

Order of Worship for November 30, 2025

First Week of Advent

Call to Worship

On Sundays and Mondays,

on good days and bad days,

early in the morning and very late at night,

here in this room, and out in the world, God, we long for you to break in.

Meet us in this space.

Surprise us with your presence.

Fill this room with your good news.

With hope, we sing, we worship, we pray. Amen!

Welcome

Lighting of Advent Candle – Hope

In a world full of fear, where do you see hope?

We see hope when we look to the next generation. We feel hopeful when we gather together. We know hope, deep in our bones, when we dream of a better world.

You are right. Even in a fearful world, hope is all around us.

Today we light the candle of hope as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that we have reason to hope.

Light candle.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Gathering Hymn ELW # 257 Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel vs 1-4

1 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 you, O Israel.

2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way. *Refrain*

3 O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe. *Refrain*

4 O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain*

Text: *Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. Composite Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

Confession and Forgiveness

God who sees our fear, we lay our hearts before you. We pour out the truth of our lives. We do not hide anything from you, our Creator. Draw us near gracious, God, so that we might name our sins and receive your abundant grace and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Ever-present God, **we long to feel you close. We long to feel your presence in our lives. We long for you to break through the chaos and suffering of this world. However, if we're honest, we rarely stand still long enough to feel you in our midst. Forgive our rushing and distractions. Forgive our wandering hearts, and center us in this space. Remind us that even in the time of Herod, even on the longest nights, you are always there. Amen.**

Family of faith, even when we doubt God's presence, even when we fail to notice God's fingerprints in this world, God is always moving closer to us. Hear and believe the good news this Advent season:

Nothing can keep God's love away. We are seen. We are forgiven. We are not alone. Amen.

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Children's Sermon

Prayer of the Day

With-us God, **in the time of Moses, you spoke through water in the desert and a pillar of smoke. In the time of the judges, you spoke through the prophets. In the time of Herod, you spoke through angel choruses and unlikely miracles. In every time you have been speaking. So today, in our time, we ask that you would speak again. Break through the chatter and the distraction of our weary minds and speak to us once more. With hope we pray, Amen.**

First reading Lamentations 3:55-57

⁵⁵ I called on your name, O LORD,
from the depths of the pit;

⁵⁶ you heard my plea, "Do not close your ear
to my cry for help, but give me relief!"

⁵⁷ You came near when I called on you;
you said, "Do not fear!"

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel acclamation ACS #1027 Don't Be Afraid

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.

Don't be afraid. My love is stronger
and I have promised,
promised to be always near.

Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949, and Graham Maule, 1958–2019

Text © 1995 WGRG, Iona Community, admin. GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

Gospel reading Luke 1:5-13

The holy gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day In the Time of Herod (tune of "In the Bleak Midwinter")

In the time of Herod, fear had taken hold
Hope was buried deep and hidden, rare as gold
Ordinary people dared not speak aloud
Dreams of the Messiah breaking through the clouds

Thick as fog the fear grew, slowly creeping in
Day by day the people bent and drew within
With the clouds so heavy, who could see the stars?
Hopelessness had trapped them, strong as prison bars

Piercing through the stratus comes the angels' son
"Do not fear!" rings hollow when we've feared so long
Still in the recesses of our weary souls
Something is awakened—could it be our hope?

In the time of Herod, fear has taken hold
Still we share a longing for a glimpse of hope
Ordinary people shout the truth we trust:
God will stop at nothing to be here with us

©Anna Strickland, 2025. Commissioned by A Sanctified Art, LLC.

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

Prayers of the People

Noisy Offering

Offering Prayer

Loving God, **everything you make is good. May these gifts be used to share your love to all people. In your name we pray, Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you!**

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

With-us God, We live in a fearful world. If we're honest, we come to this Table today with the taste of fear on our tongues. We come to this Table carrying our anxiety. We come to this Table asking for guidance. We come to this Table with all of life's "what-ifs." But you do not disregard our fear. You do not brush it under the rug or call us foolish. You do not ignore the realities in front of us. You do not dish out hurtful platitudes, telling us to "toughen up" or "power through." Instead, you meet us here. You listen to our fears. You remind us that we are not alone. You surround us with people who love us. You show us where we are strong. You walk beside us. And you give us a new song to sing.

Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes, who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

So today we pray, gracious God: replace the fear on our tongues with words of hope and songs of joy. As we come to this Table, pour out your Spirit on this bread and cup. Remind us

that even in a fearful world, you are on the move. Remind us that even in a fearful world, you are here, inviting us to the Table, nourishing our spirits, reminding us that we belong, calling us by name. Instill that good news in us, for this is a joyful feast. Fear is not the loudest voice today. What a gift that is. Now with hope for a better tomorrow, we join our voices together to pray the prayer your son taught us to pray, saying. . .

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Invitation to Communion

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace.

Meal of Holy Communion

Table Blessing

May the body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

Prayer after Communion

Loving God, **In a world racked with fear, you gather us together. You set the table. You meet us here. You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits. You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot win every time. So with renewed courage, with renewed hope, with renewed conviction, send us out into the world. Help us to feed others as you have fed us. With gratitude we pray, Amen.**

Blessing

In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach for each other's hands. May you choose courage whenever you can. And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear. In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with. **Amen.**

Sending hymn ELW #715 Christ Be Our Light

1 Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people,
light for the world to see.

Refrain

Christ, be our light!
Shine in our hearts.
Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light!
Shine in your church gathered today.

- 2 Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow'r to save us.
Make us your living voice. *Refrain*
- 3 Longing for food, many are hungry.
Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others,
shared until all are fed. *Refrain*
- 4 Longing for shelter, many are homeless.
Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others,
walls made of living stone. *Refrain*
- 5 Many the gifts, many the people,
many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another,
signs of your kingdom come. *Refrain*

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

Text © 1993 Bernadette Farrell. Published by OCP Publications. All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

Cover Art: "Depths" by Carmelle Beaugelin Caldwell; Inspired by Lamentations 3:55-57; 16"x20" Acrylic, oil pastel, metal leaf on canvas

Liturgy adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS024333

Don't Be Afraid Text: John L. Bell, b. 1949, and Graham Maule, 1958–2019

Text © 1995 WGRG, Iona Community, admin. GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright ©1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved

Unless otherwise noted, music reprinted by permission under ONE LICENSE #A-729674 or CCLI #1416628. All rights reserved.