

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 21, 2025

Greetings and Welcome

Prelude – "Long Expected One," arr. James Koerts

GATHERING

Call to Worship

P: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Confession

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence

P: Most merciful God,

C: We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. 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: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Gathering Song – “Emmanuel”

*Refrain: Come, come, Emmanuel! Son of God, appear. Heaven and earth, rejoice!
Salvation is drawing near. Salvation is drawing near.*

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

4. **O Come, Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of humankind;
Make all our sad divisions cease, And be for us the King of Peace. *Refrain***

**(Coda) Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.
Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**Greeting*

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

**Prayer of the Day*

P: God of light, so often we struggle to find our way. Our path is obscured in darkness and hard to follow. Shine your light of Jesus on us this day. Show us your path and give us your life.

C: Amen.

**Sharing Christ's Peace*

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

C: And also with you.

All are invited to share the peace of Christ with one another.

Children's Sermon

Lighting of the Advent Wreath with the children

Hymn of Praise: “While We Are Waiting, Come,” vv. 1-2

1. **While we are waiting, come; While we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, While we are waiting, come.**
2. **With pow’r and glory, come; With pow’r and glory, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, While we are waiting, come.**

WORD

Reading: Isaiah 9:1-7

Reader: John Williams

¹But there will be no gloom for those who were in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations.

²The people who walked in darkness
have seen a great light;
those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
on them light has shined.

³You have multiplied exultation;
you have increased its joy;
they rejoice before you
as with joy at the harvest,
as people exult when dividing plunder.

⁴For the yoke of their burden
and the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor,
you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵For all the boots of the tramping warriors
and all the garments rolled in blood
shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶For a child has been born for us,
a son given to us;
authority rests upon his shoulders,
and he is named
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷Great will be his authority,
and there shall be endless peace

for the throne of David and his kingdom.
He will establish and uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time onward and forevermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

R: The Word of the Lord. C: **Thanks be to God.**

**Gospel Reading:* John 8:1-12

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 8th chapter.

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

¹while Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. ²Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and began to teach them. ³The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and, making her stand before all of them, ⁴they said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. ⁵Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?” ⁶They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. ⁷When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. ⁹When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders, and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” ¹¹She said, “No one, sir.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.”

¹²Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.”

P: The gospel of the Lord. C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Scripture Song – “While We Are Waiting, Come,” v. 3

**3. Come, Savior, quickly come; Come, Savior, quickly come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, While we are waiting, come.**

Sermon: “Isaiah: A Child is Born”

Song of the Day – “I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light” ELW 815

- 1 **I want to walk as a child of the light. I want to follow Jesus.
God set the stars to give light to the world. The star of my life is Jesus.**

*Refrain: In him there is no darkness at all. The night and the day are both alike.
The Lamb is the light of the city of God. Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus.*

- 2 **I want to see the brightness of God. I want to look at Jesus.
Clear Sun of righteousness, shine on my path,
and show me the way to the Father. *Refrain***
- 3 **I'm looking for the coming of Christ. I want to be with Jesus.
When we have run with patience the race,
we shall know the joy of Jesus. *Refrain***

**The Apostles' 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 to the dead. 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*

Stewardship Time

**"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus," by Carol Tornquist
Susan Roegge**

*—We now have Worship Cards in the pews. Please let us know if you are communing,
share a prayer request, and place your card in the offering plate
as a gesture of stewardship as we grow in relationship with God
through the use of our time, talents, and finances—*

**Offertory*

“Doxology” ELW 884

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him, all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heav’nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen**

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

**Great Thanksgiving*

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

**Words of Institution*

P: 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.

**Lord’s Prayer*

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.

Communion Songs

“Christ, Be Our Light” ELW 715

1. **Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.**

*Refrain: Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.*

2. **Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair.
Your word alone has pow’r to save us. Make us your living voice. *Refrain***
3. **Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst.
Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed. *Refrain***
4. **Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for warmth, many are cold.
Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone. *Refrain***
5. **Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong.
Let us be servants to one another, making your kingdom come. *Refrain***

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” ELW 254

- 1 **Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.**
- 2 **Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.**

**Post-Communion Blessing*

P: The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
C: **Amen.**

**Closing Prayer*

SENDING

**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 Song – “Carry the Light”*

**1. In this world of darkness we are given light,
Hope for all the dying. How will they know?**

How will they know ... that Jesus loves them, And He died to save them?

Refrain: Carry the Light, carry the Light.

Go and tell the children they are precious in His sight.

Carry the Light, carry the Light. Go and preach the gospel ‘til there is no more night.

In the name of Jesus Christ, carry the Light;

(2nd time) the Light. Carry the Light.

2. Count them by the millions, blinded slaves to sin.

Inside they are dying. How will they know?

How will they know ... that Jesus loves them, And His heart is breaking? *Refrain*

**Dismissal*

P: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

The altar plants are given today by Gayla Smith in honor of her baptism

Song Credits

“Emmanuel,” by Steve Angrisano from **Songs for Praise & Worship**, Word Music, © 1992. CCLI#973583

“While We Are Waiting, Come,” by Carson & Cloninger, © 1986 Word Music. CCLI#973583

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, © 2006 Augsburg Publishing House.

“Carry the Light,” by Twila Paris from **Songs for Praise & Worship**, Word Music, © 1992. CCLI#973583

Worship Assistants

Communion Assistant: Pam Devlin

Greeter: Lynette Hamilton

Reader: John Williams

Ushers: Angie & Mike Fenner

Pastor: Adam Dichsen

Music Director: Jean Welch

Organist/Pianist: Susan Roegge

Guitarist: Marilyn Dichsen

Drummers: John Demien & Louis Dichsen

Financial Assistants: Ken Devlin & Monica Proefrock

Chancel Committee: Martha Krohe

Coffee Hosts: Judy Dillard & Vicki Robson



Singers:

Maddie Crossin

Kelly Hartz

Adam Krohe

Cole Street

Benen Dichsen

Terri Kimler

Kris Roth

Melissa Street

Church Council Members:

Malinda Carlson

Marilyn Dichsen

Greg Kimler

Monica Proefrock

Ken Devlin

Kelly Hartz

Patty Nelson

Kay Schnitker

Kelly Street

What's Coming Up at Faith?

Sunday, December 21, 9:30am: Worship

Newsletter Deadline

Tuesday, December 23, 6:00pm: Music Rehearsal

Wednesday, December 24, 4:00pm: Family Christmas Eve Service in Great Room

6:30pm: Christmas Concert

7:00pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Thursday, December 25, 9:30am: Christmas Day Service set to the tunes
of Christmas Carols

Saturday, December 27, 4:00-6:00pm: Christmas Cheer in the Great Room

Sunday, December 28, 9:30am: Service of Lessons & Carols

News Updates

Lay Ministry Sign-Up Sheets

Sign-Up Sheets are available at the podium in the gathering area. Please take a moment to sign up to be an Usher, Reader, Greeter, Communion Assistant, Coffee Host, Chancel Committee volunteer, and to Donate Altar Plants. **Thank You!** *We are Gifted to Serve!*

Faith's Little Flock — (Ages 2–7)

gathers each Sunday after the Children's Sermon and returns to the sanctuary in time for Communion. Throughout the rest of December, our crafts and activities will reflect the Christmas season, focusing on the message of hope we have in Jesus.

We are always grateful for our wonderful adult and “big kid” helpers. If you feel called to help with Faith's Little Flock, please reach out to Melissa Street, Liddy Stark, or Pam Devlin. Blessings, *Melissa*

Birthday Card Shower for Martha Sturgeon

One of our long-time members, Martha Sturgeon, will be turning 100 on Christmas Day. Please consider sending her a card. Her new address is:
Martha Sturgeon, c/o Suzanne Mettetal, 2010 Briarturn Dr., Houston TX 77077

Family Friendly Christmas Eve Worship

At 4:00pm on December 24, we are offering a family friendly service with familiar carols, the story of Jesus' birth, and some goodies and cupcakes for the children afterwards. Many of our families with young children, or those with evening commitments, are unable to attend our later service, and this gives them an opportunity to celebrate with us at Faith.

Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship

At 7:00pm on December 24, we will have our traditional Christmas Eve worship with carols on piano and organ, communion, and Silent Night/Night of Silence by candlelight. We cherish this time of worship together and realize it is a big evening for everyone, so we try to keep the service to an hour.

Christmas Morning December 25

Wake up with the shepherds at the manger for our Christmas morning worship at 9:30am. It's a holy celebration of the incarnation with communion liturgy set to the tune of familiar Christmas Carols.

Christmas Eve Concert

We will be offering a concert of musical offerings at 6:30pm before the Traditional Christmas Eve service. If you have music to share, contact Jean Welch.

Need Some Extra Christmas Cheer?

The Christmas spirit doesn't have to end on December 25th! We're excited to invite you and your loved ones to our **Extra Christmas Cheer celebration on Saturday, December 27 from 4:00–6:00pm**. Let's keep the holiday magic alive with an afternoon filled with joy, laughter, and warm memories!

Bring the whole family for some festive fun. Cozy up as we watch a delightful, family-friendly Christmas movie together—perfect for all ages! Get creative at our cookie decorating station, where you can design (and devour!) your own sweet masterpieces. Warm up at the hot cocoa bar with all your favorite toppings, and let the kids' imaginations run wild with Christmas coloring activities. In addition to all the festive fun, we'll also be serving pizza for everyone to enjoy!

Whether you're looking to extend your holiday celebrations or just want to share a little more cheer, this event is the perfect way to Gather in Faith Together. Mark your calendars and sign up today to join us for Extra Christmas Cheer—you won't want to miss it! (Brought to you by the GiFT Team)

First Sunday Schedule January 4

We continue to offer two worship services on the first Sunday of each month. Contemporary at 9:30am and Traditional at 11:00am.

Sunday, January 4 — Epiphany

As we near the 12th day of Christmas, we join the three Magi in celebrating Jesus as a light to all nations. Each of our two services will be filled with light, and we are sent out to shine the Light of the World to others.

Read the Bible in a Year

Join us in reading the Bible over the course of a year, starting after January 1, 2026. We will gather weekly at Faith to discuss our insights and reflections. We'll be utilizing The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble, available on the YouVersion Bible app, to guide our journey. For more information, feel free to reach out to Pam Devlin. Dates and time are to be determined. A sign-up sheet is available in the Gathering Area.

Post-Service Discussions after Worship resume in January

In January, grab some refreshments and join us in the Justice Room to further encounter the readings – and the sermon. *Naomi Hahn*

Doorbell Dinners

Our next time to deliver is **January 12-16**. A sign-up sheet is available in the gathering area on the counter by the Coffee Sales.