

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

This Present Sign
December 17 & 18, 2022

AS WE GATHER

One of the pleasures of walking through medieval towns and cities in Europe is seeing the signs that hang above the doorways of various stores and craftwork locations. Without a word of written language, you can tell where the town's cobbler, blacksmith, baker, and glove maker have set up their shops. The signs indicate that the masters are at work in their various locations. For Christians, Advent is a time for looking to the signs of the presence of God as found in Word and Sacrament. There are signs around us right now! The cross over the altar or in front of church wordlessly attests to the fulfilling of the work by the Master of all creation through the coming of Jesus as the babe of Bethlehem, who would be our crucified and resurrected Lord. The candles on the Advent wreath burn brightly today! The signs of the season are all around us.

Reception of Holy Communion: If you are planning to receive Christ's supper today, please read through the words of exhortation in the fellowship folder. For members, it is a good review of important spiritual matters for gathering at the table. For guests, it explains our stance on confession of faith, doctrinal unity, and proper spiritual preparation to receive the Supper for your benefit.

WELCOME

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given;

and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,
on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this. Isaiah 9:6-7

HANDSHAKES & HUGS

✘ PREPARATION ✘

OPENING HYMN #341 "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates"

Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold, the King of glory waits.
The King of kings is drawing near; The Savior of the world is here.
Life and salvation He doth bring; Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.
To God the Father raise your joyful songs of praise.

A righteous Helper comes to thee; His chariot is humility,
His kingly crown is holiness, His scepter, pity in distress.
The end of all our woe He brings; Therefore the earth is glad and sings.
To Christ the Savior raise Your grateful hymns of praise.

How blest the land, the city blest, Where Christ the ruler is confessed!
O peaceful hearts and happy homes To whom this King in triumph comes!
The cloudless sun of joy is He Who comes to set His people free.
To God the Spirit raise Your happy shouts of praise.

Fling wide the portals of your heart; Make it a temple set apart
From earthly use for heaven's employ, Adorned with prayer and love and joy.
So shall your Sov'reign enter in And new and nobler life begin.
To God alone be praise For word and deed and grace!

Redeemer, come and open wide My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!
O enter with Thy grace divine; Thy face of mercy on me shine.
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on Until our glorious goal is won.
Eternal praise and fame We offer to Thy name.

(Rise)

INVOCATION & OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✘ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down
righteousness;

**People: let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear
fruit; let the earth cause them both to sprout.**

Pastor: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims
His handiwork.

**People: Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their
words to the end of the world.**

Pastor: In them He has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

People: Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

Pastor: Blessed is the man who fears the LORD, who greatly delights in His commandments!

People: His heart is firm, trusting in the LORD. Praise the LORD!

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Let us now make confession of our sins to God, our gracious heavenly Father.

People: Eternal God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and that sin is ever-present in our lives. O God, in your mercy, forgive our sin. Redirect and renew us, that we may joyfully follow your will and gladly obey your commandments. Graciously forgive our sins and, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, guide us in ways of compassion and love.

Pastor: In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it. Go in ✠ peace.

People: Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

HYMN #357 DURING CANDLE LIGHTING

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Sts. 1, 6–7

O come, O 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 thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Refrain

O come, Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace. **Refrain**

SALUTATION & PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us pray. Stir up your power, O Lord, and come and help us by your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by your grace and mercy; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

(Be seated)

5:00 *“Let Our Gladness Have No End” and “Cantate Jubilate”*

✠ WORD ✠

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Isaiah 7:10–17* (The birth of Immanuel is prophesied.) ¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD Your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. ¹⁷ The LORD will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE *Romans 1:1–7* (Paul greets the saints in Rome with words of blessing.) Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God,² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures,³ concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh⁴ and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord,⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations,⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,⁷ To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

8:00 CHOIR *“Child of Hope and Love”*

(Rise)

HOLY GOSPEL *Matthew 1:18–25* (The telling of the birth of Jesus)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter

People: Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

(Be seated)

CHILDREN’S SONG & CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

“Away in a Manger” #364 verses 1 & 3

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.
The stars in the sky – looked down where He lay,
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

SERMON HYMN #350 “Come, Thou Precious Ransom, Come”

Come, Thou precious Ransom, come, Only hope for sinful mortals!
Come, O Savior of the world! Open are to Thee all portals.
Come, Thy beauty let us see; Anxiously we wait for Thee.

Enter now my waiting heart, Glorious King and Lord most holy.
Dwell in me and ne’er depart, Though I am but poor and lowly.
Ah, what riches will be mine When Thou art my quest divine!

My hosannas and my palms Graciously receive, I pray Thee;
Evermore, as best I can, Savior, I will homage pay Thee,
And in faith I will embrace, Lord, Thy merit through Thy grace.

Hail! Hosanna, David’s Son! Jesus, hear our supplication!
Let Thy kingdom, scepter, crown, Bring us blessing and salvation,
That forever we may sing: Hail! Hosanna to our King.

SERMON “A Sign of Judgment...A Sign of Grace”

(Rise)

NICENE CREED

People: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried.

And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.

And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead, whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.

And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church, I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life ☩ of the world to come. Amen.

(Be seated)

OFFERINGS As your offering is collected, **please sign our fellowship folder** located at the end of the pew. If you are a visitor, please leave your address and phone. After you are finished, please pass the folder along to others in your pew, and return it to the center aisle. You may check the folder to see names of those to greet after the service.

(Rise)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Trusting in God's mercy and grace, let us lift our hearts, our lives and our concerns to God in prayer.

Lord God, you promised the virgin-born Son to unfaithful King Ahaz, and in the fullness of time the Word became flesh. Open our hearts and strengthen our faith gladly to receive your Son in the signs where He is present: in your Holy Word and Sacraments. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lord God, preserve your Gospel and its ministers. Cause the name, the grace, and the resurrection of Christ Jesus to be proclaimed among all the nations, including among us who are called to belong to Him. Bless all pastors and missionaries, especially our Together in Mission partner, Pastor Chuck Ferry and family, that the obedience of faith may be brought about in every place. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lord God, it is your will that we live chaste and decent lives in all that we say and do. Preserve all couples who are engaged to be married in faithfulness and honor, that they may come to their wedding day without fear, shame or disgrace. Since Christ is Immanuel, who saves His people from their sins, clothe all those who have fallen into sin with the forgiveness of Jesus, so that all can stand before you cleansed and confident of your blessing. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lord God, you do not bear with the tiresome flattery and unbelief of kings and rulers forever. Have mercy on us, Lord, and spare our nation. Clear away all empty shows of piety and renew genuine faith in the virgin's Son, that His coming at the last may not be a sign against us. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lord God, you named your Son “Jesus” because He was born to save us from our sins. Give us repentant hearts. Do not let us bow to temptation or abuse His name by seeking our own way, but lead us to confess our sins and rejoice in His salvation. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lord God, look with kindness on the sick and those in any need especially Kaden, Guy, Pat, Don, Marga, Cheryl, Tim, Mike, Shirley, Noah, Debra, Tom, Jill, Paulette, Gloria, Janet, Brian, Norma, Vern, Amy, Brian, Cathy, Vern, Elaine, Dorothy, Cindy, Richard, Helga, Carol, Debbie, June, Jerry, Shirley and Sarah. Comfort them in their distress, heal them of their afflictions, and give them hope and peace through faith in Christ. Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: Lord God, heavenly Father, we give you thanks for your Son, Jesus Christ, who is truly Lord and ruler of the household of the faithful. Grant us to trust His promises and to love and forgive others just as He has loved and forgiven us. Grant that, as we recall with thanksgiving His advent in the flesh to die for our sins, that we may always confess Him and remain watchful for His advent in glory at the Last Day; for you live and reign, ever one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever.

People: Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

People: 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.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PAX DOMINI

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

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

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O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.

O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ, And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

(Be seated)

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

HYMN #334 “O Lord, How Shall I Meet You”

O Lord, how shall I meet You, How welcome You aright?
Your people long to greet You, My hope, my heart’s delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy, Your lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly All that may please You best.

Your Zion strews before You Green boughs and fairest palms;
And I too will adore You With joyous songs and psalms.
My heart shall bloom forever For You with praises new
And from Your name shall never Withhold the honor due.

I lay in fetters, groaning; You came to set me free.
I stood, my shame bemoaning; You came to honor me.
A glorious crown You give me, A treasure safe on high
That will not fail or leave me As earthly riches fly.

Love caused Your incarnation; Love brought You down to me.
Your thirst for my salvation Procured my liberty.
Oh, love beyond all telling, That led You to embrace
In love, all love excelling, Our lost and fallen race.

Sin’s debt, that fearful burden, Cannot His love erase;
Your guilt the Lord will pardon And cover by His grace.
He comes, for you procuring The peace of sin forgiv’n,
His children thus securing Eternal life in heav’n.

He comes to judge the nations, A terror to His foes,
A light of consolations And blessed hope to those
Who love the Lord’s appearing. O glorious Sun, now come,
Send forth Your beams so cheering, And guide us safely home.

HYMN #353 “Jesus Came, the Heavens Adoring”

Jesus came, the heav’ns adoring, Came with peace from realms on high;
Jesus came to win redemption, Lowly came on earth to die;
Alleluia! Alleluia! Came in deep humility.

Jesus comes again in mercy When our hearts are worn with care;
Jesus comes again in answer To an earnest, heartfelt prayer;
Alleluia! Alleluia! Comes to save us from despair.

Jesus comes to hearts rejoicing, Brining news of sins forgiv’n;
Jesus comes with words of gladness, Leading souls redeemed to heav’n.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Hope to all the world is giv’n.

Jesus comes in joy and sorrow, Shares alike our hopes and fears;
Jesus comes, whate’er befalls us, Cheers our hearts and dries our tears;
Alleluia! Alleluia! Comforts us in failing years.

HYMN #554 “O Jesus, King Most Wonderful”

O Jesus, King most wonderful! O Conqueror renowned!
O Source of peace ineffable, In whom all joys are found:

When once You visit darkened hearts, Then truth begins to shine,
Then earthly vanity departs, Then kindles love divine.

O Jesus, light of all below, The fount of life and fire,
Surpassing all the joys we know, All that we can desire:

May ev’ry heart confess Your name, Forever You adore,
And, seeking You, itself inflame To seek You more and more!

Oh, may our tongues forever bless, May we love You alone
And ever in our lives express The image of Your own!

COMMON DISMISSAL

(Rise)

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty and ever-living God, we thank you for having fed us with the body and blood of our Savior Jesus Christ. Continue with your gracious presence among us and bless our coming in and our going out this day and each day of our earthly lives. Graciously hear our prayers and grant all that is best for us according to your loving will. Grant us your abiding peace as we await your eternal kingdom. In the name of Jesus, our Advent hope, we pray.

People: Amen.

BENEDICTION

Pastor: 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.

People: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN #348 “The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns”

The King shall come when morning dawns And light triumphant breaks,
When beauty gilds the eastern hills And life to joy awakes.

Not as of old a little child, To bear and fight and die,
But crowned with glory like the sun That lights the morning sky.

Oh, brighter than the rising morn When Christ, victorious, rose
And left the lonesome place of death Despite the rage of foes.

Oh, brighter than that glorious morn Shall dawn upon our race
The day when Christ in splendor comes And we shall see His face.

The King shall come when morning dawns And light and beauty brings.
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray: Come quickly, King of kings!

Preacher
Liturgist
Lectors
Organist
Special Music 5:00
Special Music 8:00

Pastor Harold Bender
Pastor Josh Grotelueschen
John Gieschen
Olivia Kukor
Grades 1-4 Lead by Danielle Gedemer
St. Paul's Choir

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Christmas Eve Worship

December 24 at 3:00, 5:00 & 11:00 pm

Christmas Day Worship

December 25 at 9:00 am

“Joy to the World, the Lord is Come!”

