

Fourth Sunday of Advent



December 21, 2025



ST. JOHN'S
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**
God's work. Our hands.



a Reconciling in Christ
Congregation

Gathering

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude

***Confession & Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

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

Long-expected God,

**we confess that we look to ourselves
for the peace and security only you can provide.
We reach for swords and spears,
reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.
We become impatient while waiting
and weary of keeping awake.**

**Free us from self-reliance,
and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.
Increase our trust in God's timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.
Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. † You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

Amen.

*Gathering Hymn: All earth is hopeful (ELW 266)



To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra_al Sal - va - dor
 1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
 3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
 4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



y_el sur - co_a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el
 Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
 "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
 new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
 This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -
 la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
 here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
 world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
 stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
 clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
 Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

*Greeting

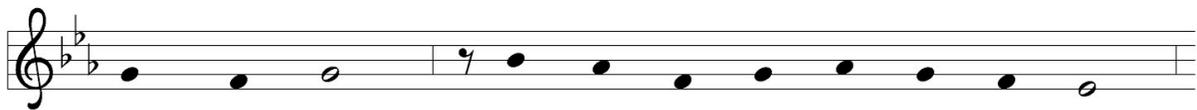
P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

*Candlelighting Hymn: Creator of the Stars of Night (ELW 245, v 4&5)



1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er -
2 When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in
3 At your great name, O Je - sus, now all knees must bend, all
4 Come in your ho - ly might, we pray, re - deem us for e -
5 To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, and God the Spir - it,



last - ing light, O Christ, re - deem - er of us all,
splen - dor bright, not as a mon - arch, but the child
hearts must bow: all things on earth with one ac - cord,
ter - nal day; de - fend us while we dwell be - low
Three in One, praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be



we pray you hear us when we call.
of Mar - y, bless - ed moth - er mild.
like those in heav'n, shall call you Lord.
from all as - saults of our dread foe.
from age to age e - ter - nal - ly. A - men.

*Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

1 Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph | like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned up- | on the
cherubim.

**2 In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, | and
Manasseh,**

stir up your strength and | come to help us.

3 Restore | us, O God;

let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

4 O LORD | God of hosts,

**how long will your anger fume when your | people
pray? R**

5 You have fed them with the | bread of tears;

you have given them bowls of | tears to drink.

**6 You have made us the derision | of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh | us to scorn.**

7 Restore us, O | God of hosts;

let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be saved.

**17 Let your hand be upon the one at | your right
hand,**

the one you have made so strong | for yourself.

18 And so will we never turn a- | way from you;

give us life, that we may call up- | on your name.

19 Restore us, O LORD | God of hosts;

**let your face shine upon us, and we | shall be
saved. R**

Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7

1 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 the gospel

concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

The musical score is written for piano in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two systems of music. The first system contains three measures of music. The second system contains four measures of music, starting with a measure number '4' in the upper left. The lyrics are: 'Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia!' The score features several triplet markings in both the treble and bass staves. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. 19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. 20 But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All

this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

23 "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,

and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." 24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife 25 but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Sermon

*Hymn of the Day: ELW 263 (Savior of the nations come, 1-4)

1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.
2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, but the mys - tic Breath of God,
3 Won - drous birth—oh, won - drous child— from his throne, a vir - gin mild!
4 From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, back to God his path - way leads;

Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth: God has cho - sen such a birth.
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of wom - an, blos - som fresh.
Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
out to van - quish death's com - mand, back to reign at God's right hand.

*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 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

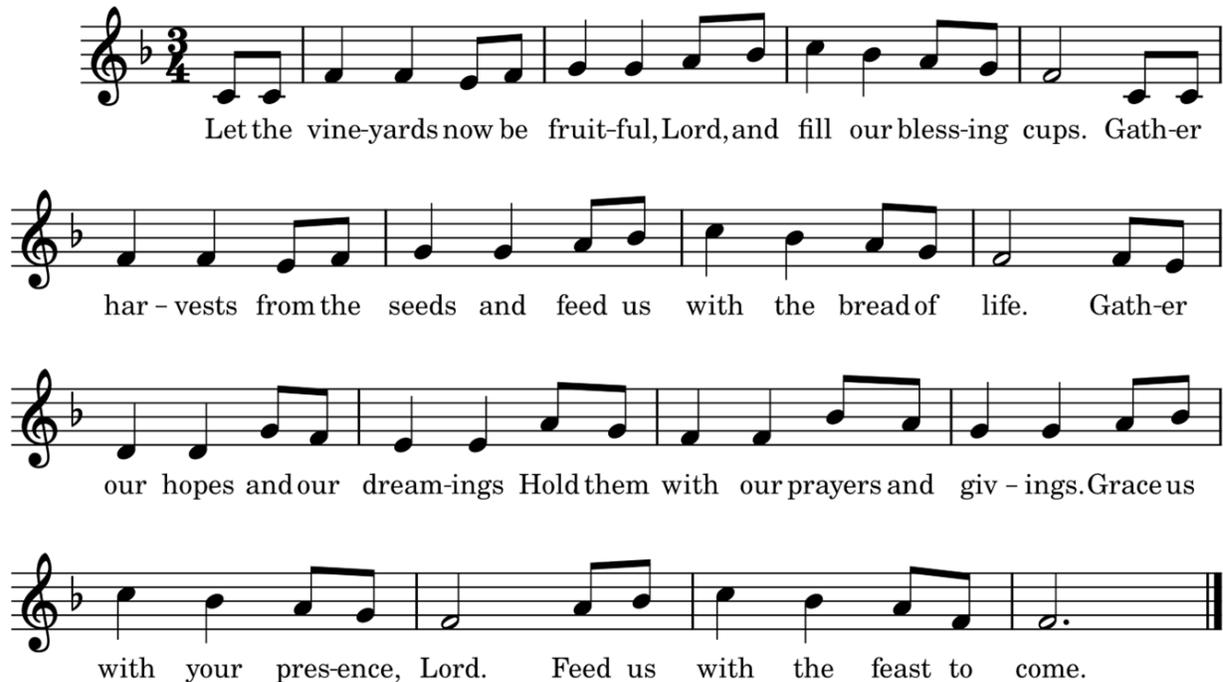
...God of grace,
hear our prayer.

*Peace

Meal

Musical Offering

*Offering Hymn



Let the vine-yards now be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill our blessing cups. Gather
har - vests from the seeds and feed us with the bread of life. Gather
our hopes and our dream-ings Hold them with our prayers and giv - ings. Grace us
with your pres-ence, Lord. Feed us with the feast to come.

*Offering Prayer

*Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

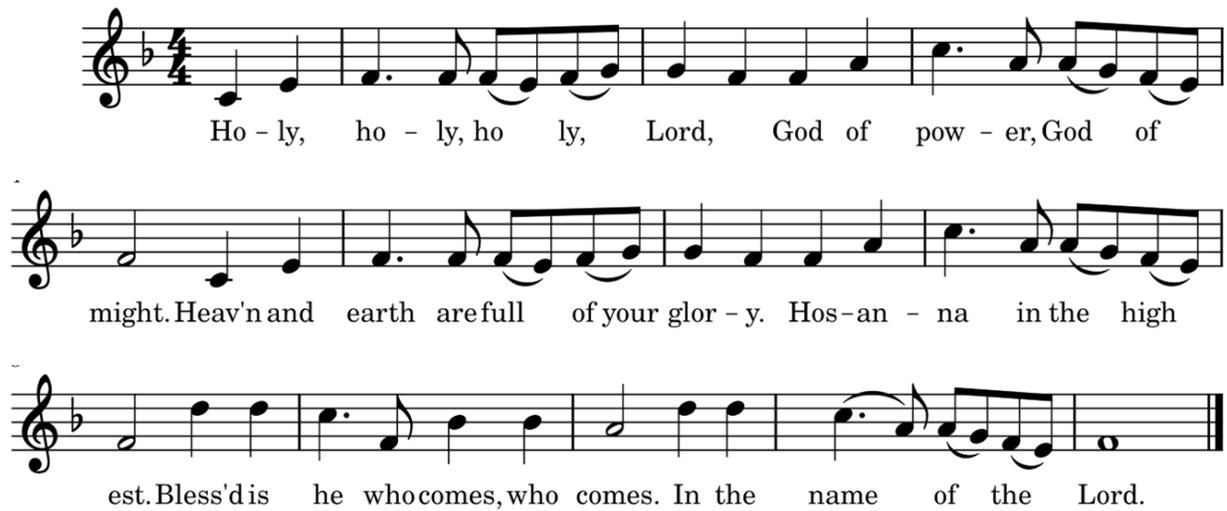
P: Lift up your hearts.

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.

*Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho ly, Lord, God of pow - er, God of
might. Heav'n and earth are full of your glor - y. Hos - an - na in the high
est. Bless'd is he who comes, who comes. In the name of the Lord.

*Eucharistic Prayer

*Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Lamb of God



Lamb of God you take a - way the sins of all the world. Lamb of God
you take a - way the sins of all the world. Have mer-cy on us now.
And grant to us your good peace, O ho - ly lamb of God.

Communion Distribution

*Post-communion prayer

Sending

***Blessing**

The love of God the Sovereign strengthen you,
God the Son save you,
and God the Holy Spirit anoint you for the work ahead.

The holy Trinity bless you †
and grant you a faithful and courageous heart
now and forever.

C: Amen.

*Sending hymn: Joy to the world (ELW 267)

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
 plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

and heav'n and na - ture sing, and

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

heav'n and na - ture sing,

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Christ is coming soon.

C: Thanks be to God.

Postlude