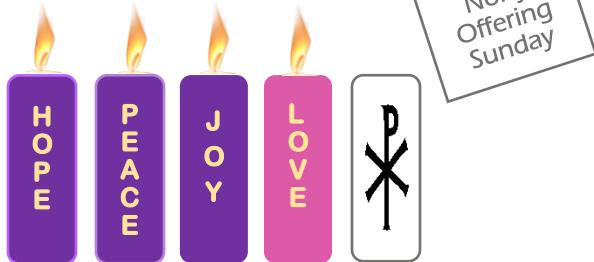


## Sunday, December 21, 2025

### Fourth Sunday of Advent, Yr. A Sunday School Program



**ADVENT:** On the four Sundays leading up to Christmas, we rejoice in the great gift that is ours in Christ Jesus. To help us celebrate, we light candles on the Advent wreath to remind us, Jesus is the Light of the World. The evergreens remind us that Jesus is Life - and brings Life to us. All these are arranged in a circle because life in Christ has no end.

#### Ringing of Bell

PRELUDE      *Bell Choir*

#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### ADVENT CANDLELIGHTING

*Light Three Purple Candles and One Pink Candle*

RDR: On this FOURTH Sunday of Advent, we light the candle of LOVE. We prepare our hearts to celebrate the birth Jesus. God sent his Only Son to teach us about Love. "Love is patient, love is kind. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends."

**ALL:** **Come Lord Jesus! By your grace, may we love one another, as you have loved us.**

#### ◆ CONFESS & FORGIVENESS

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: Long-expected God,

**C: we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release**

our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

P: God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. + We are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **C: Amen.**

#### OPENING HYMN      *All verses*      No. 242

*Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*

1 **Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn, for angels herald its dawning. Sing out your joy, for soon he is born, behold! the Child of our longing. Come as a baby weak and poor, to bring all hearts together, he opens wide the heav'nly door and lives now inside us forever.**

2 **To us, to all in sorrow and fear, Emmanuel comes a-singing, his humble song is quiet and near, yet fills the earth with its ringing; music to heal the broken soul and hymns of lovingkindness, the thunder of his anthems roll to shatter all hatred and blindness.**

3 **In darkest night his coming shall be, when all the world is despairing, as morning light so quiet and free, so warm and gentle and caring. Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in wonder, the weak be raised above the strong, and weapons be broken asunder.**

4 **Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night, though dark the winter and cheerless, the rising sun shall crown you with light, be strong and loving and fearless. Love be our song and love our prayer and love our endless story; may God fill ev'ry day we share and bring us at last into glory.**

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY *We pray together*

L: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

L: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.

**C: With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*Please be seated*

#### FIRST READING: ISAIAH 7:10-16

*The sign of Immanuel*

<sup>10</sup> The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup> "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." <sup>13</sup> Then Isaiah said,

"Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted." WORD OF GOD. WORD OF LIFE. **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

**MAGNIFICAT—LUKE 1:46B-55** *We read responsively*

L: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

**C: for you, Lord, have looked with favor on  
your lowly servant. From this day all  
generations will call me blessed:**

L: you, the Almighty, have done great things for  
me and holy is your name.

**C: You have mercy on those who fear you,  
from generation to generation.**

L: You have shown strength with your arm  
and scattered the proud in their conceit,

**C: casting down the mighty from their thrones  
and lifting up the lowly.**

L: You have filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.

**C: You have come to the aid of your servant  
Israel, to remember the promise of mercy,**

L: the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham  
and his children forever.

**SECOND READING: ROMANS 1:1-7**

*Paul's greeting to the church at Rome*

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup>the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup>and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup>through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, <sup>6</sup>including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, <sup>7</sup>To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

WORD OF GOD. WORD OF LIFE. **THANKS BE TO GOD.**

◆ **HOLY GOSPEL: MATTHEW 1:18-25**

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

*A God near at hand*

<sup>18</sup>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. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup>"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD. **PRAISE TO YOU, O CHRIST.**  
*Please be seated*

**HYMN OF THE DAY:**

***My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness*** No. 251

1 **My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord; I  
sing my Savior's praise! You looked upon my  
lowliness, and I am full of grace. Now ev'ry land  
and ev'ry age this blessing shall proclaim—great  
wonders you have done for me, and holy is your  
name.**

2 **To all who live in holy fear your mercy ever  
flows. With mighty arm you dash the proud, their  
scheming hearts expose. The ruthless you have  
cast aside, the lowly throned instead; the hungry  
filled with all good things, the rich sent off unfed.**

3 **To Israel, your servant blest, your help is ever  
sure; the promise to our parents made their  
children will secure. Sing glory to the Holy One,  
give honor to the Word, and praise the Pow'r of  
the Most High, one God, by all adored.**

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**SUNDAY SCHOOL PROGRAM**

*Readings from Spark Story Bible*

*Congregation sings along on hymn verses:*

***Away in a Manger*** v.1 No.277

**Away in a manger, no crib for his bed, the little  
Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head; the stars in  
the bright sky looked down where he lay, the little  
Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

## Go Tell It on the Mountain v.1 No.290

REFRAIN **Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!**

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night, behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light.** REPEAT REFRAIN

## Silent Night, v.1 No.281

**Silent night, holy night! All is calm, all is bright round yon virgin mother and child. Holy Infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.**

## Joy to the World v.1 No. 267

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her king; let ev'ry heart prepare him room and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.**

### ◆ 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

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

## SHARING OF PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*Please be seated*

## OFFERING—NOISY OFFERING

*Children are invited to bring an offering to the globe*

### ◆ OFFERING PRAYER

P: Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

C: **Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. Amen.**

## GREAT THANKSGIVING Spoken

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

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

**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## WORDS OF INSTITUTION & LORD'S PRAYER

### INVITATION TO COMMUNION:

Here is life. God is with us.

Come, receive what God has promised.

*Please be seated*

## DISTRIBUTION & HYMN

No. 259

*Fling Wide the Door Unbar the Gate*

1 **Fling wide the door, unbar the gate; the King of glory comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the Savior of the world who brings his great salvation to the earth. So raise a shout of holy mirth and praise our God and Lord, Creator, Spirit, Word.**

2 **He is the rock of our belief, the heart of mercy's gentle self. His kingly crown is holiness; his scepter is his loveliness; he brings our sorrows to an end. Now gladly praise our king and friend, and worship him with song for saving us from wrong.**

3 **Oh, happy towns and blessed lands that live by their true king's commands. And blessed be the hearts he rules, the humble places where he dwells. He is the rightful Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, creator of the world, our only strength for good.**

4 **Come, Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ; our hearts are open wide in trust. Oh, show us now your lovely grace, upon our sorrows shine your face, and let your Holy Spirit guide our journey in your grace so wide. We praise your holy name, from age to age the same!**

## TABLE BLESSING

*The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. Amen.*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P: God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.

**C: Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

## BENEDICTION

P: May God who comes among us, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always. **C: Amen.**

