



Every Heart Prepare

December 3rd , 2025

First Wednesday Advent Service

Noon and 7 PM

Evergreens

*Seeing Christ in
the Decorations
of the Season*

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As We Gather

“Prepare!” is often the watchword of the season as the world gets ready for another celebration of Christmas. An integral part of any preparation is decoration. We see decorations everywhere this time of year. The world may not comprehend the real meaning of Christmas, but even secular preparations use many of the same decorations beloved by Christians—an appropriation we shouldn’t mind at all, because these decorations point us to Christ. This year, as we look forward again to the coming of the Messiah, we take a fresh look at how the adornments of the season draw our eyes to Jesus, that we may more richly behold the love, peace, joy, and hope He comes to bring as this beauty is set before us.

Today, we focus on evergreens. Perhaps the most innocuous decorations in the eyes of the world, their prickles remind us of the crown of thorns, and the berries of the holly evoke the blood-stained brow of our crucified Lord. Above all, the steadfastness of their green in the midst of death symbolizes life amid death—and the life eternal Jesus won for us on the cross.

Jesus! Name of Wonderful Love

LSB 900 (vs. 1-3)

Jesus! Name of wondrous love,
Name all other names above,
Unto which must ev’ry knee
Bow in deep humility.

Jesus! Name decreed of old,
To the maiden mother told,
Kneeling in her lowly cell,
By the angel Gabriel.

Jesus! Name of wondrous love,
Human name of God above;
Pleading only this, we flee
Helpless, O our God, to Thee.

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Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Confession and Absolution

Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

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.

Amen.

Kyrie

LSB 944

Service of the Word

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Lord of all beauty, You made the heavens and the earth; the world and all its fullness are Yours. Thank You for giving us life and filling creation with signs that declare Your glory. As we behold beautiful evergreens this season, fix our eyes on their thorny leaves and red berries that we may give thanks for the crown Your Son wore and the cross He bore for us. Abide in us always, as we abide in Your Word and take heart in the promise of eternal life with Jesus, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

Amen.

First Reading

Hosea 14:4-8

⁴ I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely, for my anger has turned from them.

⁵ I will be like the dew to Israel; he shall blossom like the lily; he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon; ⁶ his shoots shall spread out; his beauty shall be like the olive, and his fragrance like Lebanon.

⁷ They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow; they shall flourish like the grain; they shall blossom like the vine; their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.

⁸ O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols? It is I who answer and look after you. I am like an evergreen cypress; from me comes your fruit.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

22 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

³ No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴ They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵ And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel**John 11:17-27**

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the Eleventh Chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

⁷ Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. ¹⁸ Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, ¹⁹ and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother.

²⁰ So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house.

²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.

²² But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." ²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day."

²⁵ Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world."

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

The people that in darkness sat
A glorious light have seen;
The light has shined on them who long
In shades of death have been,
In shades of death have been.

To us a Child of hope is born,
To us a Son is giv'n,
And on His shoulder ever rests
All pow'r in earth and heav'n,
All pow'r in earth and heav'n.

His name shall be the Prince of Peace,
The Everlasting Lord,
The Wonderful, the Counselor,
The God by all adored,
The God by all adored.

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Message

Pastor Dana Allen Brones

Prayers of the Church

In peace, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

For eyes to behold the Father's hand in all creation, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

For awareness of beauty and the living traditions of the church that bring Christ to our eyes
through arts and crafts, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That we may see the signs of Christ's return even as we celebrate His birth and encourage
one another all the more as we see the Day drawing near, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That we may be living testimonies of new life in Christ through our loving service to our
neighbor—both in word and in deed, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That we may be thankful for the bountiful harvest we enjoy amid the many festivities of this
season, and be generous to the poor, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That we may love one another as God so loved us, forgive one another, and work together in
the unity we have in Christ Jesus, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

That we may not be lured into temptation or despair or be distracted by the false
Christmases around us, but always hold the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts, let
us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy.

The Lord's Prayer

Service of the Sacrament

The Words of Our Lord

The Holly and the Ivy (7 PM Service Only)

The holly and the ivy, when they are both full grown,
Of all the trees that are in the wood, the holly bears the crown.

Refrain: Oh, the rising of the sun and the running of the deer.
The playing of the merry organ, sweet singing in the choir.

The holly bears a blossom as white as any flow'r,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ to be our sweet Savior. *Refrain*

The holly bears a berry as red as any blood,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ to do poor sinners good. *Refrain*

The holly bears a prickle as sharp as any thorn,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ on Christmas Day in the morn. *Refrain*

The holly bears a bark as bitter as any gall,
And Mary bore sweet Jesus Christ for to redeem us all. *Refrain*

The holly and the ivy, when they are both full grown.
Of all the trees that are in the wood, the holly bears the crown. *Refrain*

Text: English carol. Public domain

Dismissal

Post-Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us pray.

We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this
salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us
through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another;
through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Blessing of God's People (Benediction)

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

LSB 357 (vs. 1 & 4)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear. **Refrain**

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. **Refrain**

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Go in peace to love and
serve the Lord!
Thanks be to God!



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