

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 24, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.

AS WE GATHER

Soon and very soon our waiting and planning for Christmas celebrations will come to their close, and we will rejoice in Christ's coming to save us. Such waiting and planning for Christmas can also guide us as we prepare for Christ's final advent, His ultimate coming, when He returns on the Last Day. Until that glorious Day, when all portions of God's plan for our salvation will be accomplished, we are blessed with the peace "which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Such peace is an amazing gift that the Lord gave to the virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, when she received God's Word from the angel Gabriel. According to God's own amazing plan, Mary would carry our salvation in her womb and then, some nine months later, deliver Him into the world He would die and rise again to save. "Let it be to me according to your word," she said, accepting the Lord's plan for her life (Luke 1:38). May we say the same today as we gather in the presence of our God.

Throughout the season of Advent, you are welcome to try one of the practices for confession, which is kneeling. Kneeling has a rich meaning and symbolism in Scripture. It is associated with prayer, humility, devotion, and repentance. The act of kneeling during confession reminds us of this, and it also reflects the season's penitential nature. Whether you kneel, stand, or sit, we are all unworthy to come before our Lord because of our sin, and we thank God for the forgiveness that He has freely given us in Jesus Christ. If you would like to try this practice, we ask that you would gently put the kneeler down at the beginning of the service and would gently put it back up after Pastor is finished speaking the Absolution and the congregation responds.

HYMN "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" LSB 356

1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
Most highly favored lady."
Gloria!

2 "For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
All generations laud and honor thee;
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
Most highly favored lady."
Gloria!

3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."
Most highly favored lady,
Gloria!

4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
"Most highly favored lady."
Gloria!

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INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 37:7a, 34a; Isaiah 30:18*

Pastor: Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him.

People: Wait for the LORD and keep His way.

Pastor: The LORD waits to be gracious to you.

People: He exalts Himself to show mercy to you.

Pastor: For the LORD is a God of justice;

People: blessed are all those who wait for Him.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: So that we may experience the peace of sins forgiven, let us come before our Lord with humble hearts.
(*You may kneel or stand.*)

Pastor: We confess...

People: Gracious Father, we all have sinned and fallen short of Your glory by what we have done and by what we have failed to do. We have broken Your commands and have not accomplished Your plans for our lives.

Pastor: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, You alone give us the redemption and the restoration, the absolution and the ability to follow You and Your Word. Through the work of Jesus, the Word made flesh, do for us what is impossible apart from You.

People: Forgive us, renew us, and lead us so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

Pastor: In the mercy of our gracious Father, Jesus came into this world, journeying from the crib to the cross, from the tomb and to His throne of glory in order to secure our forgiveness according to God's plan of salvation. Receive His assurance of pardon this day as we celebrate Jesus' coming to save us. As a called and ordained 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.

People: Amen.

INTROIT *Psalm 19:1, 4c, 5–6; antiphon: Isaiah 45:8a, b*

Pastor: Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;

People: let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit.

Pastor: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

People: In them He has set a tent for the sun,

Pastor: which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,

People: and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

Pastor: Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,

People: and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

**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.**

Pastor: Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;

People: let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit.

KYRIE

Pastor: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that we may know Your plan of salvation and trust that nothing is impossible with You; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Pastor: This morning, we stand at a crossroad. On the one hand, we hear the birth of Jesus foretold in our Gospel reading and see how God keeps the promises made in 2 Samuel. On the other hand, tonight, we will celebrate the birth of the one foretold: Jesus. Today as we light the Advent Wreath, we'll see the culmination of our Advent hope and what it all has been pointing to: the birth of Jesus Christ, the One Who saves us from our sin and makes us right with God.

“Savior of the Nations, Come” *LSB* 332

1 Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin's Son, make here Your home!
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.

7 From the manger newborn light
Shines in glory through the night.
Darkness there no more resides;
In this light faith now abides.

△ 8 Glory to the Father sing,
Glory to the Son, our king,
Glory to the Spirit be
Now and through eternity.

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ADVENT RESPONSE

Pastor: Christ is coming, Alleluia!

People: Christ is coming, Alleluia!

OLD TESTAMENT READING *2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16* (“Your throne shall be established forever.”) Now when the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you.” But that same night the word of the Lord

came to Nathan, “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’ Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. ... And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.’”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL *Zechariah 9:9; Psalm 118:26, alt.*

Pastor: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.

People: Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem.

Pastor: Behold, your king is coming to you;

People: righteous and having salvation.

Pastor: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.

People: From the house of the Lord we bless You.

EPISTLE *Romans 16:25–27* (“To the only wise God be glory forevermore.”) Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

VERSE *Matthew 1:23a*

Pastor: Alleluia. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,

People: and they shall call His name Immanuel. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL *Luke 1:26–38* (God reveals His eternal plan of salvation to the virgin Mary.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

People: Glory to You, O Lord.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in

her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” sts. 1–4: *LSB 357*

1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear. Refrain

ref Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

2 O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who ord'rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go. Refrain

3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the Law
In cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain

4 O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. Refrain
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SERMON

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

OFFERING

We offer our gifts to the Lord as we use this time in our service for contemplation and preparation for the sacrament of communion. Offerings can be placed in the plates at the back entrance doors as you enter the sanctuary, or as the offering plates are passed at this time.

PREFACE 2 Timothy 4:22

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

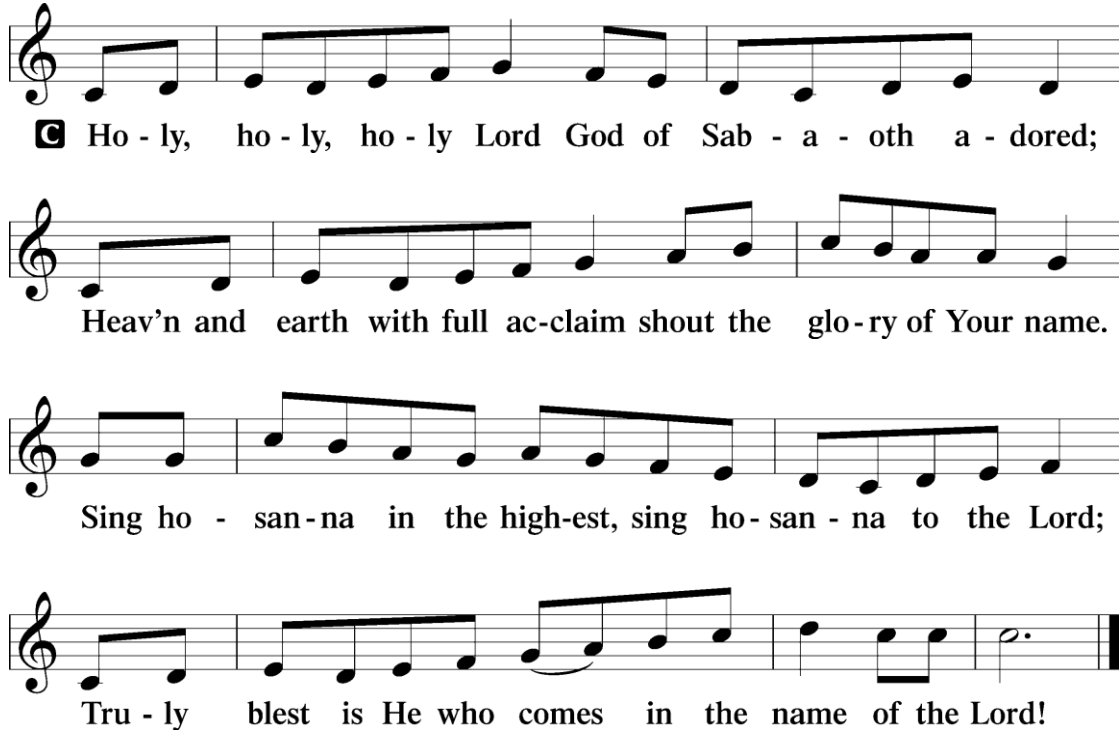
Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, the very Word made flesh who came to dwell among us, fulfilling Your Word and bringing to earth the peace of heaven. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

SANCTUS



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord God of Sab - a - oth a - dored;

Heav'n and earth with full ac-claim shout the glo-ry of Your name.

Sing ho - san-na in the high-est, sing ho-san - na to the Lord;

Tru - ly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

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PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: In Your great mercy, O Father, You sent the angel Gabriel to bring Your Word to the virgin Mary, calming her fears and filling her with Your peace. With grateful hearts, we receive Your Word again this day. Favor us with Your grace that we would trust our Prince of Peace and receive Him who comes to us in His body and blood. Hear us as we pray in His name and in the words He has taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER Matthew 6:9–13

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 ever. Amen.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: “Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me.”

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: “Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PAX DOMINI

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

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

1 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
2 O Je - sus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world a - way;
You take the sin of the world a - way;
O Je - sus Christ, true us, Lamb of God,
Have mer - cy on us, Je - sus Christ,
Have mer - cy on us, Lord, we pray.
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

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You are invited to receive the Lord’s Supper if you believe and confess that Jesus Christ is your Savior from sin, you are a baptized child of the Triune God, and you believe that He gives you His body and blood in the bread and wine you receive. White grape juice can be found in the center of each tray for those who cannot receive alcohol. Children are welcome to come forward for a blessing.

Communion is offered in two ways: the individual cup and the common cup. If you would like the individual cup, please partake from the first assistant minister. If you would like the common cup, please proceed to the second assistant minister and he will give you the common cup. You may tilt the bottom of the cup as he holds it for you.

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

“Emmanuel (Hallowed Manger Ground)” -Chris Tomlin and Ed Cash

1. What hope we hold this starlit night
A King is born in Bethlehem
Our journey long we seek the light
That leads to the hallowed manger ground

2. What fear we felt in the silent age
Four-hundred years can He be found
But broken by a baby's cry
Rejoice in the hallowed manger ground

Chorus: Emmanuel Emmanuel
God incarnate here to dwell
Emmanuel Emmanuel
Praise His name Emmanuel
(Praise His name Emmanuel)

3. The Son of God here born to bleed
A crown of thorns would pierce His brow
And we beheld this offering
Exalted now the King of kings
Praise God for the hallowed manger ground

Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash. CCLI Song #5601640

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“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” sts. 5–7: *LSB* 357

5 O come, Thou 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. Refrain

ref Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s dark shadows put to flight. Refrain

7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace. Refrain

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BLESSING

Pastor: May our Lord's body and blood strengthen and preserve you in true faith to life everlasting. Depart in peace and with joy.

People: Amen.

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have accomplished Your plan of salvation in the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior and King. As You have filled us with the peace of sins forgiven, inspire us to share this blessing with others, that they, too, may know Your love and salvation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION *Romans 16:27; Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: May our gracious God strengthen your hearts, for His plan of salvation has been revealed to us in the coming of His Son, our Savior and King.

People: “To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.”

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: Amen.

HYMN “While We Are Waiting, Come” Claire Clonger & Don Cason

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1. While we are waiting, come; While we are waiting, come.

Jesus our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

2. With pow’r and glory, come; With pow’r and glory, come.

Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

3. Come, Savior, quickly come; Come, Savior, quickly come.

Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.

Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series B, Quarter 1.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Worship 9:30 a.m.

GENEROSITY THOUGHTS: 2 Samuel 7:4–5 – “But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan. “Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in?’” Nathan thought David’s idea was great, so he blessed it with the Lord’s name. But later that night, the Word of the Lord set him straight. The Word of the Lord, not our own desires or whims, must be the basis for what we think, say and do in God’s kingdom.

HAT AND MITTEN COLLECTION - Starting on December 17th through January 7th we will be collecting hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves for the organization Hats & Mittens. They are a local non-profit with the vision of “A warmer and more welcoming world for children.” They do this by collecting and distributing hats, mittens, gloves and scarves to organizations throughout Minnesota where children need them most. Please bring new or gently used items to Emmaus and put them in the basket in the narthex. A Thrivent Action Grant has been requested to help fund this project. Any questions, please contact Marie G.

THE WILD FOR THE WIN! In the amazing, overwhelming response to our food and cash collection, the Minnesota Wild were the frontrunners followed by the Vikings, Blackhawks and Packers. We had fun supporting our favorite team and supported a great cause in the process. While we do not see the families that are helped through our contributions, know that there are many thankful people in the community at large who will be helped through your generosity. **THANK YOU TO EVERYONE** for your support.

OFFERING ENVELOPES: 2024 is right around the corner and offering envelopes are here. If you use envelopes, please pick yours up in the narthex today. If you have switched to online giving and no longer wish to receive envelopes, please let Maria know. Thank you!

WINTERWEAR DRIVE: The St. Paul Outreach Center is hosting a winterwear (hats/gloves/mittens/scarves/socks) giveaway on Saturday, January 20 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. at Jehovah Lutheran Church (1566 Thomas Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55104). This is a shared ministry of the St. Paul Circuit LCMS churches and schools. We are seeking donations and volunteers. Donations can be left at Jehovah on January Fridays (5, 12, 19) 9:00-11:00 a.m. Volunteers are needed on January 18, 19 & 20 for setup and event assistance. Please sign up on the form at this link with donations and times you can help: <https://rb.gy/hq4tc0> Questions? Contact David Mennicke, St. Paul Outreach Coordinator at spoc@jehovahlutheran.org or 651-636-3271. Thanks for your donations, time, and prayers!

HEAR “THE LUTHERAN HOUR” on Sunday mornings at 6:05 a.m. on WCCO 830 AM radio. Next week’s broadcast: “The Exit from Regret” Guest Speaker: Rev. Dr. John Nunes. When life becomes an endless roundabout of regret, Christ is your entrance to forgiveness and a new start. (Luke 2:27-28)

OFFICE NEWS: Maria’s hours will be limited this week. Please email if you need to reach the office.