

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
1100 EAST SUPERIOR STREET, DULUTH, MN

December 22, 2024

8:30 a.m.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - WORDS FOR THE BEGINNING

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."

You are invited to light a candle in prayer on the Tree of Life during the service.

The candle-lighter is hanging on the wall; you may need to take a candle out to light it.

Please pass the Friendship Notebook along your row and greet those around you that you may not know.

We welcome children in worship. There is a family room across from the right front sanctuary doors and a staffed nursery down the hall.

Hearing assist receivers are available at the ushers' station.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE *Love Has Come, a Light in the Darkness!*

Un Flambeau, Jeanette, Isabelle!, arr. Christopher Uehlein; Karen Sande, organ

WELCOME

The assembly remains seated.

CALL TO WORSHIP

In this weary world, **we sing of joy.**

In this fragile world, **we lift each other up.**

In this beautiful world, **we look for God.**

In this tender world, **we hold onto hope.**

This is the invitation of faith.

In this time of worship, we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto God. **Amen.**

CANDLE LIGHTING SONG ACS #905 *We Are Waiting for Jesus*

words and music by John Helgen

sing verse 1:



ADVENT CANDLE OF LOVE

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

Let us begin with tenderness.

Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and openness.

Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us start with love.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

May these flames representing God's gifts to us point the way.

May they point us to the One who helps us begin again - the One who comes in love.

May it be so! **Amen.**

sing verse 2:

We are waiting for Jesus, Jesus brings love. We are waiting for Jesus, Jesus brings love.

Loving Shepherd, walk beside us; stir our hearts, and gently guide us.

We are waiting for Jesus, Jesus brings love.

The assembly stands

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon. **Amen.**

Let us come in truth before the one who loves us and has freed us from our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy,

we confess that we have sinned.

We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.

We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

God of might,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have turned away from our neighbors.

We have trusted false promises.

God in our midst,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have held fast to worldly things rather than to you.

Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.

Mary's response to the news of Jesus' birth is the awestruck: How can this be?

With her, we, too, must wonder - how can this be that we receive such mercy?

But that is the good news, that is our reason to hope.

Today in the name of Christ + we are forgiven. Today we are set free. Today we can declare with Mary:

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." Amen.



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
 2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.
 3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:
 Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.
 come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
 Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.
 In the lone - ly, in the strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
 Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
 Child who comes to grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.

APOSTOLIC GREETING

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

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Christ Jesus, and come. Break open our hearts and with your love wash away all that is not of you so that you alone may reside within us. In your holy name, **Amen.**

The assembly is seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song

TIME FOR YOUNG DISCIPLES

Pastor Dianne O. Loufman

READING Micah 5:2-5a

From Bethlehem comes a ruler

Word of God.

Word of Life.

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION ELW #257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, verse 7

GOSPEL Luke 1:39-55

Blessed are you among women / My soul magnifies the Lord

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

After Luke 1:39-45, the congregation reads the Magnificat together:

**And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.**

**Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.**

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

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

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

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

**He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."**

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION ELW #257 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, verse 8*

SERMON

Pastor Dianne O. Loufman

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

HYMN OF THE DAY ACS #906 *No Wind at the Window*



1 No wind at the win - dow, no knock on the door;
 2 "O Mar - y, O Mar - y, don't hide from my face.
 3 This child must be born that the king - dom might come:
 4 No pay - ment was prom - ised, no prom - is - es made;



no light from the lamp - stand, no foot on the floor;
 Be glad that you're fa - vored and filled with God's grace.
 sal - va - tion for man - y, de - struc - tion for some;
 no wed - ding was dat - ed, no blue - print dis - played.



no dream born of tired - ness, no ghost raised by fear:
 The time for re - deem - ing the world has be - gun,
 both end and be - gin - ning, both mes - sage and sign;
 Yet Mar - y, con - sent - ing to what none could guess,



just an an - gel and a wom - an and a voice in her ear.
 and . . . you are re - quest - ed to . . . moth - er God's Son."
 both . . vic - tor and . . vic - tim, both . . yours and di - vine.
 re - plied with con - vic - tion, "Tell . . God I say yes."

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Hear us, O God. or Bless we the Lord,
Your mercy is great. Thanks be to God.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace. All are then seated for the offering.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ

OFFERING

*You are invited to use our digital offering plate. Text "**fleduluth**" to **73256**. You'll be sent a text with a link to give. Click on the link and enter your giving information. Thank you for supporting God's mission through FLC.*

OFFERTORY ANTHEM *Magnificat*
 Choir

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875-1912); Soli Deo Gloria

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.
 For behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
 For he that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is his name.
 And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.
 He hath shewed strength with his arm. He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
 He hath put down the mighty from their seat and hath exalted the humble and meek.
 He hath filled the hungry with good things. And the rich he hath sent empty away.
 He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel
 as he promised to our forefathers Abraham, and his seed forever.
 Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
 As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The assembly stands.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together:

**Creator God, you made the whole world—
 the farthest stars to our closest breath.**

You draw near to feed us with these gifts of bread and wine.

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.**

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, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through 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 all of creation, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

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

The thanksgiving continues with the Words of Institution, concluding with the Lord's Prayer

With joy and hope, we weave our voices together praying the words Jesus taught:

**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.**

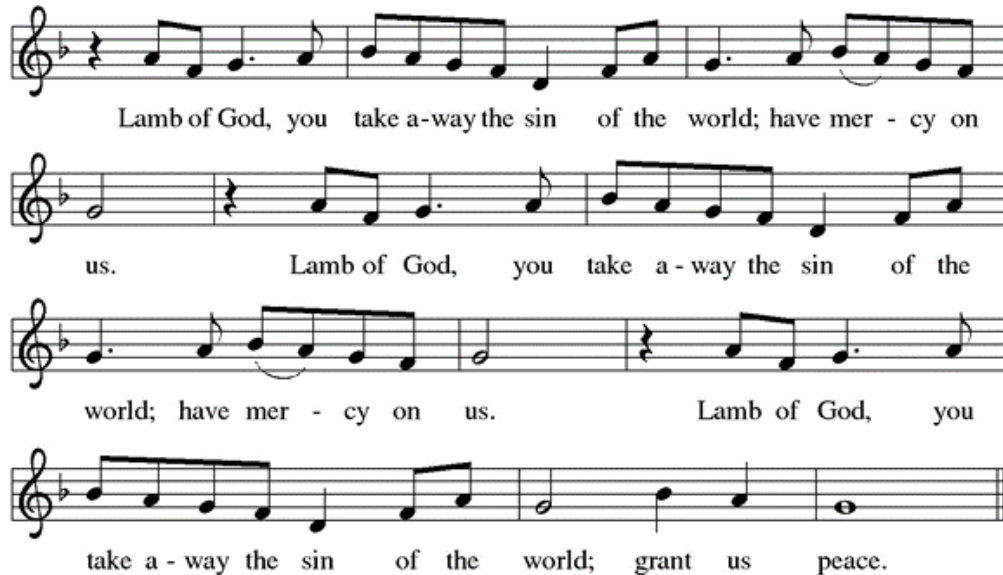
The assembly is seated.

We practice Eucharistic hospitality; all are welcome. Receive the bread and dip it into the wine (red) or grape juice (white). Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

When we come to this table, for just a moment we get a glimpse of God's promised day.
We get a glimpse of a world where all are fed and all are welcomed.
And for just a moment we can believe the angels when they say, "Be not afraid."

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMN ELW #292 *Love Has Come*

COMMUNION HYMN ELW #250 *Blessed Be the God of Israel*

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together:

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. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world

OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE

The assembly stands.

BLESSING

The presiding minister proclaims God's blessing.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW #251 *My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness, Lord*

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE *Blessed Be the God of Israel*

Forest Green, arr. Paul Manz

Ministers All People of First Lutheran Church
Pastor The Rev. Dianne O. Loufman
Program Staff Karen Sande, Director of Music
Michael Fuchs, Director of Choral Activities
Bryan Gatten, Director of Contemporary Worship
Assisting Minister
Reader Susanna Ojakangas
Musicians Soli Deo Gloria Choir
Audio/Video Team Eric Gatten, Shania Krause, Sam Weston

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First Lutheran Church, dedicated to the mission of Jesus Christ, welcomes you into this community of faith, where we share life in its entirety, with all its joys and sorrows. We believe all people are created in the image of God and are offered God's love, grace, and forgiveness, regardless of religious tradition, age, gender identity, race, education, economic status, sexual orientation, family structure, mental or physical abilities, or where they might be on their faith journey. We acknowledge the indigenous culture of this land. We are committed to the work of racial justice. We extend a special welcome in Christ's love.

faithlovecommunity
First Lutheran Church

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