



Eden Evangelical Lutheran Church
Third Sunday of Advent
December 13 & 14th, 2025

Announcements

Introduction

How do we know when God has come close? What if it's not what we were expecting? Advent asks us to adjust some of our hopes and expectations. No doubt John's disciples were shocked to see him imprisoned and later executed. That wasn't at all how things were supposed to go. But Jesus reminds them that John was not a timid and quiet voice like a "reed shaken by the wind." Nor did John enjoy the luxuries of royalty; rather he spoke with strength and conviction in opposition to those powers.

So, what did you expect to happen to John? And what do you expect will happen to Jesus? When God comes close to us we might expect God to be born in the riches of a palace, to the power of royalty, yet Jesus chooses humility for our sake at every step.

In the coming of Christ, we see the God who is small enough to fit into cradled arms. This is the God small enough to fit within humanity, and it's a mystery we still scratch their heads over. We just might need to adjust some of our expectations about God.

Litany

At every beginning there is a yearning for the one who is coming.

O Emmanuel, Open us up to your coming.

We gather together to allow our deeply held hopes to be reshaped by God's promises. O Emmanuel, **Open us up to your coming.**

We wait for the day when God will make for us a future that is no longer predicated on our fear.

O Emmanuel, Open us up to your coming.

We find a new receptivity within us that desires God's will over our own will and relies on God's justice and mercy to accomplish it.

O Emmanuel, Open us up to your coming.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Let us pray. **Jesus, we welcome your presence now with the lighting of these candles, whose flames brings warmth to winter and fill this place with the glow of hope. Amen.**

Hymn 257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, v. 3 Light three candles.

Confession and Forgiveness

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.

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.

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.

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Word

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.]]

³ Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;

⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;

the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Psalm 146:5-10

R The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (*Ps. 146:8*)
⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob ¹ for their help,
whose hope is in the ¹ LORD their God;
⁶ **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that ¹ is in them;**
who keeps promises forever;
⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to ¹ those who hunger.
The LORD sets the ¹ captive free.
⁸ **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who ¹ are bowed down;**
the LORD ¹ loves the righteous. **R**
⁹ The LORD cares ¹ for the stranger;
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way ¹ of the wicked.
¹⁰ **The LORD shall ¹ reign forever,**
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. ¹ **Hallelujah!** **R**

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
 who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

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

Sermon

Hymn of the Day #239 Hark, the Glad Sound

Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
 creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
 who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
 born of the virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended into hell,
 On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy catholic church,
 the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

Amen.

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.

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. 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.

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Offering

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.**

Thanksgiving at the Table

Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord,

heaven and earth are full of your glory.

In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son,

who reached out to heal the sick and suffering,

who preached good news to the poor,

and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his death, resurrection, and ascension,
we await his coming in glory.

Pour out upon us the Spirit of your love, O Lord,
and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food,
the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord;
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory, now and forever. **Amen.**

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.

All who desire communion on this day are welcome to commune with us and partake in the promise of eternal life by Jesus Christ himself. In solidarity with our siblings in recovery, we use non-alcoholic wine. Please indicate if you would like a gluten free communion wafer. If you do not wish to take communion, you are still invited to ask the Vicar for a blessing before you leave. Traditionally, those who commune are baptized into the Christian faith. If you are not baptized and would like to learn more about what it means to be baptized and share in the meal at the Lord's Supper Table, please talk with Vicar Elaine Robbins.

Communion

Communion Song - Instrumental

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.

Blessing

May God who comes among us,

Father, \dagger Son, and Holy Spirit,

grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,

and good news to share today and always.

Amen.

Sending Song #886 Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Dismissal

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

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Please remember the following people in your prayers: Anne Balko, Tara Henry, Larry Tweedale, Margi Beauchaine Kirby, Family of Ron Latvala, Family of Josie Seglund, Friends and Family of Doug Scheuneman, Jr.

Nursing Home: Norma Secreast

Assisted Living: Pepper VanLandschoot (Jacobetti), Pauline Elavsky – Harbour View, and Jane Guyott

In Service: Craig Oas, Zac Culter, Mike Knickerbocker, Peter Peterson, Mathew Moilanen, and our veterans who have returned to their communities.

PRESIDING MINISTER: Elaine Robbins

USHERS: **Volunteer – Saturday** **Decets - Sunday**

ALTAR GUILD: Marissa Graves

FELLOWSHIP HOST: **Joanie H.**

EVENTS OF THE WEEK

Saturday, December 20th – Saturday Worship Service - 4:00 pm – In person

Sunday, December 21st - Sunday Worship Service 10:30am - In person & Facebook



GIVE USING VANCO ONLINE OR IN THE APP

You can now use Vanco to give online or using the mobile app. Make a one-time gift, or set up a recurring offering.



The Prayer Group meets on Tuesdays at 10:00a.m.

The Book Club will **NOT** be meeting this month.

The Free Store will be open on Thursday, December 18th from 1-3 and 4-6p.m.

There will be an Ecumenical Blue Christmas service on Monday, December 22nd at 6:00p.m. at the United Methodist Church in Munising.

Eden will hold a Christmas Eve service on Wednesday, December 24th at 4:00p.m.

If you would like to help adorn the church with a poinsettia for Christmas, please follow the instructions and fill out a Christmas Poinsettia form located in the narthex.

If Saturday or Sunday worship will be cancelled due to inclement weather, a notice will be posted on Eden's Facebook page.

www.facebook.com/EdenLutheranMunising/

It will also be listed on WLUC TV6's closing page.

www.uppermichigansource.com/weather/closings/

Serving the congregation during worship - Please consider volunteering on Saturday evenings and Sunday mornings to usher, read lessons and prayers, assist with communion, or host fellowship.

Flower Sponsors Are always appreciated. Flower sponsorship is \$30 a month. Your gift may be placed in the offering with a notation for flowers and your selected month.

Support our Youth Fund by dropping off returnable cans and bottles at the church.

If you have changed any of your contact information (address, phone, email), please complete the directory update form in narthex.

CHURCH CONTACT INFO: Please note the email addresses you should use for contacting the office and the pastor.

Office: eden@jamadots.com

Pastor: pastorofeden@gmail.com

For Pastoral Care needs, please contact Vicar Elaine Robbins

906-450-3344, or pastorofeden@gmail.com