

Fourth Sunday of Advent
18 December 2022



Our Savior's Lutheran Church
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Service of Holy Communion

Evangelical Lutheran Worship, Setting 3

*The liturgy is in the front of the ELW with numbers at the bottom of the pages.
The hymns begin in the middle of the ELW with numbers at the top of the pages.*

Prelude / Ringing of the Bell

Welcome and Announcements

Fourth Sunday of Advent

~ Hope for Those Who Are Wounded ~

P: Advent is a time to bind up the broken hearted.

C: Come, Lord, and make all things new.

P: For past wrongs that prevent us from moving forward:

C: Come, Lord, and make all things new.

P: For any bitterness that scratches our soul:

C: Come, Lord, and make all things new.

P: For relationships left in decay and neglect:

C: Come, Lord, and make all things new.

P: For any action that has wounded us or by which we have wounded others:

C: Grant that we might have the peace of Christ as we wait, the love of Christ as we act, and the grace of Christ as we speak.

Candle Lighting

This morning we light four candles. The **first candle** is the light of hope for those in times of waiting. The **second candle** is the light of hope for those who are wearied by the circumstances of life. The **third candle** is the light of hope for those eagerly watching for God's promised glory. The **fourth candle** is the light of hope for those who carry the wounds of life. Today we acknowledge our pain and the pain we have caused others. As the light shines, we turn to the Savior who came to rescue the lost, to help the hurting, and to bind up the broken.

Acclamation: Hymn #715 (Refrain)

♪ **Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.**

Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

Confession and Forgiveness (pages 94-96)

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

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

(There is a time of silence for reflection.)

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Hymn #257 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” vs. 1-4

Greeting (page 138)

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

C: And also with you.

♫ Kyrie (pages 138-139)

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation,
let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church
of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and
praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C: Amen.

♩ **This is the feast of victory for our God.**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Power, riches, wisdom, and strength,
and honor, blessing, and glory are his.
This is the feast of victory for our God.**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**Sing with all the people of God
and join in the hymn of all creation.**

**Blessing, honor, glory and might
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

**For the Lamb who was slain
has begun his reign. Alleluia.**

This is the feast of victory for our God.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Prayer of the Day

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Let us pray. *concluding:* **C: Amen**

Readings

L: The Word of the Lord. **C:** Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

♫ **Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?**
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia.

Gospel

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **C:** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

Youth Sermon – Pastor Holloway-Nilsen

Sermon – Pastor Holloway-Nilsen

Hymn #242 “Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”

Confession of Faith: Nicene Creed

P: Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

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,
 was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
 and became truly human.
 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,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who 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

P: As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

(Each petition ends: P: God, in your mercy, C: hear our prayer.)

P: God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray.

C: Amen.

Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

P: Holy God, gracious and merciful...our Savior and Lord.

C: Amen.

♫ **Great Thanksgiving** (page 144)

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P: It is indeed right....and join their unending hymn:

♫ **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of pow'r and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna, Hosanna. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

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.

Holy Communion is celebrated today.

*All who are baptized into Christ Jesus are invited to receive Holy Communion
Gluten-free wafers and white grape juice are available.*

♪ Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace.

Hymn #631 "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling"

Post Communion Blessing

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

C: Amen

Post-Communion Hymn (Hymn 286)

♪ Your little ones, dear Lord, are we,
and come your lowly bed to see;
enlighten ev'ry soul and mind,
that we the way to you may find.

Post Communion Prayer

P: Let us pray.

P: We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing

P: Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Hymn #257 “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” vs. 5-8

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Share the good news. **C: Thanks be to God!**

Ringling of the Bell / Postlude

Pastor: Rev. Leah Holloway-Nilsen

Organist: Jason Bousselot or Linda Whitman

Acolyte: Macailah Jacobsen

Lector: David Burke

Communion Assistant: Neil Holmquist

Usher: Dan Burke

Cleaners: Brian Bousselot & Mary Timmerman

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This Week At A Glance

Wednesday	6:00 pm	Midweek Advent meal at Our Savior's
	7:00 pm	Midweek Advent service at Our Savior's
Saturday	9:00 pm	Christmas Eve Service at Our Savior's
Sunday	9:00 am	Christmas Day Service at Faith

Those to keep in prayer Rob Travaille, Sam Huitt, Cathy Goddard, Ruth Braet, Lucy Lee Petersen, Velma Jensen, Megan Mineck Wentland, Ryan Dick, Tim Burke, Barb Johnson; the homebound: Norman Bousselot, Carol Christensen, Shirley Ferguson, Ron Gasper, Myrna Kay Petersen, Rusty Porth, Betty Schau, Bus Seastrand, and Joan Shelton; and those serving in the military.

Annual reports from the following are due in the church office by **Monday, December 19, 2022:** Pastor, Council Presidents, and all committees (Education, Christian Outreach, Worship, Property and Management, Our Savior's Cemetery, and God Squad)

Financial reports, budgets, and audit reports are due in the church office by **Monday, January 16, 2023.**

Advent Schedule

Join the confirmation students and Pastor each Wednesday for our mid-week Advent service. A meal will be served at 6:00 pm. The Advent service will start at 7:00 pm

Dec. 21 – Our Savior's

Christmas Eve Candlelight service at Our Savior's at 9:00 pm.

Christmas Day at Faith at 9:00 am. No service at Our Savior's.

On **Sunday, January 01, 2023**, there will be one worship service at Faith at 9:00 am. Sunday School will not be held that day.

During the weeks of Advent, Our Savior's and Faith will be collecting new (or very gently used) winter coats, hats, gloves, and mittens. The items will be given to the Carroll Assistance Center in Wheatland for distribution to those who need something warm to wear this winter.

Christmas is Difficult

by John Wurster, pastor at St. Philip Presbyterian Church

One of my favorite yearly traditions is the holiday cards that arrive in our mailbox from friends and loved ones. They always include a lovely collection of smiling faces, but I also admire the cards that offer some honesty as well. For instance, several years ago we received a card from a friend who had recently divorced. The photograph he sent showed him and his children happy and carefree on summer vacation. The joyful scene in the picture contrasted starkly with a paragraph at the end of the letter where my friend wrote, “People from broken families pay an emotional price all of the time, but that is especially true during the holidays.”

That card continues to remind me that for many the joy of this season is mingled with pain and sorrow. The merrymaking of these days covers up the truth that this is not the most wonderful time of year for everyone. We sing, “I’ll be home for Christmas.” But where is home for folks whose families have been torn apart? What if home is a place of bitterness and betrayal? What if the happy memories of these days are harsh reminders of what we have lost, of who we have lost?

Christmas is difficult.

But then, as this text from Matthew suggests, Christmas has been difficult from the beginning. Just ask Joseph. He is committed to Mary in a legal way, and legal action would be required to end the relationship if some problem should arise. And there is a problem, a problem growing bigger every week. Mary’s pregnancy is obvious to anyone, but how she became pregnant makes sense to no one. Now Joseph has to decide what to do about the marriage. A righteous man, who is familiar with the law and the Scriptures, Joseph knows there are two choices: disgrace Mary by filing for divorce or have her stoned to death. That’s what the Scripture says. Isn’t that what a righteous man would do, follow the Scriptures?

Joseph instead reads the Scripture through the lens of mercy and grace. Joseph reads Scripture as if he knows something about the God to whom Scripture points. It's all problematic, of course, but Joseph refuses to turn from the difficulty. Sifting through the many layers, Joseph decides to divorce Mary quietly, save her the public humiliation, and keep the baby safe. It is a big step beyond what convention would suggest, but Joseph is willing to do that.

However, the merciful and gracious God would have him do even more. An angel comes to Joseph to announce that the child growing inside of Mary is not a moral dilemma. Instead, the child is a gift for all people, a savior, the Son of God. "Take Mary for your wife. Name the child. Name him Jesus."

Does Christmas get more difficult than this? An angel in a dream explaining that the child conceived by the Holy Spirit in a virgin womb is the incarnation of God? It's all difficult and surprising, awkward and challenging. Who can believe such a thing? Who knows how it will all turn out? Who can calculate the cost? Who can fathom what is still to come? And yet Joseph is willing to accept the risk, buck convention, and embrace the promise and the peril of what the angel says.

While we are not told specifically how Joseph is able to summon the courage and conjure strength in such an uncomfortable time, I suspect it has something to do with the passage from Isaiah that Matthew weaves into this wonderful story. Remembering a season hundreds of years ago when the birth of a special child was to Israel a sign of God's presence, Matthew brings forward the prophet's words to this time, this child, "'The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they will name 'Emmanuel,' which means God is with us.'"

The God who is with Joseph equips him to respond faithfully to such an extraordinary task and empowers him for a risky righteousness, far beyond convention, far beyond what Joseph could ever have imagined. Emmanuel, the God who is with us, provides strength, courage, mercy, and grace to respond to the difficult things before us this season. God

is with us as we seek to mend our brokenness and heal our hurts. God is with us as we remember and weep and seek to go on. God is with us, inviting us, encouraging, empowering us to believe in the promise of Christmas.