

Advent

Lessons and Carols



St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 24, 2023

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Rev. Katie McNeal, Presiding Minister

Maizy Fisher, Director of Music Ministries

*We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning!
Know that you are welcome here just as you are.*

*If you are looking for a church to call home, why not consider making this one your own? If this is your first time visiting us, please fill out the visitor information card stapled to your bulletin. Everything you need to follow worship can be found in this bulletin. As you are comfortable, please rise when there is an * and join in the congregational responses, noted in **bold**.*

All songs are marked with numbers. The red book in the pew has all the songs. Look for the large number in the upper corner of the page to find the correct song.

*During the time of **Peace**, you are invited to turn to those around you and offer a word of peace. We suggest a handshake and saying, "Peace be with you." You are also welcomed to offer another gesture of peace (wave, fist-bump, smile, etc.). Hand sanitizer is available in each pew.*

*At the time of **Offering**, you are invited to share a gift. You may also offer updates to our ongoing prayer list using the yellow cards in the pews and placing them in the offering plates. Visitor information cards and member attendance cards (attached to the front of the bulletin) may also be placed in the offering plates.*

*At the time of **Holy Communion**, all are welcome to come forward via the center aisle, receive the elements, and return via the side aisles. We begin at the front of the right side, commune all on the right side, then we will invite the left side forward. When you come forward, you may receive the bread from the pastor (gluten free wafers are available), then pre-filled cups with wine or grape juice from the assisting minister. You may consume the elements after receiving them then place the empty cup in the tray held by the acolyte. Those who do not receive Holy Communion are welcome to come forward for a blessing.*

If you need a restroom, restrooms are located on the bottom floor at the far side of the building from the elevator. Restrooms may be accessed either via the stairs in the rear of the sanctuary, the stairs by the Greeting Area, or the elevator.

PRELUDE and ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather today.

It is time to worship!

We listen for God

It is time to hear!

We receive God's grace.

It is time to be loved!

We leave in peace.

It is time to serve others!

As we wait for Jesus' arrival, Emmanuel, God-with-us, is already here in this time and place.

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Sometimes we forget that God is already here. Sometimes we think that we have nowhere left to turn. Sometimes we feel frozen or are rushing with no time to rest; and it feels like life is happening to us too quickly or like our lives will never change. Sometimes it feels like we are out of time for forgiveness. But for God, there is always time for forgiveness. God, Emmanuel, is already here. God's love is with us. And so we trust God, and we confess our sins together.

Holy One, **We have not stayed awake.**

**We have missed you when you appeared in our neighbors, in strangers half a world away,
in the suffering planet.**

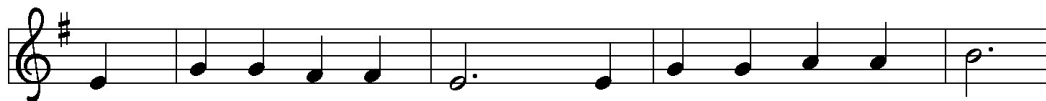
**We have wasted the time and the skills that you gave us
and assumed we were powerless to mend the breaches in our world.**

Sometimes, we even gave up on your mercy, justice, and love.

God, is it too late for us?

Speak tenderly to our anxious hearts.

Tear open the heavens and heal what we have done.



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
- 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
- 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

People of God, God’s judgment is certain and God’s forgiveness is lightning fast. Hear this good news: in the name of Jesus Christ, all your sins are forgiven. Forgiveness gives us the courage we need. Wherever we wait for God’s time to come, we will witness wonders.
Amen.

***GATHERING SONG *Wait for the Lord* (ELW 262)**

Sing four (4) times through

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

The musical score consists of two systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a bass clef staff. The first system has a 4/4 time signature and ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The second system also has a 4/4 time signature and ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Our God of mighty deeds and newborn sighs is nearly here. As we wait the final moments for God’s arrival, as we light the final candle on this wreath, may our hearts be opened to recognize the great things God has done: acts of liberation, mountains moved, hearts changed, and quiet moments of tender love.

ADVENT SONG *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* (ELW 240)

1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.

He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
 He shall feed the flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
 Lift your heads and lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.
 He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

The musical score is a single line of music in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four measures of music, each corresponding to one of the four verses of the song.

Let us pray: Praise to you, O God, who lives with us,
sharing our flesh and bones.

As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we dream and wait for you.

Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles,
and more dear than all else we seek.

Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears.

We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior.

Amen.

THE MAGNIFICAT (Luke 1:46-55)

All

1., 3. My soul pro-claims your great-ness, O God, and my
2. You have cast the might - y down from their thrones, and up -

spir - it re - joic - es in you. You have looked with love on your
lift - ed the hum - ble of heart. You have filled the hun - gry with

ser - vant here, and blessed me all my life through.
won - drous things, and left the wealth - y no part.

Great and might - y are you, O Ho - ly One,
Great and might - y are you, O Faith - ful One,

strong is your kind - ness ev - er - more. How you fa - vor the
strong is your jus - tice, strong your love, as you prom - ised to

weak and low - ly one, hum - bling the proud of heart!
Sar - ah and A - bra - ham, kind - ness for - ev - er - more. **D.C.**

PRAYER FOR OUTREACH MINISTRY

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. **Gracious God, through the ages you have sent your promise to your people in many ways, through many voices. But in these last days, your Son has come to bring it among us in person. Through your Spirit, prepare our hearts to recognize him in his many forms, and to receive him as our Lord and Savior.**

Lessons and Carols

ANTIPHON

O Wisdom,
proceeding from the mouth of the Most High, pervading and permeating all creation,
mightily ordering all things: Come and teach us the way of prudence. Amen.

HYMN STANZA: *O Come, O Wisdom* ELW (257, st. 2)



2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things



far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;



teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

LESSON: Isaiah 40:3-5

³A voice cries out:

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

⁴Every 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.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

CAROL: *Comfort, Comfort Now My People* (ELW 256)



1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.
Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

ANTIPHON

O Adonai and ruler of the house of Israel, who appeared to Moses in the burning bush and gave him the Law on Sinai: Come with an outstretched arm and redeem us. Amen.

HYMN STANZA: *O come, O Lord of might* ELW 257, st. 3



3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on



Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law



in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe. Re-joice! Re-joice!



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

LESSON: Exodus 6:2-7a

²God also spoke to Moses and said to him: "I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob as God Almighty, but by my name 'The LORD' I did not make myself known to them. ⁴I also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they resided as aliens. ⁵I have also heard the groaning of the Israelites whom the Egyptians are holding as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. ⁶Say therefore to the Israelites, 'I am the LORD, and I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. ⁷I will take you as my people, and I will be your God. You shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians.

ANTIPHON

O Root of Jesse, standing as an ensign before the peoples,
before whom all kings are mute,
to whom the nations will do homage: Come quickly to deliver us. Amen.

HYMN STANZA: *O come, O Branch of Jesse* ELW 257, st. 4

4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's
tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain* Re-joice! Re-joice!
Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

LESSON: Isaiah 11:1-10

¹A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them.

⁷The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. ⁹They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

CAROL: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus* (ELW 254)



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

ANTIPHON

O Key of David and scepter of the house of Israel,
you open and no one can close,
you close and no one can open: Come and rescue the prisoners
who are in darkness and the shadow of death. Amen.

HYMN STANZA: *O come, O Key of David* ELW 257, st. 5

O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel

LESSON: Isaiah 42:5-9

⁵Thus says God, the LORD,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it:
⁶I am the LORD, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations,
⁷to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
⁸I am the LORD, that is my name; my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.
⁹See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare; before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

ANTIPHON

O Dayspring, splendor of light everlasting:
Come and enlighten those who sit in darkness
and in the shadow of death. Amen.

HYMN STANZA: *O come, O Dayspring* ELW 257, st. 6

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel

LESSON: Luke 1:68-79

⁶⁸"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.
⁶⁹He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his servant David,
⁷⁰as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
⁷¹that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.
⁷²Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,
and has remembered his holy covenant,
⁷³the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us ⁷⁴that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness
before him all our days.
⁷⁶And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
⁷⁷to give knowledge of salvation to his people
by the forgiveness of their sins.
⁷⁸By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
⁷⁹to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace."

CAROL: *Savior of the Nations, Come* (ELW 263)



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.

ANTIPHON

O King of the nations, the ruler they long for,
the cornerstone uniting all people: Come and save us all,
whom you formed out of clay. Amen.

HYMN STANZA: *O come, O King of nations* ELW 257, st. 7

O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel

LESSON: Isaiah 35:4-7a

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."
⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness,
and streams in the desert; ⁷the burning sand shall become a pool,
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

ANTIPHON

O Emmanuel, our king and our lawgiver, the anointed of the nations and their Savior:
Come and save us, Lord our God. Amen.

HYMN STANZA: *O come, O come, Emmanuel* ELW 257, st. 1

The image shows four staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is written in treble clef. The lyrics are: "1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here un - til the Son of God ap - pear. Re-joyce! Re-joyce! Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el." The word "Refrain" is written above the third staff. The music features various note values including quarter, eighth, and half notes, with some notes beamed together. There are rests at the beginning of several phrases.

LESSON: Isaiah 7:14

¹⁴Therefore the LORD himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel.

CAROL: *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* (ELW 242)



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

***RESPONSIVE PRAYER**

Our world stumbles blindly toward chaos—

come, source of wisdom, and reveal yourself to us.

What we imagine to be strength is really weakness—

come, mighty Lord, and fill us with your true strength.

We long for a standard to look up to—

come, Root of Jesse, claim us as your own.

We languish in prisons of mind and spirit—

come, Key of David, and set us free.

The darkness grows thick around us—

come, Light of light, and dawn upon us.

We are scattered, lacking a sure leader—

come, Prince of peace, and lead us.

We need to know that God is with us—

come, Emmanuel, and dwell in our hearts.

Amen.

***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.

***BLESSING**

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

In our Savior Christ, God is with us.

Almighty God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit,

bless you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG *People, Look East* (ELW 248)



1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing
2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is
3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the
4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new



of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,
plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,
bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,
life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming



trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look
that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look
bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look
with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look



east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.
east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

The flowers on the altar today are provided by Deb and Jeff Martin in celebration of the Birth of Jesus Christ.

Attendance Last Week: 56 + 4 zoom

Notes for the day's texts:

The O Antiphons use traditional messianic titles for Jesus particularly appropriate to Advent expectation: Wisdom, Adonai, Root of Jesse, Key of David, Dayspring, King of Nations, and Emmanuel. These titles are drawn from Isaiah and were developed by the medieval European church to be used as the Magnificat antiphon in the final seven vespers services leading to Christmas Eve. For centuries, they have inspired art, music, and prayer, including the familiar hymn “O come, O come, Emmanuel” (ELW 257).

The language and imagery of the O Antiphons are drawn from the Hebrew Bible, our Old Testament, which Christians share with the Jewish community. While modern Christians look to these ancient texts to enrich our understanding of the Christ for whom we wait, it is appropriate to approach these antiphons with awareness of the context in which they emerged.

The antiphons originated in a historical period when Christian supersessionist readings of scripture were common. As heirs of this history, let us be mindful of the integrity of God's promise given to our Jewish siblings in faith while we pray and sing the O Antiphons.

Today's Music

Fling Wide the Door. Text: Georg Weissel, 1590-1635; tr. Garcia Grindal, b. 1943, Music: J. A. Freylinghausen, Geistreiches Gesangbuch, 1704; arr. hymnal version. Augsburg Fortress.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. Text: Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. composite, Music: French processional, 15th cent. Augsburg Fortress / Public Domain.

Comfort, Comfort Now My People. Text: Johann G. Olearius, 1635-1711; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827-1878, alt., Music: Trente quatre psaumes de David, Geneva, 1551. Public Domain.

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus. Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, Music: W. Walker, Southern Harmony, 1835. Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming. Text: German carol, 15th cent.; tr. Theodore Baker, 1851-1934, sts. 1-2; Harriet R. Krauth, 1845-1925, st. 3; John C. Mattes, 1876-1948, st. 4, Music: Alte catholische geistliche Kirchengesänge, Köln, 1599; arr. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621. Public Domain.

O Lord, How Shall I Meet You. Text: Paul Gerhardt, 1607-1676; tr. composite, Music: Johann Crüger, 1598-1662. Public Domain.

As the Dark Awaits the Dawn. Text: Susan Palo Cherwien, 1953-2021, Music: Carl F. Schalk, 1929-2021. Augsburg Fortress.

Savior of the Nations, Come. Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340-397; Martin Luther, 1483-1546; tr. hymnal version, Music: J. Walter, Geistliche Gesangbüchlein, 1524. Augsburg Fortress / Public Domain.

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn. Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950, Music: Marty Haugen. GIA Publications, Inc.

People, Look East. Text: Eleanor Farjeon, 1881-1965, Music: French carol; arr. Barry Rose, b. 1934. David Higham Associates / Public Domain / G. Schirmer, Inc.

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Next Week's Readings

Isaiah 61:10-62:3 *Clothed in garments of salvation*

Psalms 148 *The splendor of the Lord is over earth and heaven*

Galatians 4:4-7 *Children and heirs of God*

Luke 2:22-40 *The presentation of the child*