

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 + Sunday, December 19, 2021

Gathering in God's Presence

Prelude — “Blest Be the God of Israel”

Setting by Mark Sedio

Blessed be the God of Israel who comes to set us free and raises up new hope for us: a Branch from David's tree.

So have the prophets long declared that with a mighty arm God would turn back our enemies and all who wish us harm.

Welcome

***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,
and God's amazing grace,
☩ 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.**

*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.**

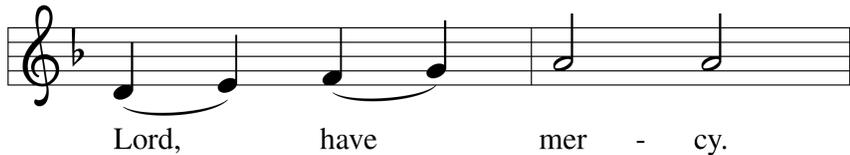
The days are surely coming
when we will walk the paths
of faithfulness and steadfast love.

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

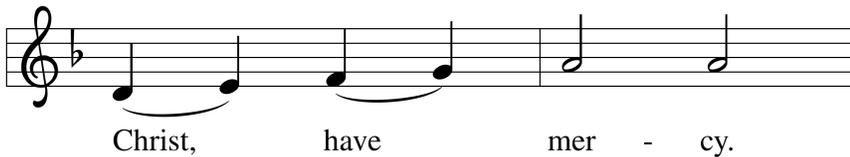
*Kyrie — FLC Liturgy for Advent

“Turn to Us Again”

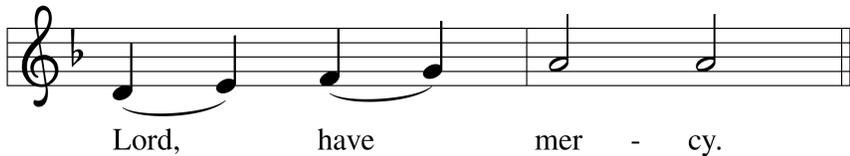
Turn to us again, O God our Savior. Send to us your gift of Love. Lord, have mercy.



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: Love

Read by the McHugh Family

God's love is like an open door.
God's love is the streetlight that guides us home.
God's love is a warm bed to fall into.
God's love is a table with room for you.
God's love is a crackling fireplace.
God's love is the sun that streams through the windows.
God's love is the roof over our heads and the floor beneath our feet.
God's love is a home for you and me, for neighbors and strangers, for family and friends,
for enemies and partners.
God's love is a home for all.
Today we light the candle of love to remind us of this truth.
May it burn brightly in this space and even brighter in our hearts.
Amen.

Four candles are lit while stanza 4 of “Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah” (hymn no. 240) is sung:

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

Hearing & Responding to Scripture

A Reading from Hebrew Scriptures — Micah 5:2-5a

2But 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.
3Therefore 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.
4And 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;
5and he shall be the one of peace.

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

Canticle — hymn no. 751, based on Luke 1:46b-55

“My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness”

A Reading from the Epistles — Hebrews 10:5-10

5Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;

6in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

7Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

8When 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), 9then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. 10And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

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 1:39-45

The Gospel of Luke, the 1st chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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

Sermon — "What Are You Waiting For?"

Garrett Paul

***Hymn** — no. 257, stanzas 1 & 6

"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**

Holy God,
Our prayers are often one lovely act of seeking.
We bow our heads, we close our eyes, and we seek—
we seek you, we seek belonging, we seek sanctuary.
And what is lovely is that we know, deep in our bones,
that if we knock, we will find you.

So today we pause our seeking to simply give you thanks.

Thank you for the Elizabeths in our lives—

the ones who have been there when we needed them most,
the ones who have blessed us with joy, allowing our happiness to take up space,
the ones who have opened the door for us and ushered us in.

And thank you not only for the Elizabeths in our lives,

but for the strangers who have cared for us,
for those older and wiser who paved the way before us,
and for individuals who share no relation to us, but love us like family.
Our lives are undoubtedly better because of them.

We give thanks for the gift of relationship.

Gracious God, we also pray for those without an Elizabeth in their life.

We pray for those who do not have a hand to hold in the dark,
who do not have a front porch to show up on,
or even a porch to call their own.

We pray for those in life transitions who carry that fear and anxiety alone,
and we pray for all who know loneliness in the face of these hardships.

We pray for all who are sick, hurting, lonely, or anxious.

Wrap your arms around those individuals. Circle back, again and again, dwelling tenderly in the wounds of their hearts until healing might be found. Open our eyes so that we might see the need in our own backyard.

We remember with great sadness the victims of the most recent school shooting. Comfort the grieving families and the traumatized students. Remember your infinite justice and mercy, and bring such things to an end, so that we may send our children to school without fear of violence.

We pray for your mercy and justice.

We remember those who have suffered from heavy rains and flooding, especially in South Somalia, the Pacific Northwest, and Hawaii, especially in Oahu, where the drinking water is now unsafe. Send aid and comfort, enable the efforts of relief organizations and public utilities, and restore the people to safety.

We pray for your mercy and power.

We thank you for being our safe place. Thank you for always welcoming us home.

Now with joy in our hearts, despite everything that confounds us, we pray the words you 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

“The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”

Edited by Hal Leonard

Liza Johnson, piano

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

Departing to Serve God's World

Announcements

*Sending Hymn —

“Come, Dear Christ, Your World Awaits”



1. Come, dear Christ, your world a - waits.
2. Morn - ing Star with dia - mond fire,
3. O - pen heav'ns and rain down dew.
4. Si - lent in the Vir - gin's womb,
5. Come, dear Christ, with ten - der care,



Speak a - loud, in - car - nate Word.
shine in ra - diance through our night.
Show - er jus - tice on the earth.
God in full di - vin - i - ty,
here in ea - ger hearts to dwell.



Long - ing earth an - tic - i - pates:
Ur - gent now with hope's de - sire
Parched and trou - bled lands, re - new
come to fill each lone - ly room
An - swer now our Ad - vent prayer:



let your cry for peace be heard.
yearn - ing peo - ples seek your light.
by a right - eous Sav - ior's birth.
come to us, Em - tiv - i - ty.
come to us, Em - man - u - el.

*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 — “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

Setting by Sally DeFord

Liza Johnson, piano

Acknowledgements

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“Call to Worship: Jeremiah 33” written by Thom Shuman, and posted on his Lectionary Liturgies blog. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.ca/>

“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: Garrett Paul
Director of Music: Emily Bruflat
Audio/Video:

Greeter/Reader: Sharon Malm
Ushers: Steve & Tyler Erickson
Advent Wreath Blessing: McHugh Family
Musicians: Liza Johnson

Advent Paraments

The transparent Alpha and Omega on an Advent blue background reveal the brick wall of the church suggesting that Christ continues to be present in the Church and its people even as we await Christ's coming. Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Revelations 1:8 is the source of the traditional use of these letters to symbolize Christ as God incarnate, the beginning and the end. Judaism and Islam also have words referring to God based on the first and last letters of their respective alphabets. This banner was designed and executed by Gretchen Bray and Patricia Freiert.

Prayers

- 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, Gwen Powell, Nancy Maag, Ellen Conover and Urusla McRostie.
- We pray for all those families continuing to adjust to the loss of loved ones, including the families of Pastor Heidi Hagstrom, Beverly Wetherill, Tom Stenson, Mary Lee Denley, Marion Peterson, and Bob Isenberg.

Announcements

- Liza Johnson is joining us today from Washington, D.C. She graduated from GAC in May of this year with degrees in Political Science and Scandinavian Studies and has been serving in the Lutheran Volunteer Corps as a Program Assistant for Lutheran Campus Ministry at the University of Maryland. Welcome, Liza!
- Those who would like to take home the poinsettias that they donated for the Christmas altar may do so after the Sunday service, December 26. The remaining poinsettias will grace the altar through the last Sunday of the season of Christmas, Jan. 2
- **Adult Forum Meet & Greet Pastor Chris Culuris** at 9am on January 9 in the Gathering Space.
- Be sure to check out all the wonderful items for sale at the **FLC Christmas Shoppe** in the Gathering Space. Proceeds will benefit out FLC youth attending the National ELCA Youth Gathering nex summer.
- Be sure to **register** yourself and your family members for the particular service you plan to attend on **Christmas Eve**. This process allows us to prepare for and adjust as necessary for health safety in attendance at these services.
- As we near the close of this calendar year (and the fiscal year for our church), we encourage all our members to **fulfill pledges** and make sure that **year-end gifts** arrive in good time. Thanks to all for your important support of the mission and programs of First Lutheran Church.