

# *Triune Lutheran Church*

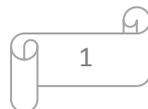


## *First Sunday of Advent*



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.



*We thank you for joining us here at Triune Lutheran Church, a family united with you through our Lord, Jesus Christ!*



In order to make you feel more at home, here are a few notes about our worship here. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask. We hope to make your time here as meaningful as possible!



- You are invited to speak the **bold print**, as well as sing along with the psalm and hymns, which you will find in the red *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* (ELW) hymnal in front of you in the pews.
- The portions marked with \* are times when we invite you to stand, as you are able.
- There will not be a separate time for an offering to be collected during worship. If you wish to do so today, you may place your offering in the offering plate at the back.
- The Communion elements are placed in the hallway/narthex just outside the entrance doors to the sanctuary. We ask you bring them to your seat and leave them until we reach the celebration of holy Communion during worship, when you will be asked to remove the lids and consume the bread (wafer), then the wine. If you need a gluten-free wafer, please let the pastor know before worship. We believe the body and blood of Christ is meant for everyone, regardless of your church affiliation, and so feel free to participate, if you feel so moved.
- For visitors, if you so choose, we encourage you to fill out a card available in the pew to learn more about us.
- Bathrooms are available in the hallway.

# WELCOME

## \* CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

*The sign of the cross serves as a reminder that nothing, not even sin, can separate you from God's love in Jesus Christ.*

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,  
who alone does wonders,  
who lifts up the lowly,  
who fills the hungry with good things.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God, our Emmanuel,  
**in the presence of one another,  
we confess our sin before you.  
We fail in believing that your good news is for us.  
We falter in our call to tend your creation.  
We find our sense of self in material wealth.  
We fear those different from ourselves.  
We forget that we are your children  
and turn away from your love.  
Forgive us, Blessed One,  
and assure us again of your saving grace.  
Amen.**

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you!  
Through the power of the Holy Spirit,  
✠ your sins are forgiven.  
You are children of the Most High,  
inheritors of the eternal promise,  
and recipients of divine mercy.  
God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.  
**Amen!**

**\*GATHERING HYMN**

“Fling Wide the Door”

ELW 259

**\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Praise to you, O God, our salvation who is near. You hold us in our waiting and keep us awake to the world. You show up in our lives at unexpected times. Bless us as we light this candle to keep vigil for your presence among us. We trust that even though we do not know the day or the hour, you hurry to gather all people to your peace. And we give you thanks for already blessing us with your wholeness in Christ.  
**Amen!**

**\*LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH  
CANDLE OF HOPE**

“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah” Vs. 1 ELW 240

## FIRST READING

Isaiah 2:1-5

<sup>1</sup>The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup>In days to come

the mountain of the LORD's house  
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,  
and shall be raised above the hills;  
all the nations shall stream to it.

<sup>3</sup>Many peoples shall come and say,

“Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,  
to the house of the God of Jacob;  
that he may teach us his ways  
and that we may walk in his paths.”

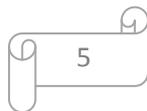
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,  
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

<sup>4</sup>He shall judge between the nations,  
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;  
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,  
and their spears into pruning hooks;  
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,  
neither shall they learn war any more.

<sup>5</sup>O house of Jacob,  
come, let us walk  
in the light of the LORD!

Word of God, word of life!

**Thanks be to God!**



# PSALM

Psalm 122

<sup>1</sup>I was glad when they | said to me,  
“Let us go to the house | of the LORD.”

<sup>2</sup>**Now our | feet are standing  
within your gates, | O Jerusalem.**

<sup>3</sup>Jerusalem is built | as a city  
that is at unity | with itself;

<sup>4</sup>**to which the tribes go up, the tribes | of the LORD,  
the assembly of Israel, to praise the name | of  
the LORD.**

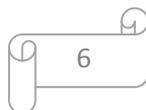
<sup>5</sup>For there are the | thrones of judgment,  
the thrones of the | house of David.

<sup>6</sup>**Pray for the peace | of Jerusalem:  
“May they pros- | per who love you.**

<sup>7</sup>Peace be with- | in your walls  
and quietness with- | in your towers.

<sup>8</sup>**For the sake of my kindred | and companions,  
I pray for | your prosperity.**

<sup>9</sup>Because of the house of the | LORD our God,  
I will seek to | do you good.”



## SECOND READING

Romans 13:11-14

<sup>11</sup>Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; <sup>12</sup>the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; <sup>13</sup>let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. <sup>14</sup>Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

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

## \*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”      Verses 1 & 2      ELW 257

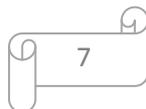
## \*GOSPEL

Matthew 24:36-44

The Gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord!**

[Jesus said to the disciples,] <sup>36</sup>“About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>37</sup>For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. <sup>38</sup>For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, <sup>39</sup>and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man.



<sup>40</sup>Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. <sup>41</sup>Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. <sup>42</sup>Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. <sup>43</sup>But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. <sup>44</sup>Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

This is the holy Gospel of our Lord!  
**Praise to you, O Christ!**

## **SERMON**

### **HYMN OF THE DAY**

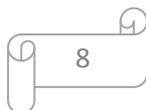
“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”

ELW 244

### **\*APOSTLES’ 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 INTERCESSION**

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

*A brief silence.*

God of all, your precious children everywhere cry out for mercy. Awaken the global church to the urgent needs of our time. Break down barriers of culture and custom and unite people of all faiths in your redemptive and healing work. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of wonder, the earth's beauty and abundance is your gift. Teach us your ways of sharing resources and caring for life. Guard fragile habitats, preserve the wild places, and protect endangered plants and animals. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of peace, you judge the nations. Beat our weapons into tools for serving the neighbor. Strengthen the resolve of all who work for an end to war. We pray for lasting peace in the land of Jesus' birth, for Israel and Palestine, Russia and Ukraine, and throughout the world. Watch over those serving in the military as well as first responders. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of lovingkindness, you desire fullness of life for everyone. Fill those who hunger. Comfort the grieving and attend to those near death. Bring help and hope to any who are sick or needing your care, including Niki Grigsby, Charlotte Jackson, Richard Jakubcin, John Kurtz, Dan & Jill Maldovan, Annie Slaughter, Mardell Weiss, Clara Wilcox, and all those we name in our hearts now. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of community, you are present when our Triune family gathers in your name. Give wisdom to congregational councils and ministry leaders throughout your whole church. Keep us alert to unexpected opportunities for mission. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of promise, your goodness is everlasting. We give thanks for the lives of the faithful who now rest in you, including Gloria Roderick. We trust that you will bring us into the company of all the saints with rejoicing. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. Gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen!**

### **\*PEACE**

The peace of the Risen Christ 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!**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the  
Redeemer,

through whom you will also make all things new  
in the day when he comes to judge the world in  
righteousness.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -



san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who



comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, the Beginning and the End,  
our Salvation and our Hope,  
we praise you for shaping a world of order and beauty.

When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair,  
you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.  
At this end of the ages,  
your Son came to bring us your love  
and to heal your world that you cherish for all eternity.

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.

Remembering, therefore,  
his life, death, and resurrection,  
we await his coming again  
in righteousness and peace.

Holy Spirit, continue to come among us  
through this bread and wine we share:  
strengthen our faith,  
increase our hope,  
and bring to birth the justice and joy of the Messiah.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,  
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,  
both now and forever.

**Amen!**

## **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.**

## **COMMUNION**

### **MUSIC INTERLUDE**

#### **\*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Most High God,  
you have come among us at this table.  
Now, form us to be bearers of your hopeful word,  
sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all,  
through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest.  
**Amen!**

## **\*BLESSING**

The God of hope  
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that we may abound in hope  
by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
through Christ Jesus our Lord.  
**Amen!**

## **\*SENDING HYMN**

“Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding”

ELW 246

## **\*DISMISSAL**

Go in peace with Emmanuel, God with us, forever!  
**Thanks be to God!**

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Ministers: ***All People***  
Presiding Minister: ***Pastor Brad Ross***  
Worship Assistant: ***Dale Kirk***  
Organist: ***Edith Schatt***  
Office Manager: ***Jan Piskac***

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## *Lectionary Blog: Starting at the Ending*

Happy New Year! As another church year begins, and as we enter a time of waiting for the coming of the Messiah, we start with stories about the end of days. The “last days” and the “coming of the Human One” are the times when massive change will interrupt the normal ways of doing things. Various biblical authors predict the days differently. Some, as J.R.R. Tolkien put it, envision “everything sad will become untrue.” For others, the end time will be one of judgment and retributive justice. What do our lectionary texts tell us about this era?

Isaiah 2 is a favorite in our house. My eldest just entered elementary school and has begun what I suppose is the inevitable fascination with guns and things that shoot. My partner and I long for the days when weapons—and nerf guns—will be refashioned into something that provides nutrition and means of celebration rather than strife and tears. But before swords are hammered into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, another, more drastic change happens in the era of God’s kingdom.

Mount Zion is relatively humble today. It’s roughly 2,500 feet high—about 200 feet lower than the nearby Mount of Olives and lower than Mount Hermon in the north, Jabal Musa (traditional location of Mount Sinai) in the south, and Mount Nebo in the east. Yet Isaiah says this humble hill where God chose to live will be elevated to become the chief of mountains. This geological event isn’t an end to itself but marks a beginning of an invitation.

Foreigners (like us!) from all over the world will stream toward God’s house to ascend the mountain of the Lord (Isaiah 2:2-3). Instead of mountaineering and tourism, education will be their goal. They will cry out to be taught the ways of the Lord so they can walk in God’s paths. God’s good and perfect law will go out from Zion, and the Word will go out from Jerusalem. The prophet’s vision is that this spreading of the knowledge of God’s statutes will lead to a positive peace. The Word of God will personally judge and mediate among all peoples. With God’s wisdom guiding humanity in justice in all ways, warfare will make no economic sense. Instead of building and training for war, people will devote their time and resources to food production and celebration. Curiosity => education => justice => peace => increased food production => international feasting. This rosy picture of the last days envisions international harmony as a “peace dividend” after God’s justice is universalized.

Jesus portrays a different vision of the end of the age and his return. He says this time is similar to the days of Noah, where normal life continued right up until people were swept away. Some will be in a home, and some will be in a field. One will be taken; one will be left—without notification or warning. It will be as if a thief broke in during an unexpected part of the night, the time the householder was least concerned. Jesus says explicitly that he will come when least expected (Matthew 24:44). (For this reason, never be worried when someone predicts Jesus' cataclysmic return—if someone expects it, it's not that time!) Indeed, even Jesus doesn't know when he will return—that information is only for God the Father. In a situation in which neither Jesus nor anyone else knows when he will return, the only possibility is to remain vigilant.

How do we remain vigilant? Matthew's Gospel goes on to present several parables on the matter. I think we could do worse than returning to Isaiah's vision. As we wait for Jesus' arrival, we could learn to walk in the ways of the Lord, to yearn for wisdom and justice, and to learn the actions that lead to a full and just peace. This will transform societies and economies in ways that lead to rejoicing with former strangers and former adversaries. As we wait for the advent of Jesus, let us not stand by idly, but prepare for the days to come in ways that we know delight our God.

*This Lectionary Blog, and other resources for the journey of faith, available on [LivingLutheran.org](http://LivingLutheran.org).*



*Cory Driver is the assistant to the bishop for emerging ministers and ministries for the Indiana-Kentucky Synod. His book on wilderness spirituality, *Life Unsettled*, is available from Fortress Press.*

From our worship resource *Sundays & Seasons*:

## The Advent Wreath

One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting amid growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is clearly an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its evergreen branches lead the household and the congregation to the evergreen Christmas tree. In many homes, the family gathers for prayers around the wreath.

### Turn On. Tune In. Wake Up!

In the 1960's people were urged to turn on, tune in, and drop out—to leave the material world behind in favor of an alternate reality. In today's gospel, Jesus also urges us to tune into an alternative to the material world, one he called the coming of the Son of Man. In Jesus' person, the dominion of God comes into the world, and the risen Christ continues to give us abundant signs of its presence. Jesus commands his followers not to drop out of the world, but to be on the lookout for him in it.

Christians await the second coming of Christ, the *parousia*, when we believe we will experience God's reign in its fullness. In the meantime, we live, in the words of some theologians, "already, but not yet." We look for glimpses of the dominion in the here and now. The season of Advent, and today's readings, are designed to help turn us on to the excitement and anticipation of God's reign in our lives and tune in to the infinite opportunities we have to participate in it. In other words, they want to wake us up!

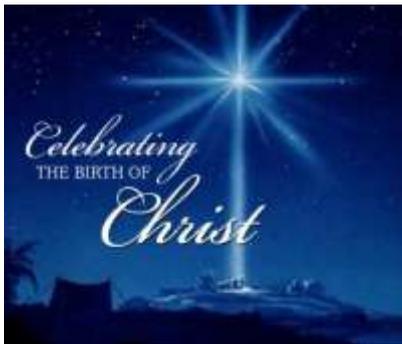
St. Paul exhorts us in today's second reading to lead lives of faithful obedience until the final day. He also challenges us to participate in God's dominion in the here and now, calling us to wake from sleep, to "put on Christ." Eyes wide open and wrapped in Christ, we are called to a new day. Isaiah describes his own vision: gathered by God, learning and teaching God's ways, walking in God's paths, beating swords into ploughshares and spears to pruning hooks. Wide-awake, active, and ready for encounters with Jesus, we may find God's dominion when and where we least expect it.

## Advent

Although the historical record is sketchy, it appears that our Advent arose out of a season of fasting to prepare for baptisms at Epiphany. By the sixth century, an eschatological emphasis was present. Our Advent comprises the four Sundays before Christmas. Each year, the first Sunday contains the theme of readiness for divine judgment, the second Sunday the ministry of John the Baptist, the third Sunday the Baptist's call to a repentant life, and only on the fourth Sunday a narrative concerning the birth of Jesus. God comes, in the past in the history of Israel and the incarnation of Jesus, in the present in the word and sacrament of each Sunday, and in the future at the end of all things. The lectionary appoints readings to fit this pattern, and its tone stands in stark contrast to our society's weeks of preparation for Christmas.

### Connections with Creation

In ways more profound than many Christians today realize, the entire Christmas cycle pivots around winter solstice, the year's shortest day and longest night. The themes of darkness and night already appear in this first Sunday of Advent, weeks before solstice: night far gone, waking from sleep, a thief in the night. In fact, winter solstice was the original Christmas Day. While solstice now occurs in Israel/Palestine and throughout Earth's northern hemisphere around December 21, when Christians first began celebrating Christmas, winter solstice was set on their calendar on December 25, making the longest night the center of the season. When we take care to subvert racially weaponized binaries, Advent can be a sacramental way to enter Earth's annual cycle of darkness. Earth and sky become expansive liturgical space, helping us ask: How shall we pray, wait, hope, and act with integrity as we move into our longest night and deepest darkness?



**On Christmas Eve (December 24), at 4pm, we gather together to celebrate our dear Savior's birth among us. We will hear stories from Scripture of God's love being brought to life, sing some of the beloved Christmas carols, share Communion, and conclude our time with "Silent Night" by candlelight, So, come let us adore him, Christ, the Lord!**

# Ready for His Return



So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him. Matthew 24:44 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Matthew 24:36-44 (NIV).

U Q Q Y G R I N D I N G X I O  
H E A V E N C Y S F I C J W Q  
H E X P E C T O O J I U J C B  
M A R R Y I N G N R E A D Y I  
C D G Z R H Y M T H I E F P Y  
A Z E I A F C J K S E M O Z T  
A O H O K A Y P I M T P A O H  
D N N E L T F K O R Y Z M C R  
R S G Q U H L C M J P F T U Y  
I R W E Y E O R B K E A O A Z  
N B O S L R O S L Z W H D G I  
K Y M M L S D I C D R D Z M V  
I O E M E E A T I N G G E S U  
N G N V G N V F S P F A N N L  
G T J Y K G E P E O P L E E F

WATCH  
NOAH  
GRINDING  
FLOOD

FATHER  
DAY  
WOMEN  
EXPECT

PEOPLE  
DRINKING  
ANGELS  
SON

HEAVEN  
COME  
MEN  
EATING

READY  
MARRYING  
THIEF  
HOUR