

Fourth Sunday in Advent

December 24, 2023 – 9:30 a.m.

Lutheran Service Book, Divine Service, Setting Two



ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Prayer before worship

Draw near to us, O Advent Lord, in this time of worship. Open our hearts and minds to your life-giving presence as we wait and watch for your promised coming. Amen.

Prelude

Welcome

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their baptism

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

C Amen.

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C **But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

Silence for reflection on God's Word and for self-examination.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

C **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.**

P 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.

C Amen.

Blessing of the Advent Wreath

Each week we light a new candle on the Advent wreath.

L Blessed are you, God of our salvation; you promised that the One of peace would come from Bethlehem to feed your flock and make us live securely. As we light these candles, kindle in us the fire of your love, infuse in us the fruit of your Word, and empower us to lift up the lowly and to fill the hungry with good things; let your face shine on us and bless us that we may be saved.

C Amen.

Advent Hymn

“Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn” (WOV 633)

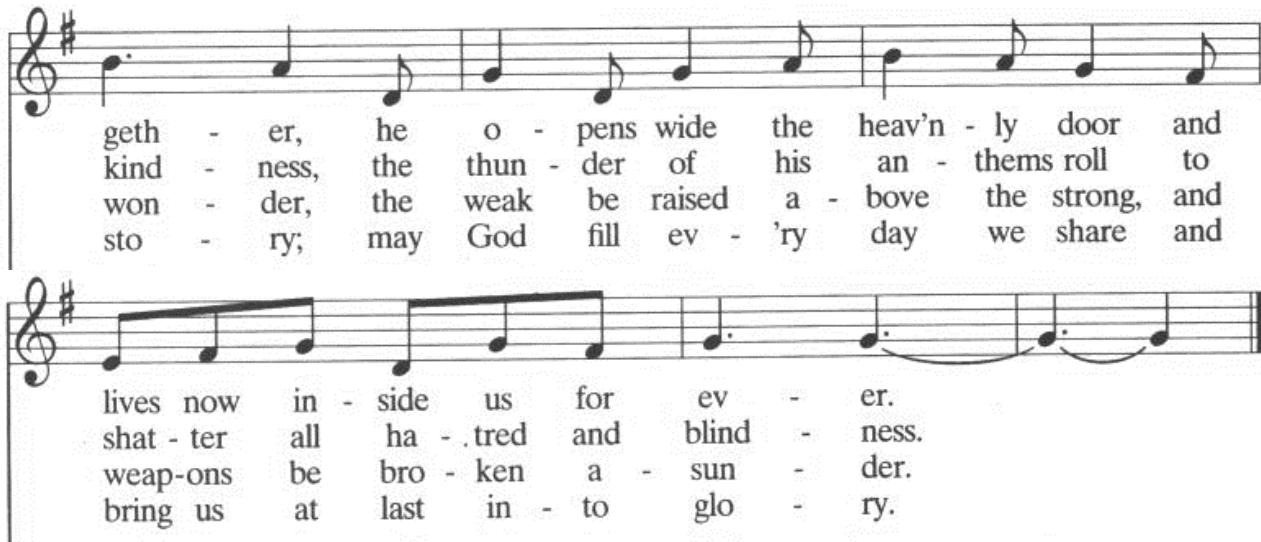
(Advent 4: all stanzas)

1 A - wake! a - wake, and greet the new morn, for
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though

an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall

soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.

Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
 mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
 Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
 kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
 won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
 sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and
 lives now in - side us for ev - er.
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Salutation and Collect of the Day

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P 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.

C Amen.

Old Testament Reading

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

¹Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ²the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." ³And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵"Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. ⁷In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"' ⁸Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no

more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. . . .

¹⁶And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

Psalmody

“The First Song of Isaiah”

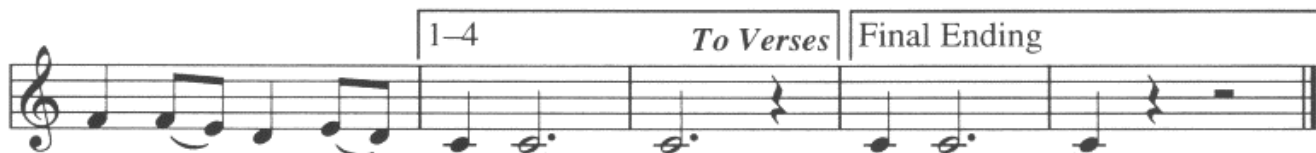
Refrain (Repeated at end)



Sure-ly, it is God who saves me; I will trust in Him and not be a -



fraid. For the Lord is my strong-hold and my sure de-fense, and



He will be my Sa - vior, Sa - vior.

Verses



1. There - fore you shall draw wa - ter with re - joic - ing



from the springs of sal - va - tion. And on that day you shall say, give



thanks to the Lord and call up - on his name;

To Refrain



2. Make his deeds known a-mong the peo - ples; see that they re-mem-ber that his

name is ex - alt - ed. Sing the prais-es of the Lord, for He has done great

things, and this is known in all the world. *To Refrain*

3. Cry a - loud in - hab - i - tants of Zi - on,

ring out your joy, for the great one in the

midst of you is the Ho - ly One of Is - rael. *To Refrain*

Words: From the *Book of Common Prayer*; Music: Jack Noble White; Copyright © 1977 by Charles Mortimer Guilbert. Used by permission.

Epistle

Romans 16:25-27

²⁵Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

G Thanks be to God.

Alleluia and Verse

G Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

*Please join in reading aloud the **highlighted portion** of Scripture and consider committing this passage to memory in the week ahead.*

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷**For nothing will be impossible with God.**" ³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

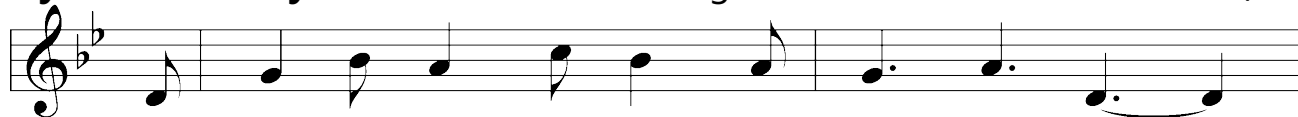
C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Sermon

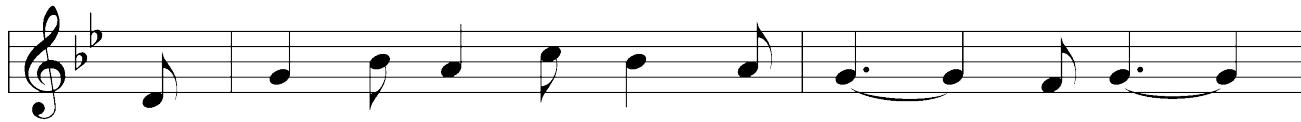
"Wonder!"

Hymn of the Day

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" (LSB 356)



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
 2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
 4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



With wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
 All gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
 "To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
 In Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
 Thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
 "My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
 And Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say:



Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Glo - ri - a!
 "Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!

Text: para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924
 Text and tune: Basque, c. 18th cent.
 Text and tune: Public domain

Profession of Faith

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, ✠ and the

life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Church

P Waiting for the fulfillment of our hope in Christ's promised coming, we pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Special prayer requests are announced followed by a brief silence for private prayer. During the Advent season each petition ends with the phrase: "Lord, in your mercy."

*Please respond by saying
"Hear our prayer."*

The prayers end with the words:

P Into your hands, O God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

C Amen.

Following the prayers, the people may greet one another in the name of the Lord, saying, "Peace be with you," as a sign of reconciliation and of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Matt. 5:22–24; Eph. 4:1–3).

Announcements

Offertory Prayer

L Let us pray: Merciful God,

C in the mystery of the Word made flesh, you embrace our lives with your great love. With joy and gladness we ask that these gifts may be a sign of that love, and that we may continue to share in your divine life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT

Prayer of Thanksgiving

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father,

be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

The Words of Our Lord

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✝ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

P In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✝ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Proclamation of Christ

P As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

C Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

**C 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.

Pax Domini

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

Agnus Dei



☐ 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.

Please be seated

Distribution

Lutheran Christians believe and teach that in the Sacrament of the Altar, Christ's body and blood are given to those who receive the bread and wine. With the bread and wine, the gifts of His body and blood are given to Christ's people for forgiveness of sins, strength for our journey of faith, and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet. All who have been baptized into Christ's death and resurrection, and who trust His words that these gifts are given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins, are invited to receive the Eucharist.

Please follow the direction of the ushers to come to the Lord's Table. The bread will be distributed first. **Gluten-free wafers** are available for those who may need these. Please indicate this to the pastor at the distribution. The wine is then received by individual glasses only. Non-alcoholic grape juice is available for those who for medical or recovery purposes must abstain from alcohol.

Children who do not receive the Sacrament are invited to come forward and receive a blessing. Please cross arms over chest so the pastor and lay assistant are able to distinguish children who do commune from those who do not yet receive the Sacrament.

For additional self-preparation to receive the Sacrament, please see "Christian

Questions with Their
Answers" beginning on page 1351 in the pew Bible.

Music at the Distribution

Advent Piano Selections

Dismissal

Post-Communion Collect

L 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 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.

C Amen.

Benediction

P 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.

C Amen.

(Sending Hymn, next page)

Sending Hymn

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus" (LSB 338)



1 Come, Thou long - ex - pect-ed Je-sus, Born to set Thy peo-ple free;
2 Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er; Born a child and yet a king!



From our fears and sins re-lease us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Born to reign in us for-ev - er, Now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con-so - la-tion, Hope of all the earth Thou art,
By Thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it Rule in all our hearts a - lone;



Dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na-tion, Joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
By Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it Raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88, alt., Tune: Southern Harmony, 1835, New Haven, Text and tune: Public domain

Postlude



Our Ministry Of Worship

Officiant/ Preacher

Pastor Meehan

Welcome

Jennifer Hills, Director of Discipleship

Lay Assistant

Angie Stiens

Communion Lay Assistant

Jennifer Hills

Organist/Pianist

David Leahey, Director of Music

Acolyte

Charlotte Hills

Crucifer

Sofi Hills

Ushers

St. John's Usher Team

Altar Care

Pat Wangeman

Welcome Host

Christy Hoins

Advent Candle Bearers:

The Wilson Family



To **Give** to St. John's Lutheran Church
scan this QR Code



This weekend's **altar flowers** are
given by donation to the flower fund.

To **view** the current edition of
our electronic weekly newsletter,
Midweek Update,
scan this QR Code



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A member congregation of the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod

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Director of Discipleship	Jennifer Hills, DCE
Director of Music	David Leahey
Office Administrator	Michelle May
Finance Administrator	Jennifer Smith
Communication Specialist	Jacqueline Fuller

Early Childhood Education Center (ECEC) Staff

Director of ECEC	Amanda Parks
ECEC Administrator	Kari Wells

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