

SAINT MICHAEL LUTHERAN CHURCH



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 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

CHORAL PRELUDE

Creator of the Stars of Night

Choir Men

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

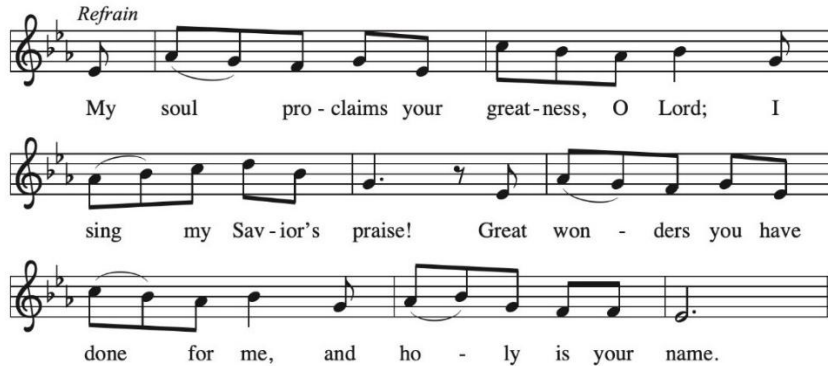
The King Shall Come

ELW 260

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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. 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.**

ADVENT CANDLE SONG *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* ELW 240, vs. 4

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Let us pray. We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

Amen.

Light four candles.

BLESSING OF THE NATIVITY AND CHRIST CHILD

Let us pray. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. With Mary and Joseph, with the angels and shepherds, and with the animals in the stable we gather around your Son, born for us. Bless us, and fill us with joy and wonder as we look upon this manger scene. May Jesus be born in our lives, that we might share his love with all the world, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever.

Amen.

Please Sit

WORD

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

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ 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.”

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

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ 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, ⁵ 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, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ 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.

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

Please Stand if you are able

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al-le-lu - ia, al - le-lu - ia, al-le-lu - ia.



Repeat alleluia

Our hearts burn with - in us as you open to us the scriptures.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the 1st chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

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

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ 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 Sit

MESSAGE

Frank W. Anderson

Please Stand if you are able

HYMN OF THE DAY

Canticle of the Turning

ELW 723

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.

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill *especially*.... God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your in love. 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. 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

Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly The Hills are Bare at Bethlehem Jesus, What a Wonderful Child

Choir

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, 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
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

Be known to us, Lord Je - sus, in the break - ing of the bread.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Be known to us, Lord Je - sus, in the break - ing of the bread.

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

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

That Boy-Child of Mary **ELW 293**
O Come, O Come, Emmanuel **ELW 257, vs. 7-8**

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

Joy to the World **ELW 267**

DISMISSAL

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

POSTLUDE ANTHEM

Beautiful Star of Bethlehem

Choir

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ASSISTING IN WORSHIP

Ushers: Bill Smoak, Mike Burgess
Lector: Kate Brighton
Sacristans: Carolyn Cook, Judith Nevergoll



ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the glory of God and in honor of Caroline's Christmas Birthday, and in loving memory of Scott, by the McCauley Family.

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

TODAY, December 21st *Advent 4*

9:15 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. Choir Warmup **10:30 a.m. Worship with Holy Communion**

Monday, December 22nd 5-7 p.m. Holiday Decorations Drop-In—Kate Brighton, 117 Cranewater Drive, Cola 29212—*All Welcome!*

Tuesday, December 23rd 12:00 p.m. AA Meeting (*Back to Basics Group*) FH

Wednesday, December 24th **10:00 a.m. NO Bible Study—Red Letter Jesus—Fellowship Hall**

3:30 p.m. Violin Music by the Thomas Family

4:00 p.m. Candlelight Worship

Thursday, December 25th 12:00 p.m. AA Meeting (*Back to Basics Group*) FH

Friday, December 26th 10:00 a.m. AA Meeting (Morning Group) ChEd

Saturday, December 27th **9-10 a.m. NO Choir Rehearsal--Choir Room**

Next Sun, December 28th **Christmas 1 Songs & Stories**

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 4:00 pm

Poinsettias may be taken home following worship by those who purchased plant(s).

Kris leaves 12/24 returning Tuesday, January 6th. She will be checking email & voicemail.

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:

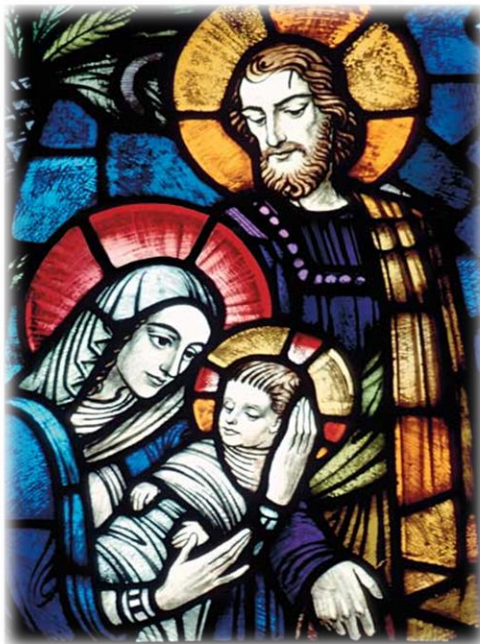
Tyler Alexander, USMC; Sherri Spangler's grandson Samantha Davis, USA; Gene & Diana Riley's niece

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, 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.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR

The People of Saint Michael, Ministers

The Reverend Frank W. Anderson, Pastor

Karen Shevenell, Cantor + Kris Esgar, Parish Administrator

WiFi: StMichaels_Guest PW: Sundays!!