



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
The Birth of Jesus: Journeying with the World
December 21, 2025

MEMORIAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
34 E. Orange Street
Shippensburg, PA 17257-1993
Web Site: memluth.org
E-mail: office@memluth.org
717-532-4614

Welcoming all
Reaching out in love
Growing together in Christ
Worshiping and serving in Jesus' name

Reverend Godfred Effisah
717-532-4614 (church office) or 571-572-0119 (cell)
pastor@memluth.org
Pastor's office hours: Monday to Wednesday: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Children are an active part of Memorial's community of faith! We welcome you to worship each week! Children's bulletins and Quiet Bags (lots of exciting things to do!) are available at the doors coming from the parking lot. Please take one of each as they may help your children bring smiles into our time of worship!

Welcome to Memorial Lutheran Church. As you prepare for Worship, please silence your cell phone.

INTRODUCTION

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

GATHERING

WELCOME

PRELUDE *"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"*

- Lau

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Please kneel or stand as you are able.

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

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.

Silence is kept for reflection.

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.

We invite the family lighting our Advent Wreath to come forward.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING HYMN: Advent 4

ELW 257 vs. 4

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

*O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan’s
tyranny; from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict’ry o’er the grave. Rejoice! Rejoice!
Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.*

Please remain standing or stand as you are able.

GATHERING HYMN *“All Earth Is Hopeful”*

WOV 629

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.

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 hinders our faith, that
eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with
the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.**

Please be seated.

WORD

FIRST READING

Isaiah 7:10-16

*An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat
to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne
and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that
human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the
sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!*

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN *“There’s a Star in the East”*

WOV 645

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia. The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel. ***Alleluia.*** (Matt. 1:23)

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 2nd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL

Luke 2:1-20

¹ In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ All went to their own towns to be registered. ⁴ Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. ⁵ He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room. ⁸ Now in that same region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the

people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” ¹⁵ When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us.” ¹⁶ So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the child lying in the manger. ¹⁷ When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child, ¹⁸ and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, ¹⁹ and Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told them.

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

Please be seated.

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

(Program participant list on the back of your bulletin.)

HYMN “Away in a Manger”

WOV 644

REFLECTION

Please stand as you are able.

HYMN OF THE DAY “Before the Marvel of This Night”

WOV 636

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 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.

A brief silence.

Risen Lord, ignite in our hearts a passion for prayer. Make our hearts yearn for your presence, helping us to seek you with all our being. In this Year of Prayer, teach us to pray with deep conviction, and never for shallow wishes, beliefs, or with a fleeting faith in you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

O Lord, to whom no one is a stranger, look with compassion on those without a place to live. Comfort the homeless as they walk their difficult paths, and give us a kind heart to help the homeless in their need as we unite our voices in a call for justice. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill (*especially*). God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. 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.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

Please be seated.

SENIOR CHOIR OFFERTORY “Holy Child within the Manger”

WOV 638

The Ushers will collect the offering.

Please stand as you are able.

OFFERTORY RESPONSE

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow”

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.*

MEAL

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray together.

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.

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 - ADVENT

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord. For he assumed at his first coming the lowliness of human flesh, and so fulfilled the design you formed long ago, and opened for us the way to eternal salvation, that, when he comes again in glory and majesty and all is at last made manifest, we who watch for that day may inherit the great promise in which now we dare to hope. And so, with Angels and Archangels, with Thrones and Dominions, and with all the hosts and Powers of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. Ho -
san-na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

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

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.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with you light. Bring the gift of peace on earth. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

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

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.

LAMB OF GOD

page 191

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

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 as you are able.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together.

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.

SENDING

BLESSING

May the God who begins all holy endings stir in you the grace to release what no longer gives life. May Christ, whose coming is near, bring to completion the work of love that has already begun in you. And may the + Holy Spirit keep watch with you in the quiet places, so that all in you that is not yet Christ may gently fall away.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN *"I Wonder As I Wander"*

WOV 642

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

Please be seated.

POSTLUDE *"He Whom Shepherds Long Came Praising"*

- Held

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Wednesday, December 24 - 7:30 pm

(musical prelude begins at 7:15 pm)

Christmas Day Worship Service

Thursday, December 25 - 10:00 am



Children's Christmas Program Participants

Sofia Kyle	<i>Narrator</i>
Toryn Wilson	<i>Narrator</i>
Olivia Creek	<i>Narrator</i>
Robbie Creek	<i>Narrator</i>
Ellie Povilaitis	<i>Mary</i>
Noah Varner	<i>Joseph</i>
Piper Alspaugh	<i>Angel</i>
Myla Alspaugh	<i>Angel</i>
Lillian Creek	<i>Angel</i>
McKenna Leach	<i>Shepherd</i>
Jillian Leach	<i>Shepherd</i>
Evan Kyle	<i>Shepherd</i>
Liam Kyle	<i>Shepherd</i>
Bella Sailhammer	<i>Shepherd</i>
Liam Creek	<i>Camel</i>
Will Houser	<i>Cow</i>
Patrick Creek	<i>Wiseman</i>
Oliver Povilaitis	<i>Wiseman</i>
Pastor Godfred	<i>Wiseman</i>



Mary Kay Dagenhart
Karen Larson
Doug & Pat Maun
Jeanne Naugle
Dorothy Railing
Trina Ruth
All Caregivers



Pastor
Pastor Godfred Effisah
Organist & Pianist
Nancy Fogelsanger
Senior Choir / Bell Choir
Director
Kathy Kerr
Parish Coordinator
Amy Piper