



## December 1, 2024 ☩ First Sunday of Advent

An asterisk \* invites you to stand in body or in spirit, and you are invited to read aloud responses found in **bold**.

**We welcome you to First Lutheran Church!**

*“God’s Work. Our Hands. To serve ALL people.”*

*P: Indicates the presider throughout the service. AM: Indicates the Assisting Minister throughout the service.*

### we gather

**Prelude** - “Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying” by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

#### Words of Welcome

\***Hymn** — no 244

“Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers”

#### \***Confession and Forgiveness**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

**Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of mercy, **we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

God of might, **we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.**

God in our midst, **we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through ☩ Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

**Amen.**

#### \***Apostolic Greeting**

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

\***Kyrie** – page 203, from *ELW, Setting 10*

**\*Prayer of the Day**

P: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

## **we LISTEN and RESPOND**

**A Reading from the prophet Jeremiah— Jeremiah 33:14-16**

*In the Old Testament, “righteousness” often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today’s reading, Jerusalem’s future name—“The LORD is our righteousness”—proclaims that God is even now working salvation for Israel.*

14 The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. 15 In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. 16 In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

**Psalm 25:1-10** - *the psalm will be read responsively today by whole verse.*

*To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul. (Ps. 25:1)*

- 1** To you, O LORD,  
I lift up my soul.
- 2** My God, I put my trust in you; let me not be put to shame,  
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
- 3** Let none who look to you be put to shame;  
rather let those be put to shame who are treacherous.
- 4** Show me your ways, O LORD,  
and teach me your paths.
- 5** Lead me in your truth and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.
- 6** Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,  
for they are from everlasting.
- 7** Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;  
remember me according to your steadfast love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.
- 8** You are gracious and upright, O LORD;  
therefore you teach sinners in your way.
- 9** You lead the lowly in justice  
and teach the lowly your way.
- 10** All your paths, O LORD, are steadfast love and faithfulness  
to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.

## **A Reading from Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians — 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13**

*Upon Timothy's report from the congregation at Thessalonica, Paul is exuberant with gratitude for them. In this passage from his letter, Paul voices overflowing thanks, joy, and blessings for the people of this growing church.*

9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?  
10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

11 Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. 12 And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. 13 And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

**\*Gospel Acclamation** — page 205, from *ELW, Setting 10*

### **\*Gospel — Luke 21:25-36**

*God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.*

The Gospel of Luke, the 21st Chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

[Jesus said:] 25 "There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. 26 People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. 27 Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in a cloud' with power and great glory. 28 Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

29 Then he told them a parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees; 30 as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. 31 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. 32 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. 33 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

34 "Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, 35 like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. 36 Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man."

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

**Sermon** —

Pastor Chris Culuris

**\*Hymn** — no. 436

"Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying"

### **The Apostles' Creed**

P: Together let us profess our faith:

**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**

AM: As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

*A brief silence.*

God of righteousness, your people live in hopeful expectation of your coming. Fill your church with renewed passion for our shared mission, and deepen our relationships with other Christians and other faith traditions in our local community and across the world. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the cosmos, all creation shows that your presence is near. Help us sense your goodness and love in the sun and moon, in sprouting leaves and bare branches, in the roaring sea and quiet breeze. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of the nations, your reign extends over all principalities and powers. Give leaders and all in authority hearts for justice and peace. Encourage efforts to enact policies that benefit the common good. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of change, you accompany us through life's transitions. Be near to all who are changing jobs, moving, welcoming children, or facing the loss of loved ones. Sustain those who are ill or suffering. In times of change, remind us of your steadfast love. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of community, your Spirit holds us together. Sustain our care for one another. Inspire us to seek new ways to live together and to embrace the diversity of thought and identity in our communities. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God of memory, we give you thanks for faithful ones who have died. Tend to our grief and sorrow with renewed trust in your promise of abundant and eternal life. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

**Sign of Peace-** P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.** Please offer one another some sign of Christ's peace.

**Offering** - "Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying" by Johann Gottfried Walther (1684-1748)



**\*Offering Prayer**

AM: Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## **we SHARE the meal**

**\*Great Thanksgiving & Preface** — page 206, *from ELW, Setting 10*

P: 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.**

P: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise..... (*Here the minister continues with the proper preface, concluding:*) we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**\*Holy, Holy, Holy** — page 207, *from ELW, Setting 10*

**\*Words of Institution and The Lord's Prayer**

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.

Holy God, prepare our hearts for Christ's coming and strengthen us as we pray: **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.**

**\*Invitation to the Table**

P: God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

**Distribution of Communion** - *we will be serving Holy Communion continuously today.*

**"Lamb of God"** — page 208, *from ELW, Setting 10*

Hymn — no 715

“Christ, Be Our Light”

Hymn —no 248

“People, Look East”

### Prayer After Communion

P: Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.

**Amen.**

## we go in peace

### Announcements

\*Sending Hymn — no. 260

“The King Shall Come”

### \*Blessing & Dismissal

P: God of endings and beginnings,  
God in the darkness and the light,  
God, our hope for the journey,  
✠ bless and keep you now and forever.

**Amen.**

AM: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

**Thanks be to God.**

\***Postlude** - “Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying” by Paul Manz (1919-1009)

**Stewardship Give Away** - Annalise Rivas

### **Acknowledgments**

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### **Worship Assistants**

Pastor: Chris Culuris  
Assisting Minister: Mary Spear  
Musician: David Fienen

Ushers: Tom Thorkelson  
Bread Baker: Diane Stewart  
Audio/Video: Rachel Ribar

Communion Preparers: Mike and Diane Stewart  
Communion Servers: Sharon Domeier, Grace Timm

## **Announcements**

- We are having our first annual congregation meeting today following worship. We will elect our Church Council members, ratify our congregation's constitution and take a first look at the 2025 budget.
- The Fellowship Committee will be serving coffee and refreshments after service today.
- Wednesdays at First: 5:30pm Dinner Starts, 6:00 Children's Music in the Chapel, 6:30 Worship in the Sanctuary, 7:00 Education in the Classrooms, 7:00 Bell Choir, 7:30 Youth Group (1st Wednesdays). The youth will be going Christmas Caroling this Wednesday. Meet at church by 7:30pm and wear layers!
- We are still accepting pledges for 2025. You may turn them in to Karen in the church office.
- **Volunteers Needed:** We are looking for cooks, servers, and clean up crew for our Wednesday meals in December. Contact Rachel Szybnski with any questions [rszybnski@gmail.com](mailto:rszybnski@gmail.com)
- Sign up to sponsor your Christmas Altar Poinsettias. Sign up sheet is on the table in the Gathering Space.
- The four Gospels (Mathew, Mark, Luke and John) tell similar, yet different accounts of Jesus's life. How do these differences show the interests of their authors and- more importantly - how do they work together to give us a more well-rounded picture of Jesus? Joining us for either or both of these sessions, Wednesday at 7:00pm in the Pioneer Parlor. Dec. 4th "Why 4 Gospels?" Dec. 11th "Birth Stories(?)"
- Come to the First Forum on Sunday, Dec 15, after worship to learn more about the activities and programming that we have on Wednesday nights. Learn about opportunities for fellowship, worship, education for all, and ways to help.
- MUSICORUM will present their winter concert "Christmas with Musicorum" on Saturday, December 14 at 6:30 p.m. at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 720 S Second Street, Mankato. Musicorum is a Mankato-based chamber choir and will be singing works by Mendelssohn, Praetorius, and Rachmaninoff, as well as contemporary composers and traditional hymns. Tickets available at the door - \$15 general admission, \$5 students and youth. Information is available at [musicorum-mn.org](http://musicorum-mn.org). Please join Musicorum for a beautiful evening of music!
- Pastor Chris will be away from Dec. 3 - 9. If you have an emergency, please contact the church office.

## **Prayers**

We lift up prayers for those on our long-term list: Elgene Lund, Bob Cady, Joan Williams, Betty Gustafson, Karen Wendroth, Paul Aasen, Shirley Storkson, Ella Twaddle, Tim Schwartz, Gretchen Bray, Jim Wendroth, Dale Rettke, Dorothy Lutz, Jan Holte, Byron Larson, Lenore Schnobrich, Gloria Kane, Judy Fienen, David Ribar, Harvey Kane, Erika Schuldt and Laurie Dietrich.

## **Joyous month, Members!**

This month our Building Renovation mortgage will be below a million! Thank you to all who have faithfully helped pay this down. Our original mortgage in 2012 was \$2,180,215 and in just over twelve years we have paid off more than half of it. The current balance will be \$995,316 in December. Again, we can't thank all of you enough for your generosity.

