

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

Greetings and Welcome

Prelude by the Faith Singers – “Sing We the Song of Emmanuel,” arr. Galbraith

GATHERING

**Call to Worship and Confession*

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.

C: Amen.

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.

Silence for Reflection and Confession

P: Gracious God,

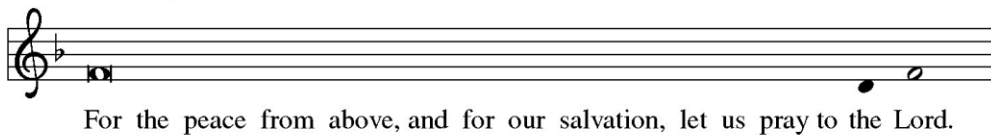
C: have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

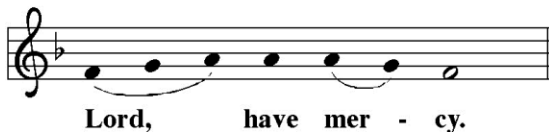
C: Amen.



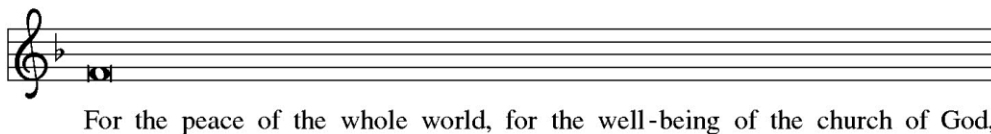
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



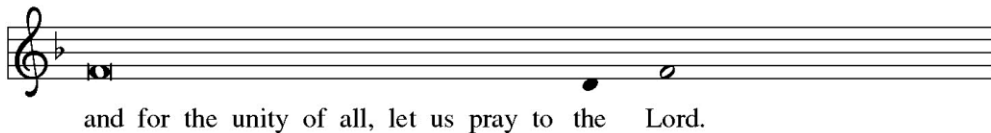
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



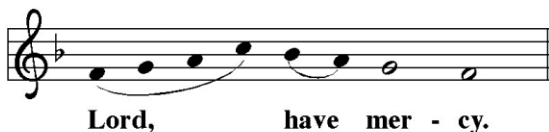
Lord, have mer - cy.



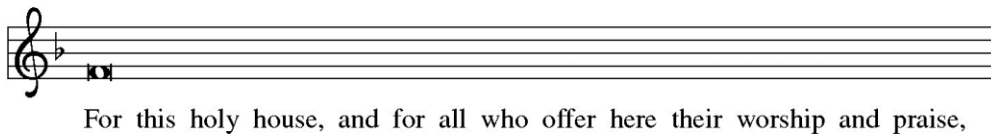
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



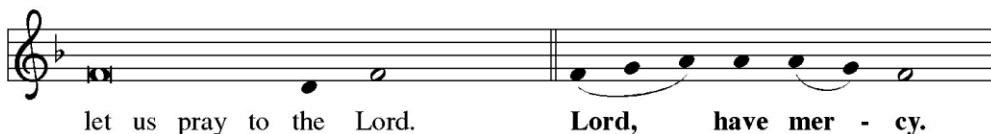
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



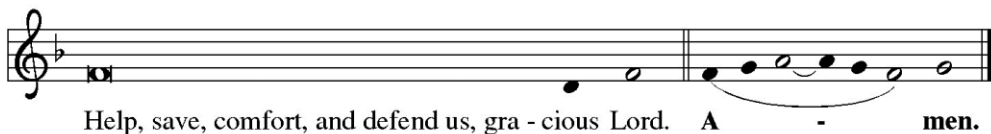
Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. **A - men.**

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

**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 –“He Came Down” ELW 253, v. 4

(piano)

**He came down that we may have Joy;
he came down that we may have Joy;
he came down that we may have Joy;
Hallelujah forevermore.**

WORD

Reading: Psalm 113

Reader: Barb Davenport

¹Praise the LORD!

Praise, O servants of the LORD;
praise the name of the LORD.

²Blessed be the name of the LORD
from this time on and for evermore.

³From the rising of the sun to its setting
the name of the LORD is to be praised.

⁴The LORD is high above all nations,
and his glory above the heavens.

⁵Who is like the LORD our God,
 who is seated on high,
⁶who looks far down
 on the heavens and the earth?
⁷He raises the poor from the dust,
 and lifts the needy from the ash heap,
⁸to make them sit with princes,
 with the princes of his people.
⁹He gives the barren woman a home,
 making her the joyous mother of children.
Praise the LORD!

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

**Gospel Reading:* Luke 1:5-13, 57-80

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 1st chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was a descendant of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God and his section was on duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense-offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified; and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, ‘Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.

In the meantime, Zechariah questioned the angel, for Zechariah and Elizabeth were “getting on in years.” As a result, the angel struck Zechariah mute until these things occurred. An angel also appeared to Mary, Elizabeth’s cousin, telling her that she would give birth to the Son of God and name him Jesus. Mary visited Elizabeth and the two praised the Lord together. We pick up now after Mary returned home.

⁵⁷Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown his great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her.

⁵⁹On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him Zechariah after his father. ⁶⁰But his mother said, 'No; he is to be called John.' ⁶¹They said to her, 'None of your relatives has this name.' ⁶²Then they began motioning to his father to find out what name he wanted to give him. ⁶³He asked for a writing-tablet and wrote, 'His name is John.' And all of them were amazed. ⁶⁴Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue freed, and he began to speak, praising God. ⁶⁵Fear came over all their neighbors, and all these things were talked about throughout the entire hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶All who heard them pondered them and said, 'What then will this child become?' For, indeed, the hand of the Lord was with him.

⁶⁷Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:

⁶⁸'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.

⁶⁹He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his servant David,

⁷⁰as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

⁷¹that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

⁷²Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,

⁷³the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us ⁷⁴that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.

⁷⁶And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

⁷⁷to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.

⁷⁸By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,

⁷⁹to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.'

⁸⁰The child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day he appeared publicly to Israel.

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

Song – “O Come. O Come, Emmanuel” ELW 257, vv. 1, 6, & 7 (organ)

1 **O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

6 **O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer; O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.**

Refrain

7 **O come, O King of nations, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you; restore the broken, make us new. Refrain**

Sermon: "Joy"

Song of the Day – “Hark, the Glad Sound!” ELW 239 (organ)

1 **Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior promised long;
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne and ev'ry voice a song.**

2 **He comes the pris'ners to release, in Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before him burst, the iron fetters yield.**

3 **He comes the broken heart to bind, the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace to enrich the humble poor.**

4 **Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace, your welcome shall proclaim,
and heav'n's eternal arches ring with your beloved name.**

**The Apostles' Creed*

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

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He 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, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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*

Stewardship Time

“Away in a Manger,” traditional
The Children’s choir directed by Maria Snodgrass

Stewardship is about our grateful response to God's grace for us. How do you respond? If you would like to financially support our ministry together, you can place a donation in an offering box or through our website. If you would like to support our ministry together through service, you can find a list of ministry teams online or on our ministry team menu. Consider joining a ministry team, or starting a new one, today!

–Please take a moment to sign into the Welcome Folder in your pew–

**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

“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers” ELW 244 (*organ*)

- 1 **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.**
- 2 **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.**
- 3 **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.**
- 4 **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!**

“Surely It Is God Who Saves Me” (*WOV 635*) (*piano*)

**Surely it is God who saves me; I shall trust and have no fear.
For the Lord defends and shields me and his saving help is near.
So rejoice as you draw water from salvation's healing spring;
In the day of your deliv'rance thank the Lord, his mercies sing.**

**Make God's deeds known to the peoples; tell out his exalted name.
Praise the Lord, who has done great things; all his works God's might proclaim.
Zion, lift your voice in singing; for with you has come to dwell,
In your very midst, the great and Holy One of Israel.**

**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 – “Joy Unto the World”*

(piano)

**1 It was a silent night, a holy night when all the world was sleeping
In a little town on lowly ground, no one knew what was coming.
In a manger, we would find, our humble King
All creation held its breath, when suddenly.**

*Refrain: Your light came breaking through the darkness
Waking every heart with heaven singing joy unto the world!
Our long-awaited Savior, you will reign forever.
We are singing “Joy unto the world!”*

**2 Hope is here so lift your eyes and see His glory and splendor.
Son of God, Love’s pure light, we come before You in wonder.
In a manger, we have found our Mighty King.
All creation held its breath, when suddenly. Refrain**

**Joy to the world! The Lord has come! Let earth receive her King!
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room. And heaven and nature sing!
And heaven and nature sing! And heaven and nature sing!
And heaven and nature sing! All heaven and nature sing! Refrain twice**

“Joy unto the world!” “Joy unto the world!”

**Dismissal*

P: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Song Credits

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“Surely It Is God Who Saves Me,” from **With One Voice**, © 1995 Augsburg-Fortress. Used by permission.

“Joy Unto the World,” arr. Erik Foster, © Be Essential Songs. CCLI#973583

Worship Assistants

Communion Assistant: Ken Devlin
Greeter: Lynette Hamilton
Reader: Barb Davenport
Usher: Patty Nelson
Pastor: Adam Dichsen
Music Director: Jean Welch
Organist: Sandi Watts
Pianist: Jean Welch
Drummer: John Demien
Financial Assistants: Greg Kimler & Patty Nelson
Chancel Committee: Martha Krohe
Coffee Host: Martha Krohe



Singers:

Benen Dichsen	Rigby Dichsen	Adam Krohe	Carol VanderKloot
Louis Dichsen	Kelly Hartz	Kris Roth	
Marilyn Dichsen	Terri Kimler	Melissa Street	

Church Council Members:

Malinda Carlson	Kelly Hartz	Patty Nelson	Monica Proefrock
Ken Devlin	Greg Kimler	Mike Oldenettel	Kelly Street
Marilyn Dichsen			

What's Coming Up at Faith?

Sunday, December 24, 9:30am: Worship

6:30pm: Concert

7:00pm: Christmas Eve Communion Service

Monday, December 25, 9:30am: Christmas Day Service of Lessons & Carols

11:00am: Doorbell Dinners

Sunday, December 31, 9:30am: Worship

Wednesday, January 3, 7:00am: Men's Prayer Group

Saturday, January 6, 9:00am: Men's Breakfast

News Updates

Sunday School

Calling all kids! After worship, fellowship, and snacks, we will gather for music and then head to our classes. We have two classes this year, one for pre-K through Kindergarten and the other for early elementary. If you have questions or are interested in helping, contact Patty Nelson at 217-653-3105.

Doorbell Dinners

Our next times to deliver are Christmas Day (December 25) and January 8-12. A sign-up sheet is available in the gathering area on the counter by the Coffee Sales.

Music Rehearsals

Exaltation Ringers rehearse on some Sundays after the service at 10:45am in the Choir Room. We ring one Sunday each month. If you are interested in ringing, please let me know. Jean Welch, *Music Director*

Book Group - "Jotham's Journey"

Our book this month is a bit different from those of the past. This month, you are invited to read "Jotham's Journey," by Arnold Ytreeide. It tells of the adventure of 10-year-old Jotham, separated from his family, on a mission to find them again. His journey brings him face to face with thieves, robbers, and kidnappers, but also wise men, shepherds, and innkeepers until at last he finds his way to the savior born in Bethlehem. Pastor Adam's family has read this numerous times. Read a chapter each day of Advent, along with the thought-provoking reflection, and prepare your hearts for Christmas.

Faith Directory

Thank you for your updated photos and information for our new digital directory! You can access it online by using this QR code. It is password protected, and the password is "faith". If you notice any changes or would like to add your photo, please contact the church office.



Fairly-Traded Coffee/Tea

Check out the coffee display from Equal Exchange. Simply select the product(s) you would like to purchase, and place the money in the container provided by the display (**\$6.50** regular; **\$7.50** decaf; **\$3.00** tea; **\$2.50** chocolate bars; **\$5.50** hot chocolate; **\$6.50** cashews). Checks should be made out to Faith Lutheran Church with “*coffee*” designated in the memo area.

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!*

Sabbatical Update

If you weren't in worship on November 26, you may have missed the official announcement of Pastor Adam's upcoming sabbatical. At our 2023 Annual Meeting, our congregation extended our support to apply for a Lilly Clergy Renewal grant to fund a sabbatical in 2024. While we did not receive the grant, we feel the time is right for Pastor Adam, his family, and our congregation to take time for renewal. He will be taking the months of February-April to unplug from the demands of pastoral ministry and plug into his identity as a husband, father, and Child of God. More details on goals for him and our congregation will be available in January. In the meantime, a “Sabbatical FAQ” sheet has been prepared. You can pick up a copy at Faith and talk to Pastor Adam or any of our Council members for more information (Mindy Carlson, Ken Devlin, Kelly Hartz, Kelly Street, Greg Kimler, Patty Nelson, Mike Oldenettel, and Monica Proefrock). Together, with Pastor Adam, we are grateful to God for the ministry we share and this opportunity for growth and renewal.