

**Luke 3:1-20** (Commentary)  
**Institute of Lutheran Theology**

John's preaching has spawned generations of fruit inspectors. Each fruit—that is, a good work—is examined every which way for its worthiness as a fruit of repentance. Fruit inspectors operate by the law, examining every work for its obedience to the law. Obedience measures the results of repentance. Sorrow for sin, our disobedience, drives us toward obedience. Fruit inspectors name that drive... that move from disobedience to obedience... repentance. We can all rejoice in fruit inspectors for they bring better behavior to our communities. But... but John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul, and all the other New Testament witnesses drive for something deeper... something more radical... than merely better behavior. After all, philosophers and ethicists through the millennia have concerned themselves with better behavior. John the Baptist and all the rest preach repentance as the movement from unbelief to belief... from no faith to faith... from the old person born under the law, who hears the law's demand but can never be the person who fears, loves, and trusts God above all things. The law demands a new person but cannot deliver it. Only the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ establishes a new person in a new reality of faith, love, and fear of God. That... That movement is the repentance demanded by the New Testament witness.

**Gospel:** On reverse of Prayer List...

**Responsive Reading:** Psalm 85 (NLT)

**ALL:** **LORD, you poured out blessings on your land! You restored the fortunes of Israel**

North: You forgave the guilt of your people—yes, you covered all their sins.

South: *You held back your fury. You kept back your blazing anger.*

North: Now restore us again, O God of our salvation. Put aside your anger against us once more.

South: *Will you be angry with us always? Will you prolong your wrath to all generations?*

North: Won't you revive us again, so your people can rejoice in you?

South: *Show us your unfailing love, O LORD, and grant us your salvation.*

North: listen carefully to what God the LORD is saying, for he speaks peace to his faithful people.

South: *But let them not return to their foolish ways.*

North: Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, so our land will be filled with his glory.

South: *Unfailing love and truth have met together. Righteousness and peace have kissed!*

North: Truth springs up from the earth, and righteousness smiles down from heaven.

South: *Yes, the LORD pours down his blessings. Our land will yield its bountiful harvest.*

**All:** **Righteousness goes as a herald before him, preparing the way for his steps.**

**Lesson:** Philippians 1:2-11 (NLT)

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace. Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. So, it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus.

# Salem's News & Family Events

## News from Call Committee

The Call Committee met this past Wednesday evening. The participation was 100% plus representatives from the Church Council were in attendance. The main gist of the meeting was to discuss and, ultimately, create the job description for the new pastor. The results of the recently distributed survey (via email) to the entire church membership were used as guidance for our deliberations in the process of creating this job description. The Call Committee is but the first step in this process with the final authority and approval belonging to the Church Council.

In addition, this job description will also be used as the advertisement for the job opening to be posted on the LCMC website. It is very important that you, the congregation, contact a member of either the Call Committee or the Church Council with any questions, comments, or suggestions. The new pastor of Salem Lutheran Church of Oxford will likely and hopefully be here for a considerable time and influence the faith of our membership now and in the future.

- There will be no Wednesday evening Advent services this year.
- December 19<sup>th</sup> – **Children's Christmas Program!!!**
- Holy Communion will be served at the service on Christmas Eve (Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>). As the 24<sup>th</sup> is on a Friday, there will be no Sunday service that weekend.



Last Week



## Salem's Service Leadership Team

Pr. Bill Pohl

Pr. Ellen Erdman

Hans Erdman

Nicolas Williams

**Sunday School has started.**

We are having 2 classes K-2 and 3-6. The teachers are preparing for fun and learning. **We are excited to see the kids!!!**



- Q. What do snowmen call their offspring? A: Chill-dren
- Q. What's St. Nicholas's favorite measurement in the metric system? A. The Santameter!
- Q. Where do Christmas plants go when they want to become movie stars? A. Holly-wood!
- Q. How do Christmas angels greet each other? A. "Halo!"
- Q. What's red and white and falls down chimneys? A. Santa Klutz!
- Q. What's a sheep's favorite Christmas song? A. "Fleece Navidad"!
- Q. Why do Dasher and Dancer love coffee? A. Because they're Santa's star bucks!
- Q. What does the Gingerbread Man use to make his bed? A. Cookie sheets!
- Q. What do you get if you cross a Christmas tree with an iPad? A. A pineapple!

