



Union Lutheran Church

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4th Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

10:30 a.m. Worship & Holy Communion

We welcome children to be a part of worship. A nursery is also provided for those attending to the needs of infants and small children.

*(Please stand when indicated by *)*

Lutheran Book of Worship (LBW) green hymnal

With One Voice (WOV) blue hymnal

P=Pastor, C=Congregation, L=Lay Reader

+++++

Welcome & Announcements

Prelude: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (Costello)

GATHERING

* Brief Order for Confession & Forgiveness

P In this season of waiting and watching for the return of Christ, we are gathered together to worship in the name of the Father, Son, **+** and Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P A voice cries in the wilderness, "Prepare the way of the Lord. Make straight in the desert a pathway for our God." Let us come humbly before our Lord, asking for forgiveness and mercy for our sins, known and unknown. (Isaiah 40:3)

(Silence for self-reflection and examination)

P God of grace,

C we confess that we have not been attentive to the urgent call to prepare for the coming of your Son. We have neglected to serve our neighbors, near and far. We have relied too much on our own strength rather than relying on your power, grace, and comfort in our lives. Grant us forgiveness and restore us to a right relationship through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

P The God who desires his people to depend upon him, offers us comfort in the knowledge that all our sins are forgiven. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God will stand forever. Live joyfully in the grace and mercy of our Lord. (Isaiah 40:8)

C Amen.

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Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel

1 Oh, come, oh, come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive
 2 Oh, come, oh, come, great Lord of might, Who to your tribes on
 3 Oh, come, strong Branch of Jes - se, free Your own from Sa - tan's
 4 Oh, come, blest Day-spring, come and cheer Our spir - its by your

Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 Si - nai's height In an - cient times once gave the law
 tyr - an - ny; From depths of hell your peo - ple save
 ad - vent here; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,

Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 In cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
 And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.
 And death's dark shad - ows put to flight.

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

5 **Oh, 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.
 Refrain**

* Greeting

P The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ for whom we wait, the love of the Father who will never let us go, and the peace of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C And also with you.

* Kyrie (*Hymn of Praise is omitted during Advent.*)

LBW p. 78-79

A In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

C Lord, have mercy.

A Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

C Amen

* Salutation

LBW p. 82

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

* Prayer of the Day

P Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. With your great might, give us your help, that whatever is hindered by our sins may be speedily accomplished by your grace; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

WORD

Old Testament Lesson: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

¹When the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ²the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” ³And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.” ⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. ⁷In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” ⁸Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no

New Testament Lesson: Romans 16:25-27

²⁵Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith — ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

L Here ends the reading.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath: 1st Advent Candle (Prophecy/Hope), 2nd Advent Candle (Bethlehem/Faith), 3rd Advent Candle (Shepherd/Joy), 4th Advent (Angel/Peace)

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah

WOV# 630

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah 630

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 consists of three systems. The first system includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The second system is a vocal line with lyrics. The third system is a piano accompaniment. The key signature has one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 7/8.

Children's Message

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke the 1st chapter.

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

* Holy Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,
²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's
name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"
²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might
be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.
³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.
³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to
him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his
kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a
virgin?" ³⁵And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of
the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son
of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is
the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God."
³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."
And the angel departed from her.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

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

Sermon: *Sharing Peace*

Pastor Heidi Punt

Hark, the Glad Sound!

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, The Sav - ior
 2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, In Sa - tan's
 3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, The bleed - ing
 4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, Your wel - come

prom - ised long; Let ev - 'ry heart pre -
 bond - age held. The gates of brass be -
 soul to cure, And with the trea - sures
 shall pro - claim, And heav'n's e - ter - nal

pare a throne, And ev - 'ry voice a song.
 fore him burst, The i - ron fet - ters yield.
 of his grace To en - rich the hum - ble poor.
 arch - es ring With your be - lov - ed name.

**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;
 by the power of the Holy Spirit
 he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.
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.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He 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**

**Or, We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.*

* Prayers of the Church

LBW p. 85

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Emmanuel, God with us, through your Word you beckon all people to the light of your love. May your Spirit kindle in your church and particularly this congregation a desire and ability to carry the torch of faithful witness to a world in need of your message of hope and salvation. *Lord in your mercy ...* **hear our prayer.**

Protecting God, grant safe journeys to those who will be traveling in the days ahead. May they be blessed with joyful homecomings. Bring us all to peaceful rest as we find ourselves at home in your presence. Grant that as we celebrate the nativity of our Lord, that we would be filled with a renewed hope for the world you love. Let Christ's love shine through us and illuminate a world in darkness and need. *Lord in your mercy ...* **hear our prayer.**

Holy Lord, give your wisdom and compassion to all who rule and guide the nations of this world. Through their wise leadership may your saving justice be made known. Put an end

to violence and destruction in the world and let your peace reign in every corner of the creation. *Lord in your mercy ...* **hear our prayer.**

God of healing and wholeness, grant the light of your healing presence to all who are suffering illness, loss, grief, or anxiety this season. Give to all in any kind of need the assurance of your life-giving presence during trials. [We pray particularly for ...] Remind all who are facing troubles that you are God-with-us and that your promises of new life, here and now and in eternity, are trustworthy and true. *Lord in your mercy ...* **hear our prayer.**

The prayers conclude:

P Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

* Sharing of the Peace

LBW p. 86

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

Offering The Offering is received as the Lord's Table is prepared. All loose offering will go towards the Youth Missions/Retreats Fund. During the month of December, the Benevolence Teaching Moment is on Food for the Poor. Please prayerfully consider giving to the Benevolence Fund.

Organ Offertory: *The Angel Gabriel* (Thompson)

MEAL

* Offertory ("Let the Vineyards be fruitful Lord...")

LBW p. 86

C **Let the vineyards be fruitful, Lord,
and fill to the brim our cup of blessing.
Gather a harvest from the seeds that were sown,
that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gather the hopes and dreams of all;
unite them with the prayers we offer.
Grace our table with your presence,
and give us a foretaste of the feast to come.**

* Offertory Prayer

P Loving God, we give you thanks for the gifts you have first given us. May the gifts we offer out of what you have granted to us, be pleasing in your sight and reflect our tender love for you.

C **Amen.**

* Great Thanksgiving

LBW p. 88

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 him thanks and praise.

P It is indeed right and salutary . . . *(Here the minister continues with the preface appropriate to the day or season, concluding:)* we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

* Sanctus (*"Holy, Holy, Holy Lord..."*)

LBW p. 89

**C Holy, holy, holy Lord,
Lord God of pow'r 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.**

* Words of Institution

LBW p. 89

P In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and 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

LBW p. 91

**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**

Lamb of God (*"Lamb of God, you take away..."*)

LBW p. 92

**C Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;
grant us peace, grant us peace.**

Distribution of Communion All are welcome to receive the Lord's Body and Blood who are baptized and believe that Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, is truly present in, with and under the form of bread and wine for the forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. All who do not commune are invited to come forward to receive a blessing. Gluten Free wafers and grape juice are also available upon request. Please fill out the communion card in the pew and hand to the Usher while following their directions to receive Holy Communion or a blessing.

* Blessing

LBW p. 92

**P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
C Amen**

* Post-Communion Canticle (*"Thank the Lord..."*)

LBW p. 92-93

**C Thank the Lord and sing his praise; tell ev'ryone what he has done.
Let ev'ryone who seeks the Lord rejoice and proudly bear his name.
He recalls his promises and leads his people forth in joy
with shouts of thanksgiving. Alleluia. Alleluia.**

* Post-Communion Prayer

P God of new beginnings, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Strengthen us for the journey as we wait and watch for the Lord's Messiah to break into our world in ever amazing ways.

C Amen.

SENDING

* Benediction

**P As you go from this place, remember that with God, nothing is impossible. May God the Father, Son, ✠ and Holy Spirit go before you, beside you, and with you wherever you go.
(Luke 1:37)**

C Amen.

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came 632

1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born

with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
"To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,

"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
"My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
and Chris - tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say:

most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Glo - ri - a!
"Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,"

* Sending

P You have been nurtured in Word and Sacrament now go therefore and make disciples of all nations

C **Baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son + and of the Holy Spirit.**

P Union Lutheran Church you are sent!

C **Amen, amen, amen**

Postlude: *Hark, the Glad Sound!* (Leavitt)

Lutheran Book of Worship Setting 2 (p. 77-97)

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Those Serving in December

Christmas Eve (10:30 a.m.): Deena Lanning & Karen Morgan

Christmas Eve (7:40 p.m.)

Acolytes: Noah Trexler & Sam Nguyen

Readers: Pete Nguyen & Ellie Wilhelm

Communion Assistants: Janice Goodman, Tara & Don Davis

Dec. 31: Scott & Jennifer Curlee and Cathy Painter

Ushers: Phil Cauble, Larry Barringer, Tara Davis & Micah Nguyen

Offering Counters: Jennifer Curlee, Ali Davis & Doris Shepherd

Union News

4th Sunday of Advent, December 24

8:45 a.m.-9:15 a.m. Beginner Bells

9:15 a.m. Kids Choir (5th grade and younger)

9:35 a.m. Sunday School Christmas Party in large fellowship hall

Please bring a wrapped \$5 exchange gift.

Adult Sunday School Class:

Expectant Mother's Faith ~ Luke 1:1-25, 39-45, 56-60; Philippians 4:10-19

10:30 a.m. Worship & Holy Communion

1st Advent Candle (Prophecy/Hope), 2nd Advent Candle (Bethlehem/Faith),

3rd Advent Candle (Shepherd/Joy), 4th Advent (Angel/Peace)

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-5; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Sermon: *Sharing Peace*

Please pick up yours and family members 2024 offering envelopes from the front pew.

Christmas Eve, December 24

4:00 p.m. Informal Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the Sanctuary

7:40 p.m. Prelude Music-**8:00 p.m.**

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the Sanctuary

This Weeks' Activities:

Monday, Dec. 25	Christmas Day The church office is closed.
Tuesday, Dec. 26	Eagle Family has reserved the small fellowship hall.
Wednesday, Dec. 27	The church office is closed. No Confirmation Class this week. No Wednesday Choirs rehearsals this week.
Thursday, Dec. 28	5:00 p.m. Christmas Program removal of decorations from large fellowship hall

Sunday, December 31

New Year's Eve

9:15 a.m. Kids Choir (5th grade and younger)

9:35 a.m. Sunday School

Mission Wonders ~ Luke 10:1-12, 17-20

Tell...how much the Lord has done for you. Mark 5:19

Adult Sunday School Class:

The Faith of the Wise Men ~ Isaiah 49:1-6; Micah 5:2-4; Matthew 2:1-12

10:30 a.m. Worship & Holy Communion

Christmas Carols Liturgy

1st Advent Candle (Prophecy/Hope), 2nd Advent Candle (Bethlehem/Faith)

3rd Advent Candle (Shepherd/Joy), 4th Advent (Angel/Peace)

5th Candle (Christ Candle-Light of the World)

Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 111; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

2023 is quickly coming to a close. All offering must be turned in by Sunday, December 31, during the worship service to be credited for 2023.

12 noon Cauble Family has reserved the small Fellowship Hall.



May your **Christmas** be blessed by the **baby Jesus!**

Merry Christmas

2024 ALTAR FLOWERS

2024 Altar Flowers sign-up sheet is available in the Narthex. Please fill out the dates that you would like to reserve. The church office will contact you the week of for bulletin wording.

It is your responsibility to pick up the liners, deliver liners to the flower store of your choosing, and deliver flowers before the worship service. (Two flower stores have the keys to deliver: Salisbury Florist and Flower Basket.)

Fresh flowers are placed in the Sanctuary as a symbol of Christ's living sacrifice for us and our grateful response in offering our first fruits to Him.

The congregation is invited to a Luncheon on **Thursday, January 11, 2024** in the large fellowship hall with the Social Ministry, Good Timers, and Autumn Care residents.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER...

Nursing Home Residents – Brenda Mahaley, Ruth Monroe, Jean Ray, Jay Rusher (Autumn Care)

Homebound/Shut-ins Members – Sarah Bame, Arnold Cauble, Rachel Earnhardt, Tommy & Joan Kerns, Teresa Kesler, James & Jean Kluttz, Glenn Lowder, Frances Norris, William Page, Rev. TC & Mary Plexico, Macky Swicegood, Effie Vellines, Billy Waller & Michael Walton

Sick/Surgery/Recovery – Genevieve Baker, Brenda Cauble, Glenn Eagle, Glenn Honeycutt, Jr., John Knight, Sharon Moore, Kay Morgan, Marvin Nunn, Doris Page, Wayne Vellines & Pat Wiles

Continual Prayer –Bill Broadway, Sharon Peeler Bullock (Sylvia Peeler’s daughter), Pat Kluttz, Fay Miller (friend of Pat Kluttz); Union Fire Department #76, Global Missions (Congo, Slovakia, and Haiti), & those affected by natural or political disasters

Confirmands: Caylea Cline, Mallory Eagle, Landon Kesler, and Noah Trexler

Stewardship Update

Sunday School (12/17)	51
Worship & Holy Communion (12/17)	99
Current Fund (12/17)	\$3,541.00
Christmas Program (12/17)	96
Mid-Week Advent (26 on 12/19 & 5 on 12/20)	31
2023 Weekly offering needed to meet our Ministry Support plan	\$6,482.37

How Can You Serve in December?



Sanctuary.

Social Ministry Committee invites the congregation to either collect new warm socks for adults in all sizes to put in our homeless bags or mark “Social Ministry” on your check for a financial donation. The committee will use the financial gift to purchase new socks. Please place the socks in the box located on the front pew in the

Section 2: Service of the Word ~ Creed (...from the Latin word *credo*, “I believe.”

*Having received the Word of the Lord, we respond with the **Creed** by confessing the Christian faith. By confessing one of the Church’s historic creeds – typically the **Apostles’ Creed** or **Nicene Creed** – we express our unity in the faith, the same faith the Church has confessed throughout the world and across the ages.*



“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” Romans 10:9-10

(A Simple Explanation of the Church Service, Concordia Publishing House, page 16)