



December 21st 2025
Fourth Sunday in Advent

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December 21st, 2025

8 am and 11 am Worship Service

As We Gather

It is still Advent, but today we hear an account of the Christmas story early so that we may know what to look for later this week. The Son of Mary by the Holy Spirit is Jesus, who saves us from our sins and who fulfills the promise of Immanuel: God is with us. Perhaps the richness of the details of Luke's account sometimes distracts us from the message. The Lord has come to keep His Word, to save us from our sins, and to keep us in His hand so that we may be His eternally. None of this was obvious to either Mary or faithful Joseph, and yet the Lord was at work through it all to deliver to us His Son to be our Savior. We will still worry when things do not go as we plan, and we will still struggle with doubts and fears, but the angel of God's presence is no mere messenger sent in His place. No, the angel of God's presence is His only-begotten Son, whose name is Jesus and whose work is our salvation.

Welcome and Announcements

Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

LSB 341

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates!
Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near;
The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation He doth bring;
Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise
Your joyful songs of praise.

A righteous Helper comes to thee;
His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness,
His scepter, pity in distress.
The end of all our woe He brings;
Therefore the earth is glad and sings.
To Christ the Savior raise
Your grateful hymns of praise.

How blest the land, the city blest,
Where Christ the ruler is confessed!
O peaceful hearts and happy homes
To whom this King in triumph comes!
The cloudless sun of joy is He
Who comes to set His people free.
To God the Spirit raise
Your happy shouts of praise.

Fling wide the portals of your heart;
Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heav'n's employ,
Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sov'reign enter in
And new and nobler life begin.
To God alone be praise
For word and deed and grace!

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Lighting of the Advent Candles

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

Service of the Word

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us pray.

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 7:10-17

(The Virgin shall conceive a son and you shall call him Immanuel.)

¹⁰ Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: 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 And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted.

¹⁷ The Lord will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father’s house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Epistle

Romans 1:1-7

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

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 concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

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

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary
and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

O Little Town of Bethlehem

LSB 361

O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

For Christ is born of Mary,
And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king
And peace to all the earth!

How silently, how silently
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His heav'n.
No ear may hear His coming;
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still
The dear Christ enters in.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in,
Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
Our Lord Immanuel!

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Message

Pastor Nathan McCarty

Prayers of the Church

Service of the Sacrament

Preface

LSB 194

The Lord be with you.
And with thy spirit.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them up unto the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is meet and right so to do.

Proper Preface

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

Sanctus

LSB 195

Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth;
Heaven 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.

The Words of Our Lord

The Peace

The peace of the ☩ Lord be with you always.

Amen.

Agnus Dei

LSB 198

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.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

LSB 357 (vs. 1-6)

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 Wisdom from on high,
Who ord'rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go. **Refrain**

O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the Law
In cloud and majesty and awe. **Refrain**

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**

O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. **Refrain**

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. **Refrain**

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Dismissal

Post-Communion Prayer of Thanksgiving

Let us pray.

Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son's body and blood. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our days of pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; 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)

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

LSB 515 Tune: Llamgloffan

Rejoice, rejoice, believers,
And let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing,
And darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising
And soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle;
At midnight comes the cry.

The watchers on the mountain
Proclaim the Bridegroom near;
Go forth as He approaches
With alleluias clear.
The marriage feast is waiting;
The gates wide open stand.
Arise, O heirs of glory;
The Bridegroom is at hand.

The saints, who here in patience
Their cross and suff'rings bore,
Shall live and reign forever
When sorrow is no more.
Around the throne of glory
The Lamb they shall behold;
In triumph cast before Him
Their diadems of gold.

Our hope and expectation,
O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, O Sun so longed for,
O'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted,
We plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption
That sets Your people free!

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

Fourth Sunday in Advent

9:30 am Contemporary Service

December 21st, 2025

Welcome and Announcements

Opening Song of Praise & Lighting of Advent Wreath

Invocation

Old Testament Reading

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begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary
and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,

and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ✠ of the world to come. Amen.

Praise Song

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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.

Holy Communion

Distribution Songs

Prayers

Lord's Prayer

Blessing of God's People (Benediction)

Closing Song of Praise

Acknowledgments

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