

First Lutheran Church

Get Ready. The Days are Coming.

Advent 2021

*An asterisk * invites you to stand in body or in spirit, and you are invited to read responses found in **bold**.
You are welcome to sing during worship if you are vaccinated!
Welcome to First Lutheran Church!*

Gathering in God's Presence

Prelude — “Come Down, O Love Divine”

Setting by Sondra Tucker
Handbell Choir

*Come down, O Love divine; seek thou this soul of mine and visit it with thine own ardor glowing;
O Comforter, draw near; within my heart appear and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.
-Bianco da Siena, from hymn no. 804*

Welcome

***Call to Worship**

The time is surely coming
when our love for one another
and all of God's children will increase.

**We would live into that time
with hope and joy.**

The day is surely coming
when God will strengthen our hearts
with humility and holiness.

We would anticipate that day

**as we reach out to serve
all of those in need.**

The days are surely coming
when we will walk the paths
of faithfulness and steadfast love.

**We begin this journey,
knowing that all of God's promises
will be fulfilled.**

***Gathering Hymn** — no. 249

“On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry”

*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!

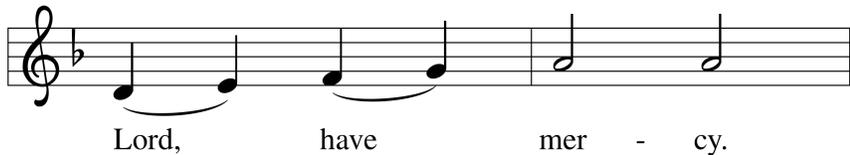
Through the power of the Holy Spirit,
† your sins are forgiven.
You are children of the Most High,
inheritors of the eternal promise,
and recipients of divine mercy.
God strengthens you anew to follow the way of
peace.

Amen.

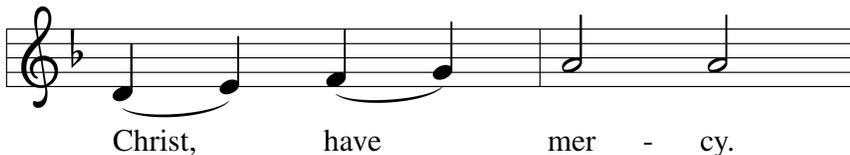
*Kyrie

“Turn to Us Again”

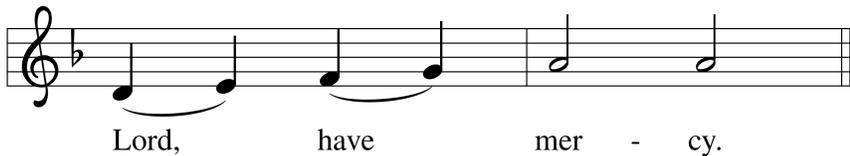
Turn to us again, O God our Savior. Send to us your gift of Love. Lord, have mercy.



Show us your compassion, O God our Lord, grant us your salvation. Christ, have mercy.



Come and bring salvation; we wait, O God; may your glory dwell in us. Lord, have mercy.



*Canticle of Praise — “We Are Awaiting the Coming”



1 We are a - wait - ing the com - ing of Je - sus,
2 We are the vine you have plant - ed and tend - ed;
3 We bring these signs of our lives whol - ly giv - en;



yearn - ing in dark - ness for light and for peace,
we are the wheat you have wa - tered and sown.
let them for us be Christ's wine and Christ's bread



long - ing at last to re - joice on that
Take our first - fruits, take our bowed heads of
poured out in love for the heal - ing of



day when all peo - ple join in this feast.
grain, in - crease them and make them your own.
all and bro - ken that all may be fed.

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy: Peace

Read by the Reese Family

As we reflect on the foundation of our faith in our lives,
we gather together around the candle of peace.
The home we long for is a home that knows peace—
peace that rests between us and our grief,
peace around our anxiety,
peace between us and our self-criticism,
peace amidst our relationships,
peace at the core of our being,
peace hovering through and in our world.
The home we long for is a home that knows peace.
So today we light the candle of peace—as a reminder and as a prayer.
Let it be so. Amen.

Two candles are lit while stanza 2 of “Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah” (hymn no. 240) is sung:

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

Hearing & Responding to Scripture

A Reading from Hebrew Scriptures — Malachi 3:1-4

1See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. 2But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; 3he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the Lord in righteousness. 4Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the Lord as in the days of old and as in former years.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people. **Thanks be to God.**

Canticle — Luke 1:68-79 (from *ELW Morning Prayer*)

The congregation is invited to sing the refrain and all verses together

Refrain

In the ten - der com - pas - sion of our God the

dawn from on high shall break up - on us.

1 Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel,
 2 You have raised up for us a might - y Savior,
 3 Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies,
 4 to show mercy to our forebears,
 5 This was the oath you swore to our fa - ther Abraham:
 6 free to worship you without fear,
 7 And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,
 8 to give God's people knowledge of sal - vation
 9 In the tender compassion of our God
 10 to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death,

1 you have come to your people and set them free.
 2 born of the house of your ser - vant David. *Refrain*
 3 from the hands of all who hate us,
 4 and to re - member your ho - ly covenant.
 5 to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
 6 holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life. *Refrain*
 7 for you will go before the Lord to pre - pare the way,
 8 by the for - give - ness of their sins.
 9 the dawn from on high shall break up - on us,
 10 and to guide our feet into the way of peace. *Refrain*

A Reading from the Epistles — Philippians 1:3-11

3I thank my God every time I remember you, 4constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, 5because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. 6I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. 7It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. 8For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. 9And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight 10to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, 11having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people. **Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel Acclamation



*Come to us, O God. Be the hope with - in our long-ing. Dwell with-in us,



O Light of the world: O God-with - us, Em - man - u - el.

*Gospel — Luke 3:1-6

The Gospel of Luke, the 3rd chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

1In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, 2during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, 4as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

“The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

‘Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.

5Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

6and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

*Hymn — no. 257, stanzas 1, 2, & 5

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

*Affirmation of Faith — 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 power of 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

God of days gone by, and God of the here and now—
We know what it’s like to be speechless and awestruck.
We know what it’s like to change plans and leave everyone whispering.
What we don’t always know is what the next right step is. We crave your voice in our
ear—guiding our steps, revealing and preparing the way.

So today, God, we pause to give you thanks for the things that leave us speechless—
for love at first sight,
for the moments when the doctor says the scan is clear,
for the family that welcomes us home,
for every small miracle and concentrated beauty in our life—
we are awestruck.
God, we are so deeply grateful.

But in between whispers of deep gratitude, we remember the suffering and despair,
grief and loss, violence and injustice in our world.
With every young person killed in the street, we lose our breath.
With every threat of violence, we lose our words.
With every updated report on climate change, we lose our peace.
And the cycle goes on and on and on.
God, hear our prayers for a hurting world.

Creator God, who breathed life into us, we remember the words of the prophecy: Every valley shall be
filled, the crooked made straight, the rough ways made smooth. Move between us and our despair. Give us
a voice to speak gratitude in the face of beauty, and justice in the face of destruction. Give us words to heal
where there is hurt and to invite where there is isolation. Help us to never lose your words of love and
hope. So today we pray the prayer your son taught us to pray, saying...

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

Offering

Music at the Offering

“Comfort, Comfort Now My People

Setting by Jayne Southwick Cool
Rebecca Carpenter, flute

Please leave an offering in the basket outside the sanctuary, mail a check to the office, or give online: <https://tithely.com/give?c=283920>.

Departing to Serve God’s World

Announcements

*Sending Hymn — no. 264

“There’s a Voice in the Wilderness”

*Blessing & Dismissal

As you leave *this* service, *your* service begins:

Comfort the homesick.

Open your doors to others.

Seek sanctuary.

Be brave enough to go home by another way.

And remember that here in God’s house, all are welcomed—so come back soon.

In the name of our Foundation—God, Spirit, and Son—

go in peace. Get ready. The days are coming.

Thanks be to God.

*Postlude — “Prepare the Royal Highway”

Setting by Jayne Southwick Cool
Rebecca Carpenter, flute

Acknowledgements

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“Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy”; “Prayers of Intercession”; “Blessing and Dismissal” written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org, from the Advent series *Close to Home*, adapted for local use.

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Worship Assistants

Interim Pastor: Bill Nelsen
Supply Pastor: Ted Kunze
Director of Music: Emily Bruflat
Audio/Video: Leif Hammar

Greeter/Reader: Aileen Bipes
Ushers: Patrick Pehrson
Advent Candle Blessing: Reese Family
Musicians: Handbell Choir, Rebecca Carpenter

The Advent Color

In the ELCA, blue is the liturgical color for Advent, and it appears in our Jesse Tree paraments, the Advent candles, and the alpha and omega banner. Traditionally the color for Advent and Lent was purple, and officially it remains so in the Roman Catholic Church. About thirty years ago, the ELCA changed to blue for Advent because of purple's association with Lent. Blue, considered more hopeful and less penitential, was also associated with the Scandinavian tradition. It is the color of the oceans, lakes, and sky which surround the green earth that we walk on. In "Beauty," John O'Donohue describes blue as "the color of faraway." He maintains that "distance maintains its faraway-ness in blue." This color expresses our anticipation of the birth of Christ on our earth.

Announcements

- The giving tree is decorated with envelopes with cards enclosed for you to donate to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund in honor or in memory of a loved one this season.
- Holiday Vouchers donations are still being accepted. Note "holiday voucher" in your check memo.
- Midweek Advent Services: Presented by our Confirmation Youth. As an important part of our Advent season, our Confirmation youth will be leading our midweek Advent services. These will be relatively short but meaningful services held in the Gathering Space at 6:30pm on the following dates: Wednesday, Dec. 8, and Wednesday, Dec. 15. Please join with our youth during these special services as we prepare for Christmas and the coming of our Lord. Note: On Wednesday, Dec. 22, there will be a "Longest Night" service.
- Please remember to RSVP for Christmas Eve Services online or just let Angela know which service you plan to attend.
- A few poinsettias are still available to purchase to be set in the sanctuary on Dec 24. Poinsettias can be taken home between Dec. 26-Jan 2.

Prayers

- We pray for the family and friends of Pastor Heidi Hagstrom who died on Nov 26.
- We pray for Gwen Powell who is beginning treatment for cancer.
- We pray for Betty Thompson's sister, Nancy Maag, and Ellen Conover who are both recovering from surgery.
- We lift up prayers for those on our long-term list: Tom and Deb Johnson, Tom Michels, Abigail Christenson, Betty Gustafson, Elgene Lund, Chuck Petry, Bob Cady, Joan Williams, Myrene Bunge, Glen Stryker, Erika Schuldt, Tim Sebring, Mary Pieklo, Gloria Kane, and Urusla McRostie; and we pray for for all those families continuing to adjust to the loss of loved ones, including the families of Beverly Wetherill, Tom Stenson, Mary Lee Denley, Marion Peterson, and Bob Isenberg.