

Dear Church family,

We will have In-person and Online Worship on **Sunday, December 17, 2023, 10am.**

Online Worship

Website: www.littlefallsumc.org

YouTube: www.youtube.com/@lfumc

You can join Online Worship using your home phone or cell phone.

Call 646-876-9923; enter the Meeting ID 917 9067 6301; and enter the Passcode 139139.

Sunday Scriptures

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11 and Matthew 1:18-25

Today's Message! 'A Time for Salvation'.

Sunday, December 17, 2023, is the Third Sunday of Advent.

Let us ponder the meaning of Advent and Christmas

in the Advent Season together through Worship and Advent Study.

The theme of the Advent and Christmas season is 'The Purpose of Christmas'.

**Sunday School will show us a presentation titled "12 Days of Kindness" at Sunday
Worship on Sunday, December 17th, 2023. Join the Sunday Worship!**

If you have any concerns and joys and want to share them with the congregation, and ask the church to pray on Sunday, please let me know! You can email, call, or text me. Or you can submit your prayer concerns and joys here: www.littlefallsumc.org/prayer

Your generous financial support is significant and appreciated very much.
We have continued our ministries with your support.

You can support God's ministry in three ways:

1. Put your offerings in the plates at the Offering Station at the in-person Worship
2. Mail your offerings and tithes to the church office: 139 Main St. Little Falls, NJ 07424
3. Make online donations at www.littlefallsumc.org/donation

Again, we appreciate your generosity very much.

Please see the bulletin for other announcements!
Have a good day! See you on Sunday!

Pastor Jin

Little Falls United Methodist Church

Sunday Worship Service

December 17, 2023 - 10 am

Come and Join us!

Advent & Christmas

SUNDAY WORSHIP AT 10AM

Dec. 3 - Waiting for Christmas
Dec. 10 - A Time for Celebration
Dec. 17 - A Time for Salvation
Dec. 24 - A Time for Reconciliation

The Purpose of Christmas

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE (DEC. 24, 7 PM)

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU!

LITTLE FALLS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
139 Main ST Little Falls NJ 973-256-0993 info@littelfallsumc.org

139 Main Street, Little Falls, NJ 07424

Office Phone: (973) 256-0993

Website: www.LittleFallsUMC.org

Email: Info@LittleFallsUMC.org

*“A Welcoming Community of Faith, Hope,
Mission and Outreach Sharing Christ’s Love”*

“Making Disciples of Jesus Christ for the Transformation of the World”

**“I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God,
to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God,
which is your spiritual worship.” (Romans 12:1)**

Called to Praise

‡Prepare your heart and body for Worship

Greeting & Announcements

- We have ‘**In-Person**’ & ‘**Online Worship**’ on **Sunday, December 17, 2023, 10am.**
- You can join our online worship via YouTube or Facebook. Type “Little Falls United Methodist Church” in the search window on YouTube or Facebook. Please use the link below to join in Online Worship. YouTube: www.youtube.com/@lfumc
- You can join the Online Worship by your phone. Call (646)-876-9923 and enter the Meeting ID, 917 9067 6301, and Passcode 139139.
- **Advent and Christmas Eve Worship - The Purpose of Christmas**

Sunday Worship at 10 am

December 17 - A Time for Salvation

December 24 - A Time for Reconciliation

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service - December 24, 7pm

- **Sunday School will show us the presentation titled, “12 Days of Kindness” at Sunday Worship on Sunday, December 17, 2023. Join the Sunday Worship!**
- **Advent Study** – We will have Advent study at Lee Lounge at 7 pm every Wednesday from **Dec. 6th to Dec. 20th**. The Theme is “The Purpose of Christmas” which is the title of the book that we will read. Advent study will enrich our Advent spirit and help us find the true meaning of Christmas. Please join us! Please let Pastor Jin know if you want to have a copy of the book.
- **Prayer Concerns & Joys** – If you would like to share your concerns and joys with the congregation, please email Pastor Jin (jkim@littlefallsumc.org) or complete the online form, www.littlefallsumc.org/prayer.
- **Altar Flowers** – Thank you **Merla Corpuz** for providing the altar flowers. If you would like to offer the altar flowers, please contact Janet (973) 896-8936 or ladyteddy@aol.com.
- **Fellowship Time after Worship** – Thank you **Sunday School** for hosting the coffee hour. Let us enjoy a good fellowship time every Sunday after Worship. Please help us with hosting the coffee hour. The Sign-up board is on the table in the Narthex. Please contact Cheryle or Kathy F. if you have any questions about the coffee hour.
- **Stewardship Campaign for the year 2024** – Thank you for your pledges for the 2024 Church ministry. You have participated in God’s mission through your pledge for the church ministry. You have committed to God to give God your first fruit not leftovers. If you didn’t give us your pledge card, do not worry. You are not late to participate in God’s ministry through your pledge. We are still accepting pledge cards. You can mail your card to

the church or put it in the Stewardship Campaign box in the Narthex. Giving us your pledge cards helps us a lot to consider the 2024 ministry and budget. Thank you for your love and support for Little Falls UMC and God's ministry again!

- **Coffee and Bible** –We will resume *Coffee and Bible* on **Thursday, January 18th, 2024** at 1 pm, at Lee Lounge. We will study **the Book of Ecclesiastes** in the Old Testament in the Bible and have a conversation, having coffee for 12 weeks. Jung Ae will lead the study. Contact Jung Ae, cclim92@gmail.com for details. Please join us!
- **Kids & Youths For Christ** – The next meeting will be held at 5 pm on **Thursday, December 21th**. Kids & Youths For Christ is a program for Kindergarten to grade 12 of Christian education and fun activities. K.Y.F.C. will get together every first and third Thursday to **June 6, 2024**. All Students are welcome!
- **Treasured Memories** – “Treasured Memories” is a grief group for those who have lost their loved ones. The ongoing meeting gathers every **2nd Wednesday of the month** in Lee Lounge at 7 pm. Contact Allison for details (973) 800-4152.
- **Online Donation** – Online donation is available now. Please visit the church website and click ‘Donation.’ The link is www.LittleFallsUMC.org/donation. Your financial support and generosity are greatly appreciated and essential for our church ministry and mission. Please consider sending your tithes and offerings to Little Falls UMC (139 Main St. Little Falls, NJ 07424). You can send your offerings and tithes to the church every week. Or you can send offerings and tithes for a month with a check. Thanks again for your generosity!
- **Shoprite Gift Card** – To purchase a Shoprite gift card, contact Pete (973) 595-5765 or detroit50@aol.com.
- **Kohl's Gift Card** – We are selling Kohl's Gift Card. Contact Allison.
- **LFUMC FOOD PANTRY ITEMS NEEDED** - Many families depend on the Food Pantry on a regular basis. The Pantry needs the following non-perishable items; canned vegetables, peanut butter, jelly, adult/children's cereal, pasta & sauce, instant potatoes/rice, tuna, chicken, sardines, fruit, apple sauce, juice, and granola bars.
- **SOCKS FOR SOULS - Do your feet get cold?** Please help Unity Circle to provide new or gently used socks to the homeless. There is a constant need. Please drop off your socks in the large white sock in the Narthex.
- **The UMW is collecting canned goods for CUMAC and Oasis during the months of November & December.** Donations can be placed on the marked table in the Narthex. Thank you in advance for supporting this mission project!
- **Ongoing Collection** - UMW collects postmarked stamps, can pull tabs, and the front of greeting cards (No Hallmark). Items are donated to different charities and organizations.

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Gallo/Ketterer Family

Reader: When God's people were surrounded by hardship, suffering, and grief, Isaiah proclaimed,

“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 (Isaiah 61:1-3a).”

Reader: We come today as people who are also surrounded by suffering and grief. And yet, the Spirit hovers among us, tending and anointing, inspiring freedom where there is captivity, declaring blessing in places the world has cursed, and igniting fierce joy where mourning and heartache prevail.

Congregation: We wait as people who experience hardship and pain, yet we are called to witness to the persistent joy that sustains our life as God's people.

Reader: We light these candles as signs of our shocking hope, just peace, and fierce joy. May our lives shine with the fierce, tenacious joy of the Light who lives in our hearts as we wait and work for the coming of God's kin-dom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Light the Third candle of the Advent wreath while we sing the Advent Song

Advent Song

Light the Advent Candle

TFWS 2090, v.3

Light the Advent candle three Think of heavenly harmony
Angels singing "Peace on Earth" At the Blessed Saviour's birth.
Candle, candle burning bright Shining in the cold winter night
Candle, candle burning bright Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

‡Call to Worship

Leader: Have you noticed? Are you paying attention? God is doing a new thing.

All: We watch and wait in the fierce joy of the coming Messiah.

Leader: You know the captives? God is bringing freedom. You know the brokenhearted? God is bringing healing.

All: We watch and wait in the fierce joy of the coming Messiah.

Leader: Beloved, listen. God is calling *you*. To be freed and to free your neighbors. To be healed and to heal your community. To testify to the Light among us.

All: We watch and wait in the fierce joy of the coming Messiah.

Leader: So, let us join our voices and our hearts as we proclaim the story of the one whose coming we anticipate and yet is already as close as our own breath.

All: We come to watch, to wait, and to worship in the fierce joy of Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. Amen.

‡Praise Song

God Almighty, We Are Waiting

Worship & Song 3047

Verse 1

God Almighty we are waiting
For a savior to appear

Meet us in our desert journey
Give a sign that you are near
Burning bushes parted waters
Food aplenty in the wild
As we look for signs and wonders
Help us see you in a child

Verse 2

God Incarnate we are waiting
For the feast day of your birth
Looking back and looking forward
To the Christ's return to earth
Help us to proclaim the gospel
'Til the world is reconciled
Let us set your holy table
For each woman man and child

Verse 3

God the Spirit we are waiting
For your presence here and now
Humbled by our sinful weakness
At Your mercy we will bow
Search our hearts and make us ready
Speak in language strong and mild
Help each one of us your people
To receive you like a child

Children's Time

12 Days of Kindness

Sunday School

‡Hymn of Prayer

Like a Child

TFWS 2092

Verse 1

Like a child love would send
To reveal and to mend
Like a child and a friend
Jesus comes
Like a child we may find
Claiming heart soul and mind
Like a child strong and kind
Jesus comes

Verse 2

Like a child we will meet
Ragged clothes dirty feet
Like a child on the street
Jesus comes
Like a child we once knew
Coming back into view
Like a child born anew

Jesus comes

Verse 3

Like a child born to pray

And to show us the way

Like a child here to stay

Jesus comes

Like a child we receive

All that love can conceive

Like a child we believe

Jesus comes

Pausing for Silent Prayer and Confession

Prayers of the People (Response: God, in Your Mercy, hear our prayers.)

Give peace to our racing hearts, O Lord. Bring your healing love into our lives. Help us to be those who will bring justice into all of our lives! We have gathered here to sing our praises to you; to celebrate the fast-approaching coming of Your Son; to learn ways of justice and hope for all your people. Empower our hearts and spirits, O Lord, to be strong witnesses of your presence in our lives. Lay your loving hands of healing on all those people who struggle with health issues, who grieve over the loss of loved ones. Dance with those people who have found your love and power in their lives and who are involved in ministries of justice and hope. AMEN.

The 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. Amen.

Called to the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Leader: Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy Spirit, that, as the Scriptures are read and your Word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you say to us today.

All: Amen

OT Lesson

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

The Good News of Deliverance

61 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, ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, ³ 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. ⁴ 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.

⁸ For 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. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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.

***This ends the OT Lessons.
Let us turn to the Gospel Lesson. Please stand, if able.***

Gospel Lesson

Matthew 1:18-25

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ “Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

This is the word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Message

A Time for Salvation

Rev. Jin Kook Kim

Good morning, Church Family! I hope you had a blessed week in God’s love and grace last week. We are in the Advent Season, and we are pondering the meaning of Christmas in this time of waiting for Christmas. Last Sunday we considered the purpose of Christmas. It is a time for celebration. Christmas is Jesus’ birth and Jesus’ coming into our lives. Jesus’ birth is God’s love and presence for us. God loves us so much and God is with us all the time. God’s love and presence should be celebrated in our lives. Let us not miss a celebration for God’s love and presence in this Christmas Season. One of the ways to celebrate Jesus’ birth is to have a birthday party for Jesus, having a birthday cake, and singing a birthday song as we celebrate our loved one’s birthday. Let us prepare a party for Jesus, remembering the meaning of Jesus’ birth in our lives.

One of the joys of Christmas is giving and receiving gifts. We prepare gifts for them, thinking of our loved ones and what gifts would be the best for them. We think about how happy they will be when they receive our gifts while we are shopping the gifts for them. Giving gifts to our loved ones is a joy

for us. On the other hand, receiving gifts is another joy for us. We are happy when we receive our loved one's gift for us because we feel their love for us through the gift. We are grateful when we receive gifts because they are given to us freely. We don't work for it or pay for it. A gift is the giver's grace for us.

What Christmas gift do you remember the most? One of the gifts that I remember is a big box of a variety of snacks which I received when I was a little child. It was amazing. The box was wrapped as a gift with a ribbon. There were many kinds of snacks in the box. As a child, I was very happy about it because all kinds of snacks were in the box. What is your memory of a Christmas gift?

Do you know this? We receive the best gift on Christmas day because God gives us the best gift on Christmas day. It is Jesus and it is the best gift for us. The gift, Jesus, is like a box of snacks. Jesus gives us many things. Jesus' birth has a lot of meanings. As we considered last Sunday, Jesus' birth is God's giving out God's love and presence to us. Another meaning of Jesus' birth is Salvation.

In today's scripture reading, an angel came to Joseph who was engaged to Mary. At that time, he wanted to break off the engagement because he heard Mary was pregnant although they didn't live together yet. The angel told him that Mary had a baby in her womb by God's Spirit. And the angel also told him about the baby, "You are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Through Jesus' birth, God gives us salvation. Through Christmas, God gives us the gift of Salvation through Jesus Christ. Christmas is a time for Salvation. Are you excited when you hear that God's gift for you is Salvation? Or not? Do you wish for other gifts from God rather than salvation? We are used to hearing the word Salvation. We are used to hearing that God saves us. So, we often devalue Salvation and the meaning of Salvation, or we neglect the real value of Salvation. Is Salvation a small gift? No, not at all. God's salvation for us is a huge gift.

What is salvation? Salvation means God saves us from our sins. No one is free from sin as we read in Romans 3:22, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. We cannot handle our sins, and sin leads us to death as we read in James 1:15, sin gives birth to death. Salvation means we have new life in God, and we are promised eternal life in heaven. Jesus, the savior, is for you, each of us. Jesus is a personal savior which means Jesus saves you from your sins, not other people's sins. Jesus came to the world, to our lives to save us, each of us. The gift of salvation is a customized gift for you, each of us.

That's not all. Salvation is not only a future promise or future event but also a current event. When we think of spiritual salvation, we often think that salvation is being saved from hell. However, God's gift of true salvation is happening right now and continues. Since we accept Jesus as our savior, our lives are transformed and changed by God's spirit. Rather than put ourselves in the center of our lives, we put God, God's will, and desire in the center of our lives. That changes the direction of our lives and our life path to God's ways.

The author of the book, "The Purpose of Christmas" surveyed Christmas shoppers asking, "What do you need to be saved from?" People answered these: "From worry; from the cost of gas and my debt; from people who've hurt me; from my past – I can't seem to let it go; from my bad habits; from myself." How about you? What do you need to be saved from?

God's salvation is not only spiritual but also physical. Through Jesus, God's salvation for us, God makes us free from guilt over the past, bitterness and resentment, the expectations of others,

addictive habits, and the fear of death. When we fully believe in God's salvation for us, we have true freedom in our lives which gives us a new life, a new attitude, and a new perspective.

Like other gifts, God's gift of salvation is given to us freely. We call it God's grace. We don't pay for God's salvation, in fact, we cannot pay for it. We cannot earn it or get it by ourselves because only God can give us it. Although it is free, that doesn't mean that it is not valuable. It is priceless and valuable more than we think or imagine. God gives us a very big and huge gift on Christmas day. It is Salvation. Let us not devalue God's salvation for us. It is a gift more valuable than the gift of a house or a car. Let us not neglect the value of God's salvation. We cannot buy or earn it by ourselves, but we should have it. Christmas is exciting for us because God gives us God's great gift, Salvation, along with God's love for us and God's presence in our lives. This is why Christmas is special and should be celebrated in our lives. This is why Christmas is different from other holidays.

Church family, let us remind ourselves that we receive the best and greatest gift from God, and it is salvation on Christmas day. Like kids who are excited for Christmas for gifts, let us be excited for Christmas for God's great gift, Salvation, for us. Also, let us celebrate God's salvation for us in this Advent and Christmas Season. Christmas is a time for Salvation.

We are blessed because we are experiencing God's salvation in our lives through Christmas, Jesus' birth. We can participate in God's ministry to let people experience God's salvation too by helping them with our hands. Is there anyone near you who needs God's salvation? As God's hands and feet, we can do good work for them. Sending a warm note or a phone call to the person who is depressed or discouraged, visiting the lonely to be with them, helping with our hands those who need our help, giving a gift to others, participating in UMW's Toy Drive, donating blood, and many other ways can help people to experience God's salvation. Let us give them God's salvation by helping them with our hands because Christmas is a time for Salvation. Amen.

Called to Share

Response to Our Generous God

‡Doxology Praise God, From Whom All Blessings Flow UMH 95

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!

‡Prayer of Dedication

All: Lord, you have blessed our lives in so many ways. Receive these tokens of our blessings and cause them to work in this world which you have loaned to us to make light shine in the darkness and peace an attainable goal in all conflicts. We offer these gifts in Jesus' name. AMEN.

Called to the World

‡Closing Hymn Hail to the Lord's Anointed UMH 203

Verse 1

Hail to the Lord's anointed
Great David's greater Son
Hail in the time appointed
His reign on earth begun
He comes to break oppression
To set the captive free
To take away transgression
And rule in equity

Verse 2

He comes with succour speedy
To those who suffer wrong
To help the poor and needy
And bid the weak be strong
To give them songs for sighing
Their darkness turn to light
Whose souls condemned and dying
Were precious in His sight

Verse 3

He shall come down like showers
Upon the fruitful earth
And love joy hope like flowers
Spring in His path to birth
Before Him on the mountains
Shall peace the herald go
And righteousness in fountains
From hill to valley flow

Verse 4

To Him shall prayer unceasing
And daily vows ascend
His kingdom still increasing
A kingdom without end
The tide of time shall never
His covenant remove
His name shall stand for ever
That name to us is love

‡Benediction

Rev. Jin Kook Kim

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you. Amen