

SAINT MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH



Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025

400 River Road, Columbia, South Carolina 29212

*In the order of service, congregational responses are printed in **bold**.
Our worship **begins** at the Prelude, as we hear God's word in music.*

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

All Creation Sings Setting 12

Please Stand if you are able

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God,

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.

Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.

**Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.**

Amen.

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. ✙ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

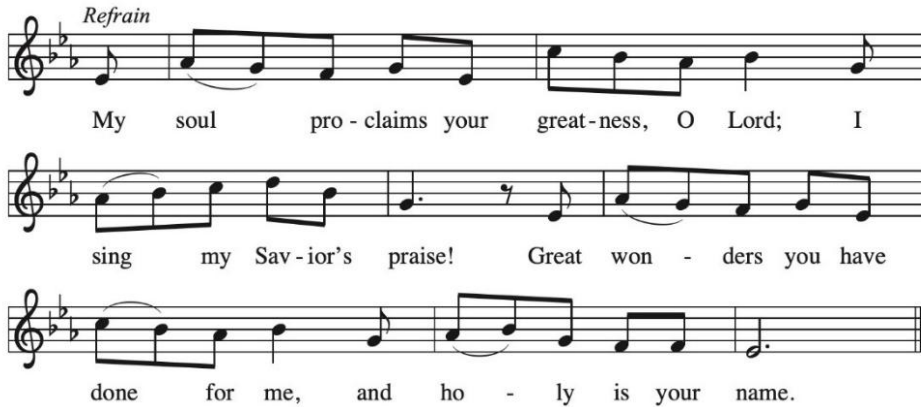
Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn

ELW 242

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.**

CANTICLE OF PRAISE *Choir sings verses, congregation sings Refrain after v. 2,4,6*



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE SONG *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* ELW 240, vs. 3

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Let us pray. We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

Amen.

Light three candles.

BLESSING OF THE CHRISMON TREE

Let us pray. Lord Jesus, you are the light of the world, and we remember that light as we decorate this tree with Chrismons which symbolize the Light of the World, Jesus Christ. When we see this tree, remind us that we are all part of your family, and that even though we are all different, you love each of us as a precious child.

Amen.

Please Sit

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD, the majesty of our God.]]

³ Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

SECOND READING: James 5:7-10

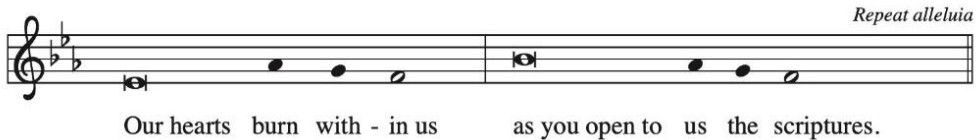
In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Please Stand if you are able

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 11th chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please Sit

MESSAGE

Frank W. Anderson

Please Stand if you are able

HYMN OF THE DAY

Christ, Be Our Light

ELW 715

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. *We pray especially for . . .* In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release.

Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant especially we pray for Global Refuge and Lutheran Social Services. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith especially Mary, mother of Jesus. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

Please Sit

THANKSGIVING AND MEAL

We give in grateful response for all God's gifts; God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

*We offer **secure online giving** through [Tithe.ly](https://tithe.ly). Please see the back page for more. Offering plates located at each entrance/exit. If you need an envelope or assistance, please ask an usher.*

SPECIAL MUSIC

***Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus** Karen Shevenell, solo*

Please Stand if you are able

OFFERING HYMN

We Are Waiting For Jesus

ACS 905

1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray. Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. **Amen.**

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, ... and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and
God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.
Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

We praise you, living and loving God, that you have sent your Son to this world. Christ is your Wisdom, sweetly ordering all creation, our Lawgiver, burning with justice, the Branch from Jesse's tree, sprouting flowers from old roots, the Key of David, opening our prison doors.

And let the people cry, O come and save us: **O come and save us.**

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.

And let the people cry, O come and save us: **O come and save us.**

We beg you, mighty and merciful God: send us the Spirit of your Son. Dwell in this food and in all who share it, that the earth may rejoice in your presence. In Christ, the Dawning Day, enlighten a darkened world, reign as Sovereign to unite all peoples, and live among us, Emmanuel, our deepest desire now and forever.

And let the people cry, O come and save us: **O come and save us.**

Even so, come, Lord Jesus, with your Father and your Spirit, to the church, and receive our praises, now and forever. Amen. **Amen.**

And let the people pray:

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest, and let these gifts to us be blessed.

Blest be God, who is our Bread; may all the world be clothed and fed. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

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.

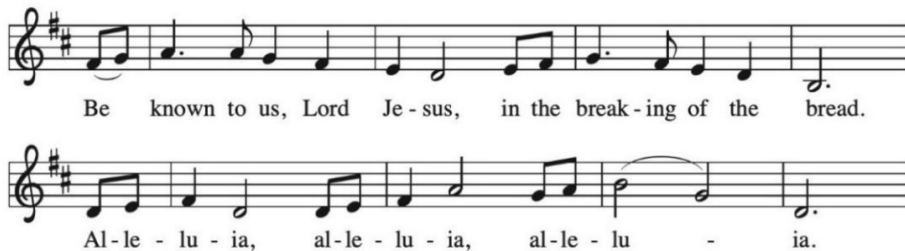
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

Please Sit

LAMB OF GOD





COMMUNION

Holy Communion is offered to all who believe in Jesus Christ, who confess their sins, and seek forgiveness. For those who are able, an usher will instruct the congregation when to come forward using the center aisle; please return to your pew using the side aisles. Wine, juice (white), and gluten-free wafers are available. Please alert an usher if you require assistance so communion can be brought to you.

COMMUNION HYMNS

He Comes to Us As One Unknown

ELW 737

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

ELW 257, vs. 5-6

Please Stand if you are able

COMMUNION BLESSING

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

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

BLESSING

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. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

People, Look East

ELW 248

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake. **Thanks be to God.**

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ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

Ushers: Bill Smoak, Mike Burgess
Lector: Harry Metz
Sacristans: Sabrina Whitecotton, Karla Maloney

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the glory of God by Bob & Rita Anderson.

THIS WEEK AT SAINT MICHAEL *Mon & Fri Update Calls from PFA at 4:55 pm*

TODAY, December 14th

Advent 3

9:15 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Choir Warmup ***10:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion***

Tuesday, December 16th

12:00 p.m. AA Meeting (*Back to Basics Group*) FH
NO LMM

Wednesday, December 17th

10:00 a.m. Bible Study—Red Letter Jesus—Fellowship Hall

Thursday, December 18th

12:00 p.m. AA Meeting (*Back to Basics Group*) FH

Friday, December 19th

10:00 a.m. AA Meeting (*Morning Group*) ChEd

Saturday, December 20th

9-10 a.m. Choir Rehearsal--Choir Room

Next Sun, December 21st

Advent 4

9:15 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Choir Warmup ***10:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion***

***Christmas Eve + Special Music from the Thomas Family at 3:30 pm, Candlelight Worship at 4.
Poinsettias may be taken home following worship for those who purchased a plant(s).***

LAST DAY FOR DONATIONS—DECEMBER 28TH

PLEASE NOTE THAT KRIS WILL BE OUT OF THE OFFICE 12/24 UNTIL 1/6

LORD, IN YOUR MERCY, HEAR OUR PRAYERS: FRIENDS--#HOME, ^REHAB, *SENIOR LIVING

Ken & #Dot Black

Grady & #Melinda

Joy Gunter

Gary McManus

**Don & Gwen Buff*

Sharpe

Bo Harris

Harry O'Quinn

**Rose Colley*

**Tommae Sligh*

David Heinrich

Brooke Pittman

**Helen Derrick*

Dea Baughman

Vicky Huggins

Jane Potts

#Barbara DeVore

Donny Day

Jill Lee

Marlene Stirewalt

#Virgie Dreher

Jackie Dunning

Patrick Lindler

Ed Thomas

**Barbara Fowler*

Lisa Gillespie

Angie Matlosz

Bruce Whelchel

**Alma Paulson*

Douglas Gourley

Terry Matlosz

MEMBERS & FAMILIES OF THE US ARMED FORCES & MILITARY, INCLUDING:

Tyler Alexander, USMC; Sherri Spangler's grandson Samantha Davis, USA; Gene & Diana Riley's niece

Zachary Davis, USN-deployed; Carolyn Cook's grandson Grant Frick, SCNG; Linda Frick's grandson

Hunter Purvis USA-deployed; Jerry & Cheryl Baxter's son-in-law

SAINT MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

A Congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



If you are a guest, welcome! Ushers have *Connections Card* to drop it in the offering plate so that we can get to know you better. As you leave, be sure to introduce yourself to the pastor. If you would like to learn about membership or have any questions, please call the church office. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

Tithe.ly online giving direct via the ONLINE GIVING tab at www.stmichael1814.com and available in the app store, www.tithe.ly/give.

One-time or recurring gifts can be scheduled. The process is quick, safe, and funds are deposited immediately.

Restrooms located in both Administrative and Christian Education Buildings.

Children are always welcome in our worship service, but for those who desire it, a nursery is located in the Administrative Building. We stream via Facebook Live.

LARGE PRINT bulletins and **Children's** books & activities available from an usher.

The People of Saint Michael, Ministers

The Reverend Frank W. Anderson, Pastor

Karen Shevenell, Cantor + Kris Esgar, Parish Administrator

Wishing you Joy and Happiness in the New Year.

WiFi: *StMichaels_Guest* PW: *Sundays!!*