

Welcome to the Lutheran Church of the Covenant!

Here are a few notes to make you feel more at home as we praise the God of new life!

Bulletins are available to be picked up at the back of the sanctuary.

We encourage you to participate throughout worship by speaking the **bold** print and singing along with the hymns. Headings preceded by an asterisk * indicate when you are invited to stand, as you are comfortable.

All are welcome to come forward for communion. The ushers will guide you. Juice and gluten-free wafers are available; please let your server know if you need either of these.

A basket for offerings is at the rear of the sanctuary.

A children's table is located at the back of the sanctuary, where you'll find some books and activities to help children feel more at home in worship.



*Sending Hymn: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling ELW #631



1 Love di-vine, all loves ex-cel-ling, Joy of heav'n, to
 2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov-ing Spir-it in-to ev-'ry
 3 Come. Al-might-v. to de-liv-er: let us all thy



earth come down! Fix in us thy hum-ble dwell-ing, all thy
 trou-bled breast; let us all in thee in-her-it; let us
 life re-ceive; sud-den-ly re-turn, and nev-er, nev-er-



faith-ful mer-cies crown. Je-sus, thou art all com-pas-sion,
 find thy prom-ised rest. Take a-way the love of sin-ning;
 more thy tem-ples leave. Thee we would be al-ways bless-ing.



pure, un-bound-ed love thou art; vis-it us with
 Al-pha and O-me-ga be; end of faith, as
 serve thee as thy hosts a-bove, pray, and praise thee



thy sal-va-tion, en-ter ev-'ry trem-bling heart.
 its be-gin-ning, set our hearts at lib-er-ty.
 with-out ceas-ing, glo-ry in thy per-fect love.



Serving in Worship Today

Presiding Minister

Rev. Andrea McDonough

Organist

Gerry Mass

Assisting Minister

Bert Zahn

Lector

Mark Gabor

Crucifer

Adrian Bernardo

Advent Wreath

Tom King

Dylan King

Parish Administrator

Jennifer Lasher-Dobush

Custodian

Vince Besednjak

Communion Prayer

*The Lord's Prayer

As the Holy Spirit gathers us in anticipation of Christ, let us pray as Christ taught us:

**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

Distribution Song: Lamb of God



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

*Processional Hymn: Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding

ELW #246



1 Hark! a thrill - ing voice is sound - ing! "Christ is near," we
 2 Wak - ened by the sol - emn warn - ing, from earth's bond - age
 3 See the Lamb, so long ex - pect - ed, come with par - don
 4 So, when next he comes in glo - ry and the world is
 5 Hon - or, glo - ry, might, and bless - ing to the Fa - ther



hear it say. "Cast a - way the works of dark - ness,
 let us rise; Christ, our sun, all sloth dis - pel - ling,
 down from heav'n. Let us haste, with tears of sor - row,
 wrapped in fear, he will shield us with his mer - cy
 and the Son with the ev - er - last - ing Spir - it



all you chil - dren of the day!"
 shines up - on the morn - ing skies.
 one and all, to be for - giv'n;
 and with words of love draw near.
 while un - end - ing a - ges run!

Text: Latin hymn, 1632; tr. Edward Caswall, 1814–1878
 Music: MERTON, William H. Monk, 1823–1889

*Prayer of the Day

Eternal God of power and grace, who comes to us in surprising ways— in angel appearances, in defeat of enemies, and in resurrection from the dead— show us the face of Immanuel in our time. As your Holy Spirit spoke to Zechariah, to Mary, and to Joseph, speak to us now through your Word so that we too may receive faith and be strengthened to do your will. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

(please stand as the offering is brought forward)

(please stand as the offering is brought forward)

Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,

give thanks be-cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.

Give thanks with a grate - ful heart, give thanks to the Ho - ly One,

give thanks be - cause he's giv - en Je - sus Christ, his Son.

And now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am

rich," be - cause of what the Lord has done for us. And

now let the weak say, "I am strong," let the poor say, "I am

Last time

rich," be-cause of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks!

Christmas Carol Fest *(see insert)*

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

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

And the darkness did not overcome it.

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

(sung responsively with Psalm tone 3)



Psalm tone reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year C* © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.
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Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the cherubim.
In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and | come to help us.

Restore | us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

O Lord | God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your | people pray?

***An Advent Affirmation**

We believe in God, creator and lover of the earth, origin and destiny of us all.

We believe in Jesus the Christ—God coming to us in the fragile promise of a baby yet unborn—who emerges as the herald of hope, God's laughter in the face of despair. Plunged into death and hell, he broke free the captives, and is leading the way to the land of promise where justice and peace will flourish.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who implants the seed of truth, brings us to birth as the body of Christ, and empowers us to confront and transform all that is corrupt, degrading and deceitful.

We believe in the coming reign of God. Announced by the Baptist, it has drawn near to us in Jesus, and will be consummated in the glorious marriage of earth and heaven, when all who have passed through the world's deep sorrow will be raised from the waters, robed in righteousness, and gathered into the joyous fulfilment of God's desire.

**For the coming of that day on this day, we work and pray:
Come, Lord Jesus, Come! Amen.**

Prayers of the People

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.

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.**

*Gospel Acclamation



*Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

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

The birth of Jesus took place like this. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. Before they enjoyed their wedding night, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. Joseph, discomfited but noble, determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced. While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: "Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus—'God saves'—because he will save his people from their sins." This would bring the prophet's embryonic revelation to full term:

Watch for this—a young woman will get pregnant and bear a son;

They will name him Immanuel (Hebrew for "God is with us").

Then Joseph woke up. He did exactly what God's angel commanded in the dream: He married Mary.

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