

Sermon Christmas 2020

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Many are calling this year “unprecedented.” While there is nothing new under the sun, this year has been quite unusual! This virus has changed all our lives, and it has exacerbated the hubbub around the fall elections. The virus has brought out the best and the worst in ourselves. Millions of masks were hand-made and distributed to try to stem the virus’ spread. Groceries and other necessities are being delivered by volunteers to those who should shelter in place. On the other hand, the virus has been weaponized for political gain and we now have 7 million people who, for the first time in their lives, purchased a firearm for self-protection. We can’t attend any holiday concerts or performances. Our favorite restaurants are closed for table seating. The size of our Christmas parties has shrunk to almost nothing. Many of use have become much more familiar with video communication. One upside of that is at least you don’t need to wear a mask!

By now we all knew someone personally who died from the virus this year. A number of us have had the virus, or tested positive for it, or have had to self-quarantine because we spent some time with someone who later was found to have had Covid. This year has indeed been unprecedented for most of us.

While some have died and many more have been afflicted by this virus, tonight we remember that sin is the disease that gets all of us. We all test positive for sin. We suffer from its sickness. We will all die from it. Anybody got a vaccine for that? Well ... this week we celebrate the birth of Jesus who cleanses us from all sin, lifts our spirits, and turns our death into everlasting life. It is as we sing, “The hopes and fears of all the years are met in Thee tonight.” A .38 special might fend off a couple ner-do-wells if the boogaloo erupts, but Jesus puts down anyone or anything that is against him or us. In *Hark the Herald Angels* we sing, “Light and life to all He brings, ris’n with healing in His wings.” Nothing is a match for what Jesus does for us. He overcomes every virus, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, dementia, and even death. In Him there is hope for broken hearts, friendship for the lonely, and status for the belittled. How good it is for us to remember Jesus’ birth and offer him our thanks and praise and worship.

The Christmas angels and even Jesus have returned to heaven. We, however, are all stuck here below in a world full of selfish sinners and death. We do the best we can. Some think they know the best way forward and would like to lead us. We call those people politicians. Boy what a year it has been in that area as well, especially with the presidential election. Sides were taken early on. Words and knives were sharpened. Friends became former friends. Families are no longer so familiar. Fingers were pointed and voices were raised and words were spoken. The internet is discussing the possibility of a Civil War. And then came the mail-in ballot and voter fraud issues which are still ongoing, continuing to tear our people apart. All this while we are trying to solve a global pandemic.

When we are at odds with one another, its hard to enjoy life and even harder to get things done. While the squabbling continues about the validity of the election, it may be helpful to remember that the term of office for the President is four years. This President will be followed by the next one and so on until our earthly cares are over. Then, finally, we will live under the rule of the one who's birth we now celebrate.

Jesus Christ was not elected to office by a democratic process with all it's special interests, back-door deals, money power and fake news. The validity of his office does not depend on the decision of any high court. God the Father didn't even bother to ask us what we thought about the appointment. Jesus is, "Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be." As Isaiah says, "His origin is from of old, from ancient of days." Jesus is as we sing, "Born the king of angels," the "Newborn King," and the "Heav'n born Prince of Peace." Isaiah brings it home in his ninth chapter, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

It has been an unprecedented year. A year for us to see how vulnerable we are as even the mightiest among us are easily toppled by an unseen microscopic virus. It's a year for us to realize the great confusion we live in as even the brightest and best disagree about how to handle public health and which candidates would be the best leaders for the state. This is another year for us to turn our eyes to Jesus. He provides all we need and could ever ask and more. He is the one chosen by our Father to help us now and lead us into an eternity of blessedness and life.

Welcome to earth, dear Christ child. We're glad you're here, because boy do we need you!
Amen.

Ron Breight, Pastor
Christ Lutheran Church
400 Barclay Avenue
Forest Hills, PA

Sunday bulletins and sermons available online at christlutheranfh.org
Service video recordings on YouTube – "Christ Lutheran Forest Hills PA"
Watch services live-streamed on our Facebook page - christlutheranchurchfh