



# St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



## *3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

*December 15, 2024*

*10:30 Holy Communion*

We continue the story of Mary the mother of Jesus today. It is the story of her travels to visit her relative Elizabeth. Though we often think of Mary as being meek and mild, today's story will challenge that. Mary is bold, confident, and perhaps reckless! But she is strong in what God is doing in the world. Nothing will stop her from living in that promise.

### *Welcome to worship today!*

If you are visiting with us we invite you to sign the Guest Book in the back of the sanctuary.

Large print bulletins are available on the usher's stand.

The Zoom feed for this service is available in the nursery.

# † GATHERING †

## Prelude and Announcements

### Confession and Forgiveness

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

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.  
*Silence for reflection and self-examination.*

P: God of mercy,

**C: we confess that we have sinned.**

**We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.  
We grow fearful. We cling to false comfort.**

P: God of might,

**C: we confess that we have sinned.**

**We have turned away from our neighbors  
We have trusted false promises.**

P: God in our midst,

**C: we confess that we have sinned.**

**We plead: come to us.**

**Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

P: 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.

**C: Amen.**

Gathering Hymn    Fling Wide the Door  
*(For music see Hymn 259 in the Red Hymnal)*

- 1. Fling wide the door, unbar the gate;  
the King of glory comes in state;  
the Lord of lords and King of kings,  
the Savior of the world who brings**

**his great salvation to the earth.  
So raise a shout of holy mirth  
and praise to God and Lord,  
Creator, Spirit, Word.**

- 2. He is the rock of our belief,  
the heart of mercy's gentle self.  
His kingly crown is holiness;  
his scepter is his loveliness;  
he brings our sorrows to an end.  
Now gladly praise our king and friend,  
and worship him with song  
for saving us from wrong.**
- 3. Oh, happy towns and blessed lands  
that live by their true king's commands.  
And blessed be the hearts he rules,  
the humble places where he dwells.  
He is the rightful Son of bliss  
who fills our lives and makes us his,  
creator of the world,  
our only strength for good.**
- 4. Come, Lord, our Savior, Jesus Christ;  
our hearts are open wide in trust.  
Oh, show us now your lovely grace,  
upon our sorrows shine your face,  
and let your Holy Spirit guide  
our journey in your grace so wide.  
We praise your holy name,  
from age to age the same!**

Text: Georg Weissel, 1590-1635; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943, text copyright 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship, admin. Augsburg Fortress. Music: J.A.Freylinghausen, *Geistreiches Gesengbuch*, 1704; arr. hymnal version, arrangement copyright 2006 Augsburg Fortress

### *Prayer of the Day*

**A:** Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen**

† WORD †

*Lighting of the Advent Wreath*

A: We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

**C: Amen**

*As the third candle on the wreath is lit we sing:*

Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel

*(For music turn to Hymn 257 in the Red Hymnal)*

**1. Oh come, Oh come Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here  
until the Son of God appear.**

*Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to you, O Israel.*

**3. O come, O come, O Lord of might,  
as to your tribes on Sinai's height  
in ancient times you gave the law  
in cloud and majesty and awe. Refrain**

**4. O come, O Branch of Jesse, free  
your own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell your people save,  
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. Refrain**

*First Reading* Isaiah 40:1-11

B: Comfort, O comfort my people,  
says your God.

<sup>2</sup>Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,  
and cry to her  
that she has served her term,  
that her penalty is paid,  
that she has received from the Lord's hand  
double for all her sins.

<sup>3</sup>A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord,  
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

<sup>4</sup>Every valley shall be lifted up,  
and every mountain and hill be made low;  
the uneven ground shall become level,  
and the rough places a plain.

<sup>5</sup>Then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all people shall see it together,  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.”

<sup>6</sup>A voice says, “Cry out!”  
And I said, “What shall I cry?”

All people are grass,  
their constancy is like the flower of the field.

<sup>7</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades,  
when the breath of the Lord blows upon it;  
surely the people are grass.

<sup>8</sup>The grass withers, the flower fades;  
but the word of our God will stand forever.

<sup>9</sup>Get you up to a high mountain,  
O Zion, herald of good tidings;  
lift up your voice with strength,  
O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings,  
lift it up, do not fear;

say to the cities of Judah,  
“Here is your God!”

<sup>10</sup>See, the Lord God comes with might,  
and his arm rules for him;  
his reward is with him,  
and his recompense before him.

<sup>11</sup>He will feed his flock like a shepherd;  
he will gather the lambs in his arms,  
and carry them in his bosom,  
and gently lead the mother sheep.

*After the reading the reader may say: The Word of the Lord*

**C: Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading 2 Peter 3:8-15a

D: But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day.

<sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. <sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be

dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

<sup>11</sup>Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, <sup>12</sup>waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? <sup>13</sup>But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home. <sup>14</sup>Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; <sup>15</sup>and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

*After the reading the reader may say:* The Word of the Lord

**C: Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel Acclamation (2 Peter 3:8)*

**C: Alleluia. With the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. Alleluia.**

*Gospel Reading* Luke 1:39-56

*The gospel is announced:*

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to you O Lord.**

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."<sup>46</sup>And Mary said,

P: "My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

**C: for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;**

P: for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

**C: His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.**

P: He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

**C: He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;**

P: he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

**C: He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,**

<sup>55</sup>**according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”**

P: And Mary remained with her about three months and then returned to her home.

*After the reading:*

P: The Gospel of the Lord

**C: Praise to you O Christ.**

### Children's Sermon

#### Sermon

Hymn of the Day Cantic of the Turning  
(For music see Hymn 723 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **My soul cries out with a joyful shout  
that the God of my heart is great,  
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things  
that you bring to the ones who wait.  
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,  
and my weakness you did not spurn,  
so from east to west, shall my name be blest.  
Could the world be about to turn?**

*Refrain:* **My heart shall sing of the day you bring.  
Let the fires of your justice burn.  
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,  
and the world is about to turn.**

2. **Though I am small, my God, my all,  
you work great things in me,  
and your mercy will last from the depths of the past  
to the end of the age to be.  
Your very name puts the proud to shame,  
and to those who would for you yearn,  
you will show your might, put the strong to flight  
for the world is about to turn. *Refrain***

3. From the halls of pow'r to the fortress tow'r,  
not a stone will be left on stone.  
Let the king beware for your justice tears  
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.  
The hungry poor shall weep no more,  
for the food they can never earn;  
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,  
for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*
4. Though the nations rage from age to age,  
we remember who holds us fast;  
God's mercy must deliver us  
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.  
This saving word that our forebears heard  
is the promise which hold us bound,  
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,  
who is turning the world around. *Refrain*

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat, text copyright 1990 GIA Publications Inc. Music: Star of Country Down; Irish Traditional.

### Nicene Creed

P: Let us confirm our faith with the Nicene Creed

**C: 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 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.**



Peace

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

P: We share that peace with one another.

*The congregation may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.*

Special Music and Gathering of Prayers and Offerings

*You are invited to write a prayer concern on the small blank slip of paper in your worship bulletin. This slip will be collected by the ushers in the offering plates. The concerns raised will be prayed for later in the service.*

Offering Prayer

P: Let us pray: Creator God,

**C: 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.**

Prayers of Intercession

P: With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

*Issues raised by the congregation are prayed for.*

*The prayer concludes:*

P: Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

**C: Amen.**

† MEAL †

Great Thanksgiving

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, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus the Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, though whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join in their unending hymn:

*(Isaiah 6:3, spoken)*

**C: Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

P: In the night in which he was handed over our Lord Jesus took bread, 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."

### Lord's Prayer

P: Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**C: 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.**

### Invitation to Communion

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

### Communion Distribution

*Welcome to the Lord's Supper! All who are baptized are invited to receive communion. Please pick up a communion glass as you come forward to the altar. You will receive bread from the communion assistant. (If you need a gluten free wafer please tell the assistant.) The pastor will pour wine into your glass. If you prefer grape juice it is prefilled in the individual glasses. As we commune together everyone is invited to sing the following hymns:  
Lamb of God (Page 39 of the Blue Hymnal)*

**254** *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus (Red Hymnal)*

**239** *Hark the Glad Sound (Red Hymnal)*

Communion Blessing After all have communed the pastor will say:

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

**C: Amen.**

Post Communion Prayer

A: Let us pray:

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.

**C: Amen.**

✠ SENDING ✠

Blessing

P: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

**C: Amen.**

Sending Hymn People, Look East  
(For music see Hymn 248 in the Red Hymnal)

**1. People, look east. The time is near  
of the crowning of the year.  
Make your house fair as you are able,  
trim the hearth and set the table.  
People look east, and sing today –  
Love, the Guest, is on the way.**

**2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,  
one more seed is planted there.  
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,  
that in course the flow'r may flourish.  
People, look east, and sing today –  
Love, the Rose, is on the way.**

3. **Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,  
one more light the bowl shall brim,  
shining beyond the frosty weather,  
bright as sun and moon together.  
People, look east, and sing today –  
Love, the Star, is on the way.**

4. **Angels announce with shouts of mirth  
him who brings new life to earth.  
Set ev'ry peak and valley humming  
with the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east, and sing today –  
Love, the Lord, is on the way.**

Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965, copyright Miss Farjeon Will Trust, by permission of David Higham Associates. Music: French carol; arr. Barry Rose, b. 1934, copyright 1999 Novello and Co. Ltd., London.

*Dismissal*

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

**C: God's Work. Our Hands.**

**Worship assistants TODAY:**

Greeters and Ushers	Bruce and Connie Stevenson
Acolyte	Charlotte Stroup
Altar Care	Mary Zuege
Communion Assistant	Gary Boisseau
Counters	John and Linda Thompson
Coffee Hour	

**Worship assistants for next Sunday, December 22, 2024**

Greeters and Ushers	Mary and Greg Zuege
Acolyte	Elijah Young
Counters	Bill and Katy Stimmel
Coffee Hour	The Stuarts

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