

Fourth Sunday in Advent December 21, 2025 Blended 10:45 IV

As We Gather

This Sunday, we hear of Joseph's own angel visit, of the name that shall be given to this child, and of His birth to save His people from their sins. This is the radical mission of God.

Prelude

Welcome

Opening Song "Sing We the Song of Emmanuel" SSP 91

Sing we the song of Emmanuel
This the Christ who was long foretold
Lo in the shadows of Bethlehem
Promise of dawn now our eyes behold

God Most High in a manger laid Lift your voices and now proclaim Great and glorious Love has come to us Join now with the hosts of heaven

Come we to welcome Emmanuel
King who came with no crown or throne
Helpless He lay the Invincible
Maker of Mary now Mary's son

O what wisdom to save us all Shepherds sages before Him fall Grace and majesty what humility Come on bended knee adore Him

Go spread the news of Emmanuel Joy and peace for the weary heart Lift up your heads for your King has come Sing for the Light overwhelms the dark

Glory shining for all to see
Hope alive let the gospel ring
God has made a way He will have the praise
Tell the world His name is Jesus

Glory shining for all to see Hope alive let the gospel ring God has made a way He will have the praise

Tell the world His name is Jesus

Text: Keith Getty | Matt Boswell | Matt Papa | Stuart Townend

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Invocation

- ${f P}$ In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

- Me light the fourth Advent candle as we prepare for the arrival of the Savior, who would come to His people in human flesh and who promises to come again. In a world of darkness, a light shines. Jesus Christ is the light of the world.
- The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.
- The fourth Advent candle has been known as the angel candle and the candle of love. As our Advent season soon ends, we await the angelic message of the good news of a Savior. We have come to know the love of the one true God this season and always as we have prepared to celebrate His birth. We know God's promises come to fruition in Jesus, who later made known His Father's love in His being born into this world; in His life, ministry, teaching, preaching, healing; and ultimately in His dying and rising. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."
- The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

- A Guided by the light of love, we respond with the psalmist: "Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the clouds.
- Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast You save, O LORD.
- P How precious is Your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.
- They feast on the abundance of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your delights.
- A For with You is the fountain of life;
- in Your light do we see light."

Light One Candle

Light One Candle for hope one bright candle for hope, He brings hope to every heart He comes! He comes!

Light one candle for peace One bright candle for peace, He brings peace to every heart, He comes, He comes,

Light one candle for joy, One bright candle for joy, Every nation will find salvation for Bethlehem's baby boy. Light one candle for love, one bright candle for love, He brings love to every heart, He comes! He comes!

Text: Traditional
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Confession and Absolution

- P O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
- and with Him is plentiful redemption.

Silence for self-examination.

- A Holy and gracious God,
- I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but some is known only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ I ask forgiveness. Deliver and restore me that I may rest in peace.
- Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C Amen.
- A He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.
- C Amen.

Song of Forgiveness "How Deep (I Will not Boast) SSP 40

I will not boast in anything.

No gifts, no power, no wisdom.

But I will boast in Jesus Christ:

His death and resurrection.

Why should I gain from His reward?

I cannot give an answer.

But this I know with all my heart:

His wounds have paid my ransom.

Text: Stuart Townend

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WELCOME

On behalf of St. Paul Lutheran Church we welcome you! The Sacrament of Holy Baptism is a monumental and lifetime event in the life of a Christian. The Baptism of this child becomes a reminder of the day of our baptism when God claimed us as His son or daughter through the power of His Word. In this particular moment God comes to us in water and Word.

INVOCATION

- P In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C Amen.

TEACHING

- Martin Luther wrote about baptism, asking the simple question, "What does such baptizing with water indicate?"
- "It signifies that the old Adam in us should, by daily contrition (sorrow for our sin) and repentance (a desire to change), be drowned and die with all sins and evil lusts. And also it shows that a new man should daily come forth and arise, who shall live before God in righteousness and purity forever." (Small Catechism)
- P St. Paul says in the sixth chapter of Romans,
- "We were buried, therefore, with Him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).
- The command to baptize comes from Jesus. He speaks to His disciples in the last chapter of Matthew saying, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." In the last chapter of Mark our Lord promises, "Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved." And the apostle Peter has written, "Baptism now saves you."
- A The Word of God also teaches that we are all conceived and born sinful and are under the power of the devil until Christ claims us as His own. We would be lost forever unless delivered from sin, death, and everlasting condemnation. But the Father of all mercy and grace has sent His Son Jesus, who atoned for the sin of the whole world, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

The Pastor addresses the parents and sponsors:

- **P** How is this child named?
- R Jonah Aaron Lopez

The pastor makes the sign of the holy cross upon the forehead and heart of the candidate while saying:

P Jonah, receive the sign of the holy cross both upon your + forehead and upon your + heart to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified.

THE RESPOSONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND SPONSORS

It is your task as parents and sponsors to confess with the whole Church the faith we have in God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in whose name this child is to be baptized. After this child has been baptized you are at all times to remember him in your prayers, put him in mind of her Baptism, and, as much as in you lies, give your counsel and aid, especially if he should lose his parents. Place in his hands the Holy Scriptures so that he grows and matures as His disciple expressing a living faith to all he encounters in his life. That with instruction in this faith he comes to the Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood and thus, abiding in baptismal grace and in communion with His Church, he may grow up to lead a godly life to the praise and honor of Jesus the Christ.

This, then, you intend gladly and willingly to do?

Parents & Sponsors: Yes, with the help of God.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH

It is not the water alone nor the parents and sponsors, who present this child at this font, which empowers Baptism. As we have heard it is God's Word of promise, freely given, through Christ's death and resurrection, which conveys God's abundant grace through the simple means of water, which our Lord commanded us to use.

It is God's action of redemption we witness here. In our weakness it is Christ's power bestowing life, faith, and salvation.

- A People of God, baptized into God's Triune name, proclaim on behalf of this child what you believe about God the Father.
- I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
- A People of God, baptized into Christ's death, proclaim on behalf of this child what you believe about God the Son.
- I believe 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.
- A People of God, having received the gift of the Holy Spirit in Baptism, proclaim in behalf of this child what you believe about God the Holy Spirit.
- 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.

THE BAPTISM

P Who brings this child to be baptized?

Parents: We do.

The pastor pours water three times on the head of the candidate while saying:

- P Jonah Aaron Lopez, I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C Amen.

The pastor places his hand on the head of the newly baptized while saying:

The almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given you the new birth of water and of the Spirit and has forgiven you all your sins, strengthen you with His grace to life + everlasting. (The blessing renewed at Confirmation.)

C Amen.

The pastor or another may give a white baptismal cloth and a burning light as gifts of the church.

Almighty and most merciful God and Father, we thank and praise You that You graciously preserve and enlarge Your family and have granted Jonah the new birth in Holy Baptism and made him a member of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and an heir of Your heavenly kingdom. We humbly implore You that, as he has now become Your child You would keep him in his baptismal grace, that according to Your good pleasure he may faithfully grow to lead a godly life to the praise and honor of Your holy name and finally, with all Your saints, obtain the promised inheritance in heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

An Elder or representative of our church will speak a welcome and our members respond.

A Jonah, in Holy Baptism God the Father has made you a member of His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, an heir with us of all the treasures of heaven in the one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

- We welcome you into the Lord's family. We receive you as a fellow member of the body of Christ, a child of the same heavenly Father, to work with us in His kingdom.
- And you, Jonah, the Lord bless you in all your ways from this time forth and even forevermore. Peace + be with you.
- C Amen.

WORD

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray.

Almighty God, all our plans come to nothing, but we daily live with fear and disappointment. Grant to us hopeful hearts, that knowing You have kept Your Word and delivered up Your only Son to be our Savior, we may live in peace and confidence, assured that You will bring all things to their perfect end in Christ; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and to the end of the ages.

C Amen.

Old Testament Isaiah 40:21-31

Isaiah 7:10–17

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹"Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹²But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. ¹⁷The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria."

- **I** This is the Word of the Lord.
- Thanks be to God.

Epistle 1 Corinthians 9:16–27

James 5:7-11

⁷Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. ⁹Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, brothers, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹Behold, we consider those blessed who remained steadfast. You have heard of the steadfastness of Job, and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.

- **I** This is the Word of the Lord.
- Thanks be to God.

Gospel *Matthew 1:18–25*

- **A** The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.
- Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

- **A** This is the Gospel of the Lord.
- Praise to You, O Christ.

Children's Message

Hymn for Today "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" LSB 357 vs 1, 4-7

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

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

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

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

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

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 Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710, Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–66, alt.

Text: Public domain

Sermon

Prayers of the church

A Let us pray for the people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Gracious Lord, we are citizens of the nations and places in which You have put us, with our citizenship in heaven assured. In our land, guide and direct the governing authorities over us that they may serve according to Your will. Impart in them Your truth and wisdom that life be treasured and protected, justice enacted, and order kept secure. Grant Your protection over those who serve in the military both here and abroad, and safety to all who keep roads and communities safe in their law enforcement vocation. Amid the conflicts and tribulations in any land, instill in us responsible citizenship as we await the eternal kingdom not of this world. Thy kingdom come,

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

- A In these winter months grant favorable weather and safe travel for all who give thanks for Your creation. In each and every season, continue to pour out Your mercy and grace that we as Your people remain faithful and trusting in Your promises made, fulfilled, and yet to come. Thy kingdom come,
- Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- Your peace and comfort in times of affliction. For those who have gone before us in the faith, we give You thanks for their witness of truth and hope. Comfort those who are sick or dealing with difficult times, Ami Gray, Teo McDonald, Doug Ebersol, Kelsey Taylor, Mark Lasche, Tim Maher, Drake Williams, Roger Kindt, Joe Kuzma, Nilsa Colas, David Glass, (AT) Atinae Lealiiee, Jan Felzien, Melissa Ruhberg, Karen Manion, Jan Peterson, Cythina Estes, Joe Northcutt, Carla Weikert, Robert Wood, Eric Peterson, Kerstin Krueger, Mary Fodor, Joseph Davis, Tammy Tolbert. In all things, grant us Your Spirit to sustain us in our earthly pilgrimage. Thy kingdom come,
- Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- We lift up to You the authorities over us in our Synod, districts, and congregations. Grant wisdom and confidence for all who lead. Bless all churches and people of all ages that You gather together as Your own, that we may be courageous witnesses of Your grace and truth to our neighbors, communities, and beyond. Thy kingdom come,
- Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- A Your kingdom is not of this world, yet You come to us still in Your Word and Sacraments to strengthen us, nourish us, and forgive our sins. Bless our unity and fellowship at Your Table as we receive Jesus in His body and blood until the eternal feast You have prepared for those who keep faith in You. Thy kingdom come,
- **G** Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Our Lord who taught us to pray...

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 and ever. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

(Having received the Gospel's grace, let us joyfully share "Peace of Christ" with one another.)

Offerings are Received

Prepare our Hearts for Communion

- 1. Do I believe that I am sinful, without hope of eternal life except for God's mercy in Christ Jesus?
- 2. Do I harbor resentment for another or refuse to forgive another's sin?
- 3. Do I believe that Jesus is God's Son and my personal Savior?
- 4. Do I believe that He is personally present with His Body and Blood?
- 5. Do I desire by the Holy Spirit's power to live a Godly life?

If this is what you believe, we invite you to come forward to share Communion with us. If this is not what you understand or believe you are welcome to come forward for a blessing; simply cross your arms for the Pastor to bless you.

Communion Instructions

(For those who are intolerant to alcohol, grape juice is available in the center of each communion tray marked by purple cups. Gluten free wafers are available upon request.)

SACRAMENT

Prayer of Thanksgiving

When the peace of perfection was broken by the voice of rebellion and death became our end, You looked upon us in love, O merciful Father, and You sent forth the promise of a new day made possible by a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. He fulfilled Your Word, was incarnate of the virgin by the Holy Spirit, and was delivered in flesh and blood as one of us, yet without sin. He fulfilled all Your saving will and offered up Himself in our place to death, paying the price of our redemption and forging a path through death to life everlasting. In this Holy Supper He established, He placed His promise, that by our communion in His flesh and blood, we might be forgiven of our sins and strengthened in the new life granted to us in Baptism. Now, by His own Word and testament, we gather to set aside this bread, that it may be to us His flesh for the life of the world, and this cup, that it may be His blood to cleanse us from all our sin, as He Himself has said.

Amen.

The Words of Our Lord

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

- The peace of the Lord be with you always.
- C Amen.

Song of Sacrifice "Lamb of God" LSB p. 163 (sing)

the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away
the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away
the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, You take away
the sin of the world;
grant us peace.

Distribution Song "Come to Us" SSP 26

Scattered and broken, bent in our way, We are your people gathered to praise You. A vineyard uprooted, narrow in sight. Come, Lord of glory! Come, Lord of Light!

Come to us, O Lord of glory and shine in our hearts.
Come to us, O Lord of glory and make us anew.
Lord, we wait for You.
Lord, we wait for you.
Lord, we wait for you.
Come, Lord of glory.

Come, Lord, our dayspring, come from on high, as we Your people gather to praise You. Unworthy to taste from Your heavenly vine, but your word will heal us. Come light divine.

Come to us, O Lord of glory and shine in our hearts.
Come to us, O Lord of glory and make us anew.
Lord, we wait for You.
Lord, we wait for you.
Lord, we wait for you.
Come, Lord of glory.

Come, Root of Jesse: Come, David's son; Come, Star of Morning; We come to praise You. Hope of creation, of all humankind, reign over body, spirit and mind.

Come to us, O Lord of glory and shine in our hearts.
Come to us, O Lord of glory and make us anew.
Lord, we wait for You.
Lord, we wait for you.
Lord, we wait for you.
Come, Lord of glory.
Lord, we wait for you.
Come, Lord of glory.
Text: Greg Walton

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Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord LSB 352

Let the earth now praise the Lord, Who has truly kept His word And at last to us did send Christ, the sinner's help and friend.

What the fathers most desired, What the prophets' heart inspired, What they longed for many_a year, Stands fulfilled in glory here.

Abram's promised great reward, Zion's helper, Jacob's Lord— Him of twofold race behold— Truly came, as long foretold.

As Your coming was in peace, Quiet, full of gentleness, Let the same mind dwell in me Which is Yours eternally.

Bruise for me the serpent's head That, set free from doubt and dread, I may cling to You in faith, Safely kept through life and death. Then when You will come again As the glorious king to reign, I with joy will see Your face, Freely ransomed by Your grace.

Text: Heinrich Held, 1620-59; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-78, alt.

Text: Public domain

Song of Thanks "Thank the Lord" LSB p. 164 (sing)

Thank the Lord and sing His praise; tell ev'ryone what He has done.

Let all who seek the Lord rejoice and proudly bear His name.

He recalls His promises and leads His people forth in joy with shouts of thanksgiving.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Post-Communion Thanksgiving

- A Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,
- for His steadfast love endures forever.
- A O Lord, God Almighty, everlasting Father, we pray You to open our hearts to Your Spirit that we may enter into the holy contemplation of our Savior's birth with sins forgiven and hearts at peace, knowing that He who moved time and eternity for us and our salvation will preserve us in all uncertainty and fear and bring us to the perfect fulfillment of heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with the Father and the Spirit are one God, now and even to the end of all the ages.
- C Amen.

Benedicamus

- P Let us bless the Lord.
- Thanks be to God.

Benediction

- 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.
- C Amen.

Dismissal

- **P** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
- **G** AMEN!

Song of Departure "He Shall Reign Forevermore" SSP 65

In the bleak mid-winter All creation groans For a world in darkness Frozen like a stone Light is breaking In a stable for a throne

And He shall reign forevermore forevermore And He shall reign forevermore forevermore Unto us a Child is born The King of kings and Lord of lords And He shall reign forevermore forevermore If I were a wise man
I would travel far
If I were a shepherd
I would do my part
But poor as I am
I will give to Him my heart

And He shall reign forevermore forevermore And He shall reign forevermore forevermore Unto us a Child is born The King of kings and Lord of lords And He shall reign forevermore forevermore

Here within a manger lies the One Who made the starry skies
This baby born for sacrifice
Christ the Messiah
Into our hopes into our fears
The Savior of the world appears
The promise of eternal years
Christ the Messiah

And He shall reign forevermore forevermore And He shall reign forevermore forevermore

And He shall reign forevermore forevermore And He shall reign forevermore forevermore Unto us a Child is born The King of kings and Lord of lords And He shall reign forevermore forevermore

Text: Chris Tomlin | Matt Maher

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Postlude

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