

**Historic Scripture Lessons for ☩ ☩ ☩ the Third Sunday in Advent**  
**OLD TESTAMENT Malachi 3:1-6 NIV** "See, I will send My messenger, who will prepare the way before Me. Then suddenly the LORD you are seeking will come to His temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, 4 and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years. 5 "So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear Me," says the LORD Almighty. 6 "I the LORD do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.

#### **Epistle**

**I Corinthians 4:1-5** So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. 2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 3 I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the LORD Who judges me. 5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the LORD comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

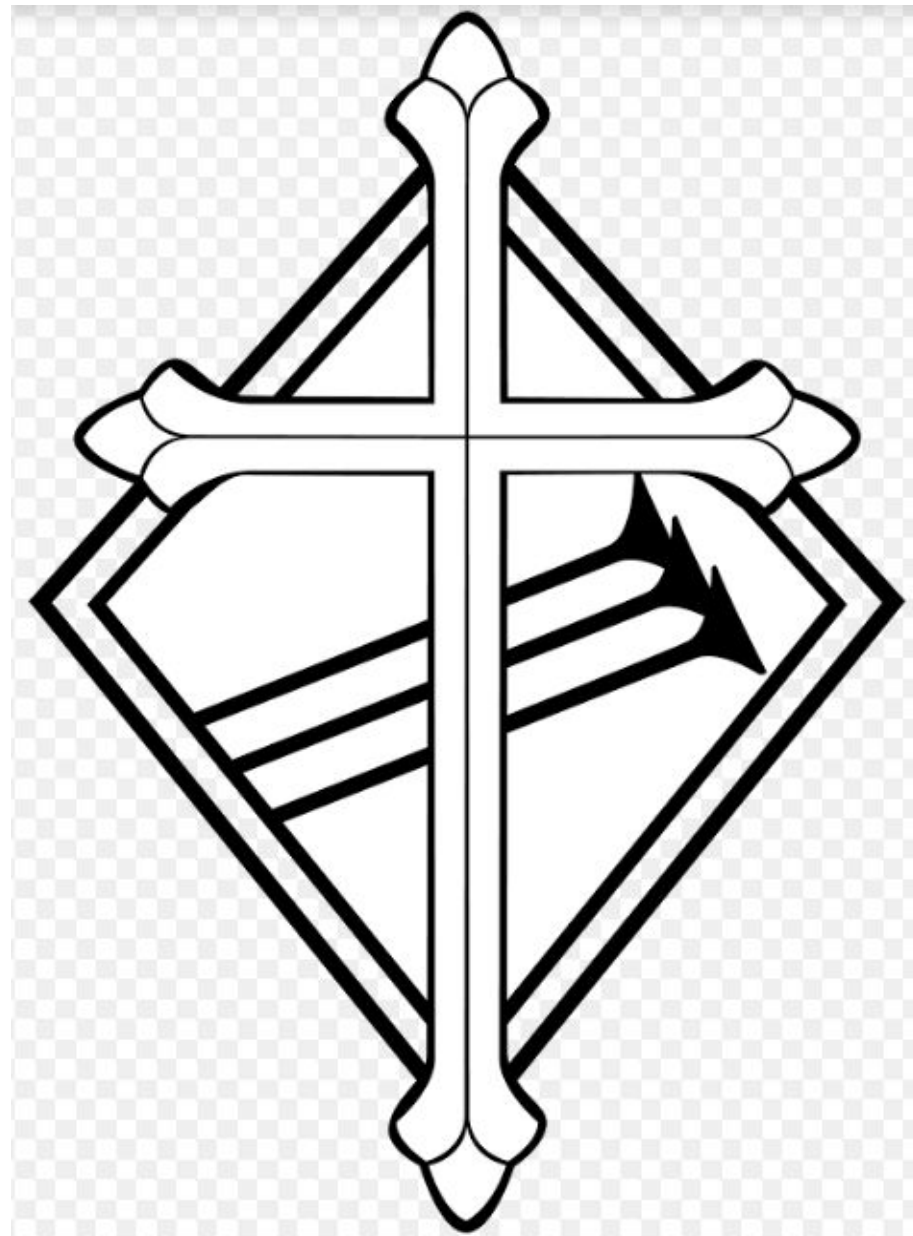
#### **Historic Gospel**

**Matthew 11:2-10** When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples 3 to ask Him, "Are You the One who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" 4 Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5 The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor. 6 Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of Me." 7 As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? 8 If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. 9 Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 10 This is the one about whom it is written: "'I will send My messenger ahead of You, who will prepare Your way before You.'

#### **3-Year Gospel-B (Sermon Text)**

**John 1:6-8,19-28** There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that Light, so that through Him all men might believe. 8 He himself was not the Light; he came only as a witness to the Light. ... 19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ." 21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." 22 Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 23 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.'" 24 Now some Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned 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. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." 28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

Our Savior Lutheran Church  Lakeland, FL   
3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent ☩☩☩ *Gaudeté* 😊 *Forerunners of Jesus*  
(JB:) "Are You the One?" ✠ December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017, 9:30 am



*Historic Church Year Symbol Set for Advent-3 – Matthew 11:2-10*  
*John's disciples ask about Jesus, Jesus speaks about John the Baptist.*

Image courtesy of the Lutheran Synod Publishing <https://lutheransynodpublishing.com>

# **OSL OUR SAVIOR LUTHERAN CHURCH OSL**

6920 N Socrum Loop Road / (north) Lakeland, FL 33809 USA

Phone: (863) 859-3400 ~ Web: [www.osllakeland.org](http://www.osllakeland.org)

BIBLE CLASS 8:30 AM WORSHIP 9:30 AM FELLOWSHIP 10:45 AM

✱ Rev. Andrew R. Burmeister 863-430-5859 ✱ Organ: A.R. Burmeister

## **December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Advent-3** *Forerunners of Christ*

**TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE LORD'S SUPPER:** If you are new to the area or our worship and have never communed with us before, please speak with the pastor before the service. If you are not currently a member of an ELS or WELS congregation, we ask that you please **wait to take Communion until you can speak with our pastor**. Out of Christian love and consideration to you the guest, we want you to have the opportunity to learn what our church teaches about the Bible and Sacraments before you unite with us in taking Holy Communion. Thank you for your understanding. LORD's blessings to you.

**OUR ORDER OF WORSHIP** On the silver liturgy sheets or red TLHymnal **p.15**

Service	TLH# (vv)	...First Line
Invocation Hymn	70 (4v)	Hosanna to the Living Lord
<i>Psalm 25</i>	25 (3v)	<i>To You O LORD, I Lift My Soul; to You I Lift.. 7</i>
Hymn of the Day	62 (4v)	Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel
<i>Offertory Verse</i>	441 (6v)	<i>Sing verses 1&amp;2 We Give Thee But Thine Own</i>
Distribution Hymn	58 (9v)	O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee(?)
Closing Hymn	66 (5v)	Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

**Suggested Bible readings for the weekdays of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Advent & Church Year**

Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday  
 Isaiah 2:1-5 Is.24:21-25:5 Isaiah 25:6-10 Isa. 26:1-21 Isa. 51:1-16 Isa.52:1-12  
 Heb.10:35-39 Luke 21:5-24 Luke 12:35-59 James5:7-11 Luke 1:1-25 Lk.1:26-38

**PROPERs for ADVENT-3** *🕊️🕊️🕊️* (3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the New Church Year) **DEC 17<sup>TH</sup>**

**INTROIT** Rejoice in the LORD always; and again I say, Rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The LORD is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. LORD, You have been favorable to Your land; You have brought back the captivity of Jacob. ... **New Testament**

**COLLECT** LORD, we beseech You, give ear to our prayers, and lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever. **C: ♪ A---men.**

**GRADUAL C:** Alleluia! You who dwell between the cherubim, shine forth. Stir up Your strength and come. Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock. Alleluia! Alleluia! Stir up Your strength, and come and save us. Alleluia!  
 ...from Psalm 80

**SCRIPTURE LESSONS** *(printed on outside back page of bulletin)*

O.T. **Malachi 3:1-6** (Malachi/)God prophecies re: His messenger, John.  
 Epi. **I Corinthians 4:1-5** God judges His servants, His ministers & stewards.  
 Gos. **Matthew 11:2-10** Jesus testifies of Himself, the Christ, and of John.

**Psalm 25 REFRAIN:** *To You, O LORD, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.*

Verse 1. ♪ Lord, \_ Make me know Your ways, Teach me Your paths,  
 And keep me in the way of Your truth, \_ For You are God, my Saviour.

**Refrain C:** ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

Verse 2. ♪ For- the-Lord is good and righteous, \_ Revealing His way,  
 To those who seek Him, \_ Gently leading the poor, and the humble.

**Refrain C:** ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

Verse 3. ♪ To-the-ones who seek the Lord, \_ Who look to His Word,  
 Who live in His Love, \_ He-will-always be near; He will show them His mercy.

**Refrain C:** ♪ To You, O Lord, I lift my soul; To You, I lift my soul.

**SERMON** (Gospel-B) **John 1:6-8,19-28** *"Who Do YOU THINK JOHN Is(?); JESUS Is?"*

PRAYER REQUESTS:	Member or Relation	Pray for...
Alex Gourley (Ilene)	Alex had catheter procedure Thu. Went well. Back home	
Jim&Elma Hendricks	LORD's will be done. Jim at home. Blood pressure spikes	
Mary Lou Knigge	Mary Lou is back home after fall and rehab. Recuperating	
Dee Kurczewski (David)	Dee fell(twice), was in hospital. Back home rehabbing	
Carolyn Miner (Don)	Carolyn had (knee) surgery this week. Back home	
Joan & Frank Patrick	Frank had (eye)surgery last week. Both have eyes Wed.	
Jon Sawyer Sr(Andrea)	Jon had a stroke in Boston. Bloodclots on brain&heart	
James Vanesky&Delores	Delores & Jim at home. Both doing rehab	
Bev Wienke (Don)	Bev is rehabbing from her back. Thank God for progress	

Volunteers	Today	Next Sunday
Greeters	Bev & Don Wienke	Elaine Jones
Treaters	Mary Lou Knigge (Lunch)	Volunteer (Christmas Eve AM)

Statistics	Last week	Year to date / Avg.
Sunday Attendance/(L.S.) / Wed.	27/(22) / 15	24 / 21
Bible Class Attendance (Sunday)	7	8
Sunday Offering for LORD / Wed.	\$. / \$.	YTD Total \$.

### **Calendar of Events**

Today, Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup>	8:30 am	Bible Study Heb. 11 JC, Hero of Faithful
Second Sunday of Advent & New Year	9:30 am	Divine Worship (W/ Holy Communion)
	10:45 ff...	Fellowship, Coffee ... <i>Please stay &amp; talk</i>
Wednesday 12/20	4:30 pm	Midweek Advent(3W) Vespers Worship
Next Sunday 12/24	8:30 am	Bible Study Heb. 12 JC, Hero of Faithful
Third Sunday of Advent & Christmas	9:30 am	Divine Worship (W/ Holy Communion)
Eve(ning) Worship	10:45 ff...	Fellowship, Coffee ... <i>Please stay &amp; talk</i>
	7:00 pm	Special Family Christmas EVE at church
Monday, 12/25 <sup>th</sup>	9:30 am	Special Christmas DAY Worship at church

Our Savior Elders: Tom Temple 213-4622; John Weber 853-5458; Steve Wendt 858-3611 & Don Wienke 815-8892. Please contact with concerns.

✱ Please take advantage of (4)Worship opportunities next 8 days – Christmas(Eve/Day):  
 20<sup>th</sup> Wed.4:30 3<sup>rd</sup>(Final) Midweek; 24<sup>th</sup> Sun.9:30; 7 pm Eve; 25<sup>th</sup> Mon.9:30am Day

Wednesday: 12/20 Advent-3-Wed. (BLACK ELH p.120) ELH #s 133 123 561  
 Sun. 12/24 Advent-4/Christmas Eve (L.S. p.5,24) TLH Hymn #s 95 62 85.1,15 315 75

ADVENT3-B John 1:6-8,19-28 **"WHAT Do YOU THINK OF JB;JC?" 12.17.17 OSL**

***There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came for testimony, to bear witness to the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light. (John 1:6-8)***

INTRODUCTION STORY "**Barry**" The five year old nephew of the bride was chosen to be in charge of carrying the rings down the aisle. At the wedding rehearsal he was unusually unruly. He kept **leaping out at people, baring his teeth at and then chasing the flower girls**. He growled and snarled as he practiced going down the aisle. He held up the pillow and his arms like bearing claws. Finally his mother pulled him aside and demanded to know why he was behaving so badly.

"But Mum," he explained, **"I have to act fierce. I'm the 'Ring BEAR.'"** Like so many of us that **little boy misunderstood** just what **ROLE** he was supposed to play. He thought he was called to be big, imposing, fearsome, large and in charge. **He thought he was to BE the "star of the show."** He thought the spotlight was his.

But he **wasn't supposed to BE a bear**, he was supposed to offer the supportive role of "ring bear**ER**." His role was important. The pastor, not to mention the bride and groom, needed those rings down front. But the focus of the wedding ceremony was not on the ring bearer. The reason for the wedding celebration was not him.

In this week's Advent Gospel text John, the author of the fourth Gospel, has no trouble distinguishing the one who "bears witness" to the light from the One who actually IS the light...**So what do YOU think of John the Baptist?** You've had a week to think about him, to live with this Advent image in your head of this wilderness prophet wearing camel's hair and leather, eating locusts and wild honey, calling people to repentance and baptism. What do you think of him? **Do you like him?** Would you **want to meet him?** Does he **disturb** you?

He **disturbed the religious leaders of Jerusalem**, that's for certain. They sent priests and Levites out to conduct an investigation. And isn't that how it always is when there is a man sent from God. There is certain to be an investigation from synodical headquarters. These things have to be controlled, managed, supervised, watched closely. We can't be having guys impersonating Elijah and baptising people in the Jordan without our approval, can we? We need to appoint a blue-ribbon panel to investigate this guy.

So they asked John, **"Who are you?"** - Great question. The question of **identity** and **purpose**. (I ask **you**) **"Who are YOU?"** Or perhaps it might be better expressed, **"Who do you think you are?"** Implied is another question, **"Who sent you?"** And John confessed. He spoke the truth. He didn't flinch or deny, he didn't engage in the weasel talk one hears from public officials these days, skirting the issue, avoiding the question. John was clear. **"I am not the Christ."** Some apparently thought he was. People were waiting for a messiah. And there were already messianic pretenders. John was their kind of messiah – wilderness, camel's hair, weird, ascetic, holy, intense. He could gather crowds. rally men, lead an army, mobilize forces, establish a kingdom **with violence**.

**John confessed clearly.** **"I am not the Christ."** He would come later, after John. Cousin Jesus. So **who are you? Are you Elijah?** You sure look like Elijah with that camel hair shirt and leather belt. You came in the **same place** Elijah left this earth in a fiery chariot drawn by horsemen of Israel. Are you Elijah?

Again, John confessed clearly. **"I am not."** Actually he was Elijah in **opposite** as Jesus Himself said. John wasn't Elijah. So, **Who ARE you?!** Are you the great Prophet of whom **Moses spoke?** One who would arise from the people and lead the people like Moses did? Again the answer, even shorter, **"No."**

So, Who **are you**, John? Inquiring minds want to know. The boys in Jerusalem need to know. We have papers to fill out, reports to make. Give us something. Okay (John says) Here's something: **A voice calling in the wilderness. A voice.** Nothing more. A prophet mouth to produce words. That's all John wanted to be known as. A voice in the wilderness with a single message: **"Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight paths for Him."**

Then, **What's with the Baptising** thing, John? We don't baptise around here. It's unheard of. Why do you baptise if you are neither the messiah or Elijah or **the** Prophet? You don't just go around baptising. **Why?**

Here's why: **"I come baptising with water, but among you stands One you do not know, even He Who comes after me, the strap of Whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."** That's why. Are **you** satisfied with that explanation? You have to be; it's all you're going to get from John.

What a strange figure John is! Stranger this week than he was last week. He seems to have **no identity of his own**. He's just a Voice calling in the wilderness and a finger pointing to Jesus, the One coming after him Whose sandals he is not worthy to stoop down and untie. **"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."** That's where John is pointing. **To Jesus, God's Lamb** Whose sacrificial Blood takes away the sin of the world. That's where John **wants your attention focused. Not on him but on Jesus**. When John's disciples were leaving him in droves to follow Jesus, John said, **"Good! That's how it should be. He must increase, and I must decrease. He must become everything, and I must become nothing. You can throw me away, lock me in Herod's prison and lose the key for all I care. You can forget I even exist. I'm just a voice calling in the wilderness, pointing to Jesus. Don't follow me, follow Him."**

What a **model for the ministry John** is! In our day, when pastors are expected to be salesmen, politicians, outgoing **winners** who project a winning attitude and attract (only?) winners to themselves. Isn't that what we really expect? Be honest. We want ministers to be kind, caring, gentle, nurturing, even "motherly," dare I say it. **Would you want John as your pastor?** He was weird. He was as weird then as he would be today. And maybe weird will draw a crowd for a while, but sooner or later people are going to get tired (of the freak,) of the repentance message and look for something more "relevant and meaningful."

He came as a **witness**. That's the word **John the Evangelist** uses to describe John **the Baptist**. A "witness." What does a witness do? He **doesn't talk about himself** or his feelings or what he had for breakfast today. He talks

about what he has seen and heard. His personal stuff is irrelevant to his testimony. When the religious types from Jerusalem came to John to interrogate him, **he could have gone on and on about his own life.** And we would have had some fascinating details into this mysterious man from the wilderness. Who raised him when his parents died? What was that like, growing up with wilderness monks? Or that question that sports stars get asked after a big game: **What are YOUR emotions right now? How do you feel about things John?**

But John would simply say, *“Who cares? It’s none of your business. You don’t need to know, and I don’t need to tell you. I’m **nothing but a Voice.** What matters is the coming Christ and your repentance.”* That’s **all** that matters. John came to testify to the Light. He was not the Light. He simply reflected the Light and pointed to it, so that through him, through his preaching and his baptism, **people might believe in the Light who is Jesus Christ.**

One of the great **insights in church history** is the recognition that the **Sacraments retain their power** even when the men who administer them are wicked scoundrels and even unbelievers. Luther once said that **even if the devil or his mother** were to pose as a pastor and preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments, these would be as valid and certain as if Christ Himself were preaching and administering, because it is Christ’s office and Christ’s Word. Now that doesn’t mean that we should tolerate scoundrels and unbelievers in the Office of the Ministry, but it does mean that should not put our trust in them either. They are instruments, **witnesses**, a voice and a finger, pointing to Jesus.

John is also **a model** for each and **every one of us** in the priesthood of the believers. The **church is the John the Baptist** of these End times, calling sinners to repentance and Baptism, preparing the way of the Lord in advance of His **Final Advent in glory.** You are witnesses to the Light who shines on you. Your witness is **not** about yourself – your life, your decisions, your feelings. Those are really quite irrelevant. **You are a voice in this present dark wilderness**, calling to a world that needs so desperately to hear. *“The Lord is near. Prepare His way.” **“Make Way(!) A Saviour Comes.”*** You are that pointer to the Lamb in **Word and Sacrament** – Behold the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world, who takes away **your sin.**

(And like JohnB) People will **investigate** you too. **They’ll ask questions.** They’ll look for reasons **NOT to believe you OR Who sends you.** *“Oh, look at your life. How can you call yourself a **Christian**, you **hypocrite**!”* That’s what they’ll say. Or they might say, *“I just don’t have that God-gene. You do. You’re a good person, pious and faithful. But I could never be like that.”*

**CONCLUSION** You are a witness. (Just like John) The spotlight is **NOT** on you, **but ON Christ.** You must decrease – it’s really not about you. Christ must increase. He must be all in all. Your old Adam won’t like it. Face it – **we like to be the center of attention.** The world won’t like it. The devil will surely hate it. And when that happens, **you’re on the right track.** Be a witness. Be a bearER.

**Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding - “Christ is near” we hear it say  
Cast away the works of darkness - All you children of the Day.**

Come, Lord Jesus ... and come QUICKLY. **IJ’N, Amen. SDG**

*The peace of God which surpasses our understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, until He appears again in glory, **and YOU in glory with Him.***

**Possible Prayer of Church ☞ 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent + December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

*Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs. (Possible Brief silence)*

For the Church on earth, that her members would rejoice always in their salvation, pray without ceasing and bear witness about the light of the world that is Jesus Christ, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who are preparing to serve the Church as pastors, teachers, deaconesses and directors of Christian education, that they would be diligent in their studies, faithful to their callings and a blessing to those they will come to serve, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those that God has appointed to civic leadership, that they would govern wisely, administer justice fairly and not abuse the authority that has been granted them, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those traveling this season to celebrate the Nativity with family and friends, that they reach their destinations safely, that their time with loved ones be joyful, and that they return home without incident, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who are hungry, homeless, unemployed or find themselves in any kind of need, that they find food, shelter and employment and come to know and confess God as the giver of daily bread, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who gather at this Altar today to receive the very Body and Blood of Jesus, that they depart from here strengthened in faith toward You and love for their neighbor, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who are ill, those recovering and those who are homebound who cannot be with us,

PRAYER REQUESTS:	Member or Relation	Pray for...
<b>Alex Gourley</b> (Ilene)	Alex had catheter procedure Thu. Went well. Back home	
<b>Jim&amp;Elma Hendricks</b>	LORD’s will be done. Jim at home. Blood pressure spikes	
<b>Mary Lou Knigge</b>	Mary Lou is back home after fall and rehab. Recuperating	
<b>Dee Kurczewski</b> (David)	Dee fell(twice), was in hospital. Back home rehabbing	
<b>Carolyn Miner</b> (Don)	Carolyn had (knee) surgery this week. Back home	
<b>Joan &amp; Frank Patrick</b>	Frank had (eye)surgery last week. Both have eyes Wed.	
<b>Jon Sawyer Sr</b> (Andrea)	Jon had a stroke in Boston. Bloodclots on brain&heart	
<b>James Vanesky&amp;Delores</b>	Delores & Jim at home. Both doing rehab	
<b>Bev Wienke</b> (Don)	Bev is rehabbing from her back. Thank God for progress	

that they find comfort, healing, patience and the sure knowledge that Jesus will never leave them or forsake them, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who mourn, that they find comfort in the promise of the resurrection from the dead and the hope of reunion with those they love who have died in the faith, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

**Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Then, The Lord’s Supper**