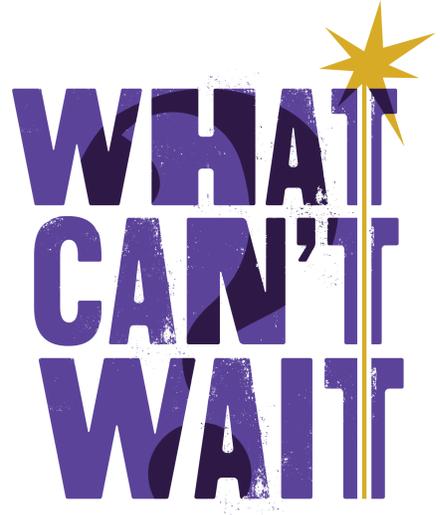


December 18, 2022

Fourth Sunday of Advent

You are invited to read responses found in **bold*
**An asterisk * invites you to stand in body or in spirit*

Welcome to First Lutheran Church!



we GATHER here

Prelude — “Sarabande” Setting by S. Drummond Wolff

Words of Welcome

***Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be God’s name forever.

Amen.

Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep.
Let us confront our sins,
and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.

Gracious God,

**We long to be as courageous as Joseph—
Brave enough to trust your call,
And strong enough to hold onto one another.
There are so many places in the world that could use
our courage.**

You know them, but we do too.

So when fear takes over, forgive us.

**When our knees shake and our words fail, forgive
us.**

**When self-hatred is easier than self-love,
forgive us.**

**When walls are more convenient than
peace, forgive us.**

**When pessimism is more convenient
than hope, forgive us.**

**When our comfort is more important
than our neighbor, forgive us.**

**You invite us to be courageous. Forgive
us.**

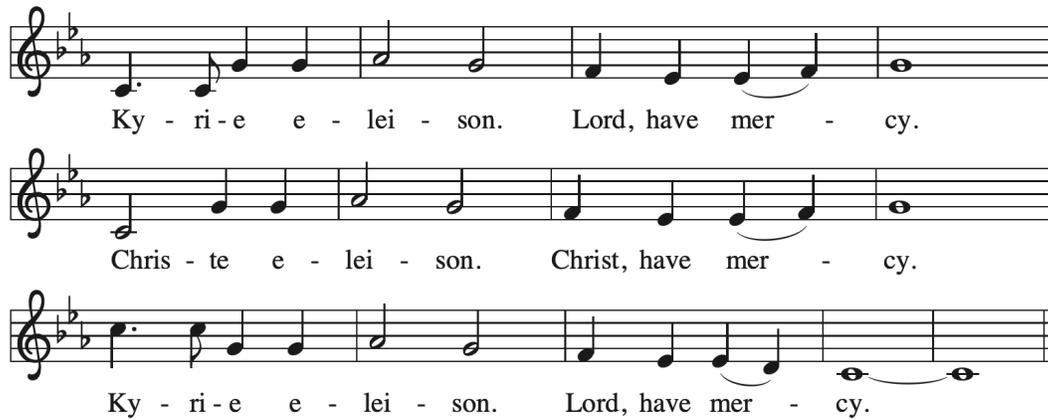
Amen.

Go forth boldly in the assurance that your
sins are forgiven
in the name of the one who is coming and is
already here,

✠ Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

***Kyrie** — from *All Creation Sings*, Setting Twelve



Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

Chris - te e - lei - son. Christ, have mer - cy.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

***Prayer of the Day**

May God be with you. **And also with you.** Let us pray.

We are courageous

When we are vulnerable.

We are courageous

When we are honest with ourselves.

We are courageous

When we extend words of welcome.

We are courageous

When we invite others to sit with us.

We are courageous

When we proclaim the love of God to a broken world.

We are courageous

When we say that love cannot wait.

So let us be courageous—

Let us worship Holy God. Amen.

***Advent Candle Lighting Litany: Love Can't Wait**

Voice A: I will wait for the DMV.

Voice B: I will wait for the right moment.

Voice A: I will wait for the fire to grow.

Voice B: I will wait for the popcorn to pop.

Voice A: I will wait for political reform.

Voice B: I will wait for the light to turn green.

Voice A: I will wait to leave a message at the beep.

Voice B: I will wait for my kids to come home.

Voice A: I will wait for the paint to dry.

Voice B: I will wait for the right words to say.

Voice A: I will wait for Christmas to arrive.

Voice B: I will wait for a lot of things, but I will not wait for a chance to share love.

Voice A: The world needs love. We need love.

Voice B: So today we light the candle of love to remind us to spread love wherever we go.

May we be courageous enough to love our neighbors as ourselves. Amen.

All sing "Wait for the Lord" (hymn no. 262) while the Advent wreath is lit:

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near. Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

we LISTEN and RESPOND

A Reading from the book of Isaiah — Isaiah 7:10-16

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” Then Isaiah said: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? 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. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. 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.”

The Light shines in the darkness, **and the darkness cannot overcome it.**

Canticle — Hymn no. 251

“My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness”
Based on Luke 1:46-55, Mary’s Magnificat

A Reading from Paul’s Letter to the Romans — Romans 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Light shines in the darkness, **and the darkness cannot overcome it.**

*Gospel Acclamation — hymn no. 257, stanza 1

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lowly exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

*Gospel — Matthew 1:18-25

The Gospel of Matthew, the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”

which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

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

Sermon — "When You Care Enough to Send the Very Best"

Pastor Chris Culuris

***Hymn** —

"Unexpected and Mysterious"
Sung to the tune JOYOUS LIGHT

1. Un - ex - pect - ed and mys - te - rious is the gen - tle word of grace.
2. In a mo - men - tar - y meet - ing of e - ter - ni - ty and time,
3. We are called to pon - der mys - t'ry and a - wait the com - ing Christ,

Ev - er - lov - ing and sus - tain - ing is the peace of God's em - brace.
Mar - y learned that she would car - ry both the mor - tal and di - vine.
to em - bod - y God's com - pas - sion for each frag - ile hu - man life.

If we fal - ter in our cour - age and we doubt what we have known,
Then she learned of God's com - pas - sion, of E - liz - a - beth's great joy,
God is with us in our long - ing to bring heal - ing to the earth,

God is faith - ful to con - sole us as a moth - er tends her own.
and she ran to greet the wom - an who would rec - og - nize her boy.
while we watch with joy and won - der for the prom - ised Sav - ior's birth.

***Affirmation of Faith** — The 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**

Keeping awake as we watch for Christ, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

Hear your church, O God, as we pray for all who belong to Jesus Christ. Where the church is scorned, preserve it; where the church is privileged, grant it humility. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Hear your earth, O God, as we pray for its healing and care. Protect the grapevine and the mighty cedar, the mountains and seas and all that is in them. Give life, that all life may call on your name. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Hear the nations, O God, as we pray for those who hold power and authority over people and lands. Help those who create and uphold good laws and those working to reform what is unjust, that the world might better reflect your grace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Hear those in need, O God, as we pray for all who face uncertainty: refugees and immigrants, those who are imprisoned, and those without work, housing, food, or health care. Bring good news to all in need of hope. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Hear this community of faith, O God, as we pray for families and friends who gather in this season, for travelers and hosts, and for those who will work or serve others this Christmas. Give peace to those experiencing loss, loneliness, anxiety, or any kind of imbalance around the holiday season. Let the peace of Emmanuel, God-with-us, shine in every heart. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Hear all who mourn, O God, as we remember the lives of our beloved dead. Encourage the living to learn from our ancestors in faith as we follow your call. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You hear the cries of our hearts, O Lord. Fill us with hopeful expectation, that in each day and hour we may love and serve our neighbors, in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Offering

Music at the Offering

"Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming"

Setting by David N. Johnson

we SHARE the meal

*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.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

*Sanctus — from *Setting Twelve, All Creation Sings*

"Holy, Holy, Holy"

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and
God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.
Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

*Words of Institution and The Lord's Prayer

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.

In gratitude to God, we pray the prayer Jesus taught us: **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 Communion

Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God, who has come to save you.
All are welcome here at Christ's Table.
God can't wait to meet you here.

Distribution of Communion

Canticle — hymn no. 250
Hymn — no. 272

“Blessed Be the God of Israel”
“Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming”

Communion Blessing and Prayer

God of abundance,
we give you thanks that in this holy meal
you have invited us to feast with you and one another.
May the taste of your love remain with us,
and may our words and our work in your name
invite others into your bountiful grace.
Send us from your table to proclaim your presence,
even as we await the glorious coming of Christ our Savior.

we DEPART for service

Announcements

***Sending Hymn** — no. 723

Sung in this format: Stanzas 1 & 2, REFRAIN, Stanzas 3 & 4, REFRAIN

“Canticle of the Turning”

*Blessing & Dismissal

What can't wait? **Hope for a better day.**
What can't wait? **Peace and repentance, among and within us.**
What can't wait? **Joy and delight! Our cup runs over.**

What can't wait? **Love for self, love for neighbor, love for Creator, and love for creation.**
God is waiting, and God is ready. **Starting here and now—let us worship Holy God. Amen.**
Go in peace. Christ is near. **Thanks be to God.**

***Postlude** — “Vom Himmel hoch, da komm ich her”

Setting by Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau

Acknowledgements

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Worship Assistants

Pastor: Chris Culuris

Director of Music: Emily Bruflat

Music Leader: Sophie Martinez

Audio/Video: Rachel Ribar, Ella Twaddle

Greeter: Lewis Nowell &

Reader: Nancy Timm

Ushers: Gordon Long

Acolytes: Aaven Twaddle

Communion Preparers: Shirb & John Sylvester

Communion Servers: Nancy Timm, Shanon Nowell

Bread Bakers:

Announcements

- Flowers today are given by the Szybnski family in honor of **Marcia and Larry Kiewel's 50th wedding anniversary, congratulations!**
- **Devotional booklets** will continue to be available in the Heartbeat this coming week. Please contact Angela if you would like a black and white version printed for you. Hard copies are available in the gathering area!
- Please attend our **congregation meeting on Jan. 29**. Your participation is very important!
- Our **last Advent Midweek Worship** featuring *Holden Evening Prayer* by Marty Haugen will be this Wednesday, Dec. 21, at 7:00 p.m.
- **The Giving Tree:** The Altar Guild invites you to contribute to the Giving Tree. This money will be directed to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. This is a congregational fund that supports people in need. Thank you for your contributions.
- **We encourage youth of all ages to attend worship on Sundays!** Children are a blessing and we don't mind a little noise! Busy Bags are available in the back and there are lots of activities near the Pray Ground rug!
- While we are not currently staffing our **Nursery**, it is fully functional and available for families to utilize during our worship. For our Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Services: the Nursery is Available & it Will Be Staffed!
- The Staples and Roemhildt Families will be serving fellowship refreshments after worship today.

Prayers

- We lift up prayers for those on our long-term list: Elgene Lund, Chuck Petry, Bob Cady, Joan Williams, Myrene Bunge, Glenn Stryker, Erika Schuldt, Claire Cardwell, Ursula McRostie, Karen Wendroth, Ellis Jones, Allen Storkson, and Gene Roemhildt.
- We pray for Dan Polzin who is mourning the loss of his father Ken.
- We pray for the family of Grant Block who passed away on November 16.
- We pray for the family of Galen Ribar who passed away on November 30.
- We pray for all those mourning the recent loss of loved ones.
- We pray for peace around the world; for all affected by natural disasters; and, for healing and wholeness in the lives of all who are ill.
- We pray for Stu Nesburg who is mourning the recent loss of his brother John.
- We pray for Paul Aasen who was recently injured.