

Immanuel Lutheran Church



P.O. Box 5326
Kansas City, MO 64131
www.immanuelltcmckcmo.org
ImmanuelLCMS42@gmail.com



Fourth Sunday in Advent
December 21, 2025



Nothing to Figure Out

As We Gather

Though Matthew is already telling of the birth of Jesus Christ, it is not yet the account we look forward to hearing on Christmas Eve. But this one, lighter on details, is heavy with the promise Jesus' birth fulfills. This Sunday, we hear of Joseph's own angel visit, of the name that shall be given to this child, and of His birth to save His people from their sins. All of this is prefigured in the voice of the Advent prophet Isaiah and framed in the essential message of the church by the words of Paul. Each of the readings appointed for today remind us that God has it all figured out, and even though it all unfolded in time before us, it was appointed by God from the beginning of time. As we remember again all that happened, we also happily remember that God still has it all in hand and that Christ is not only the fulfiller of the past but also the author of the future.

PRELUDE AND WELCOME

HYMN “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates” #340

Please stand as you are able.

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

CONFSSION AND ABSOLUTION

Psalm 130:7; Philippians 1:6

Pastor: O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love,

People: **and with Him is plentiful redemption.**

Pastor: Holy and gracious God,

People: **I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but some is known only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ I ask forgiveness. Deliver and restore me that I may rest in peace.**

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✕ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

People: Amen.

✖ WORD ✕

INTROIT

♪ Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen

KYRIE

♪ Lord, have mercy upon us. Christ have mercy upon us, Lord have mercy upon us.

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

♪ Glory be to God on high; and on earth peace good will toward men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory.

**O Lord God, heavenly King. God the Father Almighty.
O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ;
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou
that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayer. Thou
that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy
upon us.**

**For Thou only are holy; Thou only art the Lord.
Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the
glory of God the Father. A-men.**

SALUTATION and COLLECT OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **♪ And with thy spirit.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

Almighty God, all our plans come to nothing, but we daily live with fear and disappointment. Grant to us hopeful hearts, that knowing You have kept Your Word and delivered up Your only Son to be our Savior, we may live in peace and confidence, assured that You will bring all things to their perfect end in Christ; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and to the end of the ages.

People: **♪ A--men.**

Please be seated.

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 7:10-17*

(“The virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”)

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE *Romans 1:1-7*

(Long promised by God, the Savior, Jesus Christ has come.)

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand as you are able.

ALLELUIA

♪ Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

THE HOLY GOSPEL Matthew 1:18-25

(“The birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew the 1st chapter.

People: **♪ Glory be to Thee, O Lord.**

The Gospel is read.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord

People: **♪ Praise be to Thee, O Christ.**

THE NICENE CREED *(found on the last page of the pew hymnal)*

Please be seated.

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” #357 v1-4

SERMON Pr. Mark Croucher

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERTORY

♪ Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit. A-men.

Please be seated.

OFFERING

Please stand as you are able.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For faith to rejoice in the promise of the Father kept in Christ, for an end to worries and fears, and for peace to rule our hearts, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For the courage in the face of danger and confidence in the face of doubt, knowing that God will keep us as His own possession, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For this congregation and the church across many nations, called by the Spirit and sustained by the means of grace, that we may not fail to tell the story of our Savior’s birth nor the promise of His name, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For the peoples and leaders of all the nations, that in every

place they may know justice and be free to worship the Lord without fear, and for an end to violence and war, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For all those who protect us in this and every place, for the emergency workers and disaster relief personnel, and for those who watch on our behalf in the armed forces, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For generous hearts that those in poverty and need may be supplied from the abundance the Lord has granted to us, and for our tithes and offerings to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For families and homes, especially those alone in this holy season of our Savior's birth, that we may love and serve them, extending Christ's compassion to all those around us, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For God's mercy to the sick, His relief to those who suffer, His presence with the grieving and dying, and His peace to those troubled in mind or spirit, especially Liz, Myron, Betty, Karla, Dan and Ian, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For faith to discern and believe Christ's presence in this Holy Communion and for repentance that we may receive His body and blood for our good, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For all those who travel and those whose celebrations may be missing loved ones, that the Lord may at last bring us together in His presence on high, let us pray to the Lord:

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Come to the aid of Your people, O Lord, and defend us against all our enemies of body and soul, that at the day You have appointed, we may rejoice in Your presence together with those who have gone before us with the sign of faith and now rest in peace; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whom with the Father and the Spirit You are one God, one Lord, now and to the end of the ages.

People: **Amen.**

✖ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT ✖

pew hymnal page 194

PREFACE

2 Timothy 4:22

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **♪ And with thy spirit.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: **♪ We lift them up unto the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks unto the Lord our God.

People: **♪ It is meet and right so to do.**

PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is our privilege and our duty, at all times and in every place, to give You thanks and praise, O Lord, God Almighty, eternal Father of the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, whom we know and in whom we rejoice as the fulfillment of all the promises given down through the ages and the herald of all that is come. With angels and archangels; the blessed apostles and prophets; the virgin Mary; Joseph, faithful guardian; and all the company of heaven, we join in their eternal song of praise and sing:

SANCTUS

♪ Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth; heav'n and earth are full of Thy glory. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: When the peace of perfection was broken by the voice of rebellion and death became our end, You looked upon us in love, O merciful Father, and You sent forth the promise of a new day made possible by a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. He fulfilled Your Word, was incarnate of the virgin by the Holy Spirit, and was delivered in flesh and blood as one of us, yet without sin. He fulfilled all Your saving will and offered up Himself in our place to death, paying the price of our redemption and forging a path through death to life everlasting. In this Holy Supper He established, He placed His promise, that by our communion in His flesh and blood, we might be forgiven of our sins and strengthened in the new life granted to us in Baptism. Now, by His own Word and testament, we gather to set aside this bread, that it may be to us His flesh for the life of the world, and this cup, that it may be His blood to cleanse us from all our sin, as He Himself has said.

People: **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: 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.

People: **♪ For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: **♪ A---men.**

AGNUS DEI

♪ O Christ, Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. O Christ Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us, O Christ Thou Lamb of God, that takest away the sin of the world, grant us Thy peace. A---men.

Please be seated.

DISTRIBUTION

Please stand as you are able.

NUNC DIMITTIS

♪ Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou has prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THANKSGIVING

Pastor: O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good.

People: **♪ And His mercy endureth forever.**

Pastor: O Lord, God Almighty, everlasting Father, we pray You to open our hearts to Your Spirit that we may enter into the holy contemplation of our Savior's birth with sins forgiven and hearts at peace, knowing that He who moved time and eternity for us and our salvation will preserve us in all uncertainty and fear and bring us to the perfect fulfillment of heaven; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who with the Father and the Spirit are one

People: God, now and even to the end of all the ages.
 ♪ A--men.

SALUTATION and BENEDICAMUS

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: ♫ And with thy spirit.

Pastor: Bless we the Lord.

People:  **Thanks be to God.**

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✡ give you peace.

People: ♫ Amen, amen, a--men.

HYMN “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” **#357 v5-7**

POSTLUDE

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THE MESSENGER

December 21, 2025

WELCOME! Dear guest, we pray that your worship with us is as spiritually enriching for you as your presence is encouraging to us. We invite you to sign our guest book in the foyer and leave your email address if you would like periodic updates from Immanuel. Most importantly, come back and worship with us again next Sunday.

SERVING US TODAY: Rev. Mark Croucher
Dan Henggeler, Organist

IN OUR PRAYERS: Liz Kraft, Myron Kimber, Betty Peuster, Karla Kass, Dan and Ian Henggeler

NO BIBLE CLASS NEXT SUNDAY: There will be no Bible class next Sunday, December 28th and Pastor Paul Hoemann will be serving us.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE: Our Christmas Eve service will be at 5:00 pm on December 24th.

THE LUTHERAN HOUR theme for next Sunday, December 27th is "**Get Ready for the Best**" Guest Speaker: Rev. Germán Novelli Oliveros Christ will return—maybe this year, maybe even today! Pastor German Novelli helps us to prepare for the blessings and challenges of a new year. Luke 12:36-37 Listen online at <https://www.lutheranhour.org>.