



**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
December 19, 2021

**MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
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**Welcoming all  
Reaching out in love  
Growing together in Christ  
Worshipping and serving in Jesus' name**

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*Office hours are Monday and Wednesday: 9:30 am - 2:00 pm*  
*Tuesday and Thursday by appointment*

**Welcome to Memorial Lutheran Church. As you prepare for Worship, please silence your cell phone, complete the connection card and place it in the offering plate.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."

## **GATHERING**

*Because the spread of Covid-19 is greatly increased by singing, there will be no singing of the liturgy or the hymns. Even in our silence the meaning of the hymn will be present to us.*

## **WELCOME**

**PRELUDE** *"Still, Still, Still"*

- Hayes

*Please kneel or sit*

## **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God for whom we wait,

**in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.**

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, + your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

**Amen.**

*Please stand*

**GATHERING HYMN “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” ELW 254**

*The organist will play the hymn but we will not sing.  
Please read the words as he plays.*

*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.*

*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.*

**GREETING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you always. **And also with you.**

**KYRIE**

**READ RESPONSIVELY**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

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

**Lord, have mercy.**

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 mercy.**

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen, amen.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray together.

**Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

*Please be seated*

## WORD

### FIRST READING

**Micah 5:2-5a**

*The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.*

<sup>2</sup>But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. <sup>3</sup>Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. <sup>4</sup>And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; <sup>5a</sup>and he shall be the one of peace.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

Blessed are you, God of hosts, for you promised to send a son, Emmanuel, who brought your presence among us; and you promise through your Son Jesus to save us from our sin.

As we light these candles, turn again to us in mercy; strengthen our faith in the word spoken by your prophets; restore us and give us life that we may be saved.

O house of David, come,  
**let us rejoice, for the Son of God, Emmanuel, comes to be with us.**  
**Amen.**

### ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING HYMN: Advent 4

**ELW 240**

*“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”*

*The organist will play the hymn but we will not be singing.  
Please read the words as he plays.*

*Light one candle to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.  
He shall bring salvation to Israel, God fulfills the promise.*

*Light two candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.  
He shall feed the flock like a shepherd, gently lead them homeward.*

*Light three candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness  
Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the King of glory.*

*Light four candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness. He is coming, tell the glad tidings. Let your lights be shining!*

**PSALM**

**Luke 1:46b-55**

**READ RESPONSIVELY**

<sup>46b</sup>My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**

**From this day all generations will call me blessed:**

<sup>49</sup>you, the Almighty, have done great things for me  
and holy is your name.

<sup>50</sup>**You have mercy on those who fear you,  
from generation to generation.**

<sup>51</sup>You have shown strength with your arm  
and scattered the proud in their conceit,

<sup>52</sup>**casting down the mighty from their thrones  
and lifting up the lowly.**

<sup>53</sup>You have filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup>**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,  
to remember the promise of mercy,**

<sup>55</sup>the promise made to our forebears,  
to Abraham and his children forever.

**SECOND READING**

**Hebrews 10:5-10**

*The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.*

<sup>5</sup>Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; <sup>6</sup>in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup>Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)." <sup>8</sup>When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law),

<sup>9</sup>then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup>And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Please stand*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia.** Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word. **Alleluia.** (Luke 1:38)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 1st chapter.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

**GOSPEL**

**Luke 1:39-45**

*Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.*

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

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

*Please be seated*

**SERMON**

*Please stand*

**HYMN OF THE DAY** "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

**ELW 257**  
**verses 5 - 8**

*The organist will play the hymn but we will not sing.  
Please read the words as he plays.*

*O come, O 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: *Rejoice! Rejoice!*

*Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.*

*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

*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

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

Refrain

## **NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the 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.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

*A brief silence.*

Nurturing God, you give us life and care for our every need. Use the church's gifts and ministries for your service, bringing your word to all who seek your transforming grace. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Creator God, you proclaim your boundless love for all that you have made. Renew barren lands, polluted waters, and melting ice caps. Make us servants of your creation that brings forth abundant life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Righteous God, you bring down the mighty and lift up the lowly. Strengthen those who seek justice. Bless the work of community organizers, activists, journalists, and all who call our attention to imbalances of power. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate God, you proclaim your love and mercy. Show your lovingkindness to teen parents and those who are pregnant. Comfort any struggling with infertility and those who await test results, are in treatment and hospice care, and others in need (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, you fill the hungry with good things. Bless the feeding ministries of this congregation and community. Guide us to share your bounty with those who hunger or live in poverty. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Faithful God, you stir up the hearts of those who love you. We give you thanks for those who, like Mary, were courageous in their witness (*especially*). Give us such courage until that day when you fulfill all things. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

**Amen.**

## **SHARING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*(Everyone is to remain in their pew for the passing of the peace. To share the peace with someone sitting near you, share a slight bow, wave, or cross your arms with hands touching the opposite arm, a gesture of embrace.)*

*Please be seated*

## **OFFERTORY**



*The Ushers will collect the offering*

## **OFFERTORY ANTHEM**

*Please stand*

## **MEAL**

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray together.

**God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace. Amen.**

### **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

### **PREFACE**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

### **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

*Read Together*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

### **EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,  
the Word made flesh.

## **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

*(1 Corinthians 11:23b-25)*

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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**

Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

*Please be seated*

## **COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION**

*All are welcome at the Lord's table. Please come forward by the center aisle at the usher's direction. If you choose to have wine for communion, take an empty cup from the usher. If you prefer grape juice, receive a pre-filled cup at the altar. If you or a child has never received the sacrament, fold hands to receive a blessing instead. After receiving communion or a blessing, you may choose to remain at the altar for extra time in prayer. When you return to your pew do so by the side aisles. Please deposit the empty cup in the basket.*

*Please stand*

## **COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in eternal life. **Amen.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together.

**Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. Amen.**

## SENDING

### BLESSING

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus for whom we wait. **Amen.**

### SENDING HYMN "All Earth Is Hopeful"

**ELW 266**

*The organist will play the hymn but we will not sing.  
Please read the words as he plays.*

*All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!  
Furrows lie open for God's creative task: this, the  
labor of people who struggle to see how  
God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free.*

*People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:  
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel"; she  
conceived him, "God with us," our brother, whose birth  
restores hope and courage to children of this earth.*

*Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;  
new highways opened, new protocols declared. Almost  
here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace! All  
clear ev'ry gateway, in haste, come out in haste!*

*We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.  
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live in our  
world; he is present, in neighbors we see our  
Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.*

*Please be seated*

### POSTLUDE "Angels We Have Heard on High"

*- McDonald*

### DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near.

**Thanks be to God.**

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