSALM OF THE DAY

PSALM 71 ..... *Christian Worship* page 92

**Refrain:** *Blessed are they who hope, who hope in the Lord.*

*In you, O Lord, I have taken refuge;\*  
let me never be put to shame.*

*Even when I am old and gray,\*  
do not forsake me, O God,*

*Rescue me and deliver me in your righteousness;\*  
turn your ear to me and save me.*

*till I declare your power to the next generation,\*  
your might to all who are to come.*

*Be my rock of refuge to which I can always go;\*  
for you are my rock and my fortress.*

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit,  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen**

**Refrain**

*Since my youth, O God, you have taught me,\*  
and to this day I declare your marvelous  
deeds.*

**Refrain**

SECOND LESSON

JOHN 1:6-8; 19-28

*“Our role as Christians is to do like John, point to Jesus, not ourselves.”*

6There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.

8He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

19Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ"

21They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

22Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

23John 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.' "

M: Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Through his holy prophets, he promised a King to bring light to those living in darkness and in the shadow of death. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever. :

“Holy, Holy, Holy” ..... *Christian Worship* page 34

*Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly is the Lord of hosts.  
The whole earth is full of your glo-ry.*

*You are my God, and I will ex-alt you.  
I will give you thanks, for you have be-come my sal-va-tion.*

*Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho-ly is the Lord of hosts.  
The whole earth is full of your glo-ry.*

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples and saying, “Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying “Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, when ever you drink it, in remembrance of me.

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C:** *(sung)* **Amen.**

“O Christ, Lamb Of God” ..... *Christian Worship* page 35

*O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.*

*O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us.*

*O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; grant us your peace. A-men.*

BE SEATED

P: Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has also encouraged us to pray:

**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 forever. Amen.

**THE SACRAMENT**

**The Celebration of Holy Communion ..... CW pages 33-36**



*At Tree of Life, we desire to have all commune with us at the Lord's Table. However, since the Scripture encourages us to "recognize the body and blood of the Lord," "examine ourselves," and join together as "one body," we ask those who are visiting with us this morning to take the time to understand these teachings and establish a unity of beliefs with us before partaking of this act of fellowship. By this practice of close communion, we are in no way judging your personal faith and relationship with Jesus, we just ask for an opportunity for us to share our beliefs with you so that together we can make a true expression of oneness at the Lord's Table.*

M: The Lord be with you.  
C: (sung) **And also with you.**  
M: Lift up your hearts.  
C: (sung) **We lift them up to the Lord.**  
M: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.  
C: (sung) **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

24Now some Pharisees who had been sent 25questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"  
26"I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. 27He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."  
28This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

**Hymn..... "On Jordan's Bank The Baptist's Cry"  
*Christian Worship Hymn 16***

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
Announces that the Lord is nigh;  
Come, then, and listen, for he brings  
Good news about the King of kings.

Stretch forth your hand, our health  
restore,  
And lift us up to fall no more.  
Oh, make your face on us to shine,  
And fill the world with love divine.

Then cleansed be ev'ry life from sin  
And furnished for a guest within,  
And let us all our hearts prepare  
For Christ to come and enter there.

All praise to you, eternal Son,  
Whose advent has our freedom won,  
Whom with the Father we adore  
And Holy Spirit evermore.

We hail you as our Savior, Lord,  
Our refuge and our great reward.  
Without your grace we waste away  
Like flow'rs that wither and decay.

Text and Tune: public domain.  
Setting: c A. R. Mowbray & Co., Ltd.

**YEAR OF JUBILEE: REJOICE IN THE  
YEAR OF THE LORD'S FAVOR!**

Isaiah 61:1-3, 10,11  
Vicar Steve Neuman

STAND

**Statement of Belief** ..... Nicene Creed

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 our salvation, he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,  
and became fully 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 in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy Christian 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.

*BE SEATED*

**ADULT CONFIRMATION**

*Meredith Johnson*

**Friendship Registers**

**Offering**

**Prayer of the Church**

P: O Lord God Almighty, Your Son is the Son of David whose kingdom never ends. Extend Your everlasting kingdom of grace and mercy to all people on earth. Continue to strengthen those whom You have brought into Your kingdom by grace through faith. Bring to faith all those yet remaining outside Your kingdom so that they may receive the redemption from sins which Your Son came to bring. O Lord, come down from heaven,

**C: and reign among us with Your salvation.**

P: Eternal Lord, as we feebly struggle with the effects of sin here on earth, keep us firm in the faith, confident in Your promise of everlasting life. Govern our hearts by Your Holy Spirit that in our daily need, and especially in all time of temptation, we may seek Your help and, by a true and lively faith in Your Word, obtain all that You have promised. O Lord, come down from heaven,

**C: and reign among us with Your salvation.**

P: Almighty God, You care for our earthly lives by the many gifts, skills, and callings You give to certain individuals. We thank You for blessing us with caring people who dedicate their lives in service to You as they protect and care for us. We especially praise You for our governmental leaders, military personnel, police officers, firefighters, doctors, nurses, and all those who support them in their various callings. Help us see You at work through the service of those You place to preserve us here on earth. O Lord, come down from heaven,

**C: and reign among us with Your salvation.**

P: Lord God, as we prepare to receive the Sacrament of the Altar this day, we thank You that You can do all things and that nothing is impossible for You. Defying all limited human comprehension, You dwelt among us in the mystery of the Word made Flesh. And today, You also defy our understanding by dwelling among us in, with, and under simple bread and wine, giving to us poor sinners forgiveness, life, and salvation. Grant us repentant hearts as we approach Your altar this day. By this Sacrament, keep us in Your faith and favor that we may live in You even as You live in us. O Lord, come down from heaven,

**C: and reign among us with Your salvation.**

*Continued on next page*