



Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:30 am - December 22, 2024

Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church

PRELUDE

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CANDLE LIGHTING

Welcome to Messiah

We are a community of grace where we live out Jesus' commandment to love God with our whole heart and to love our neighbors as ourselves. We also seek to be a welcoming community for all people. This includes people of every race, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity, ethnic background, economic grouping, religious affiliation, and political persuasion. We do this simply because God created all people in God's own image and Christ Jesus came so all people might have abundant life. We may not always be perfect, but this is our intention--all are welcome!

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

Let us begin with tenderness.
Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve.
**Let us begin from a place of vulnerability
and hope.**
Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us start with love.
Today we light the candles of hope, peace,
joy, and love.

**May the warmth of these lights be
our cornerstone.**
**May the truth in these lights help us
begin again.**

May it be so! **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Please stand as comfortable, in body or in spirit and face the cross at the back of the sanctuary. The presiding minister will read the sections in plain text.

You are invited to read the bold portions.

Gracious God,
**You paint pictures of what could be,
but we declare those visions impossible.**
**You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,
but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.**

You dream of a more just day,
 but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that horizon.
 Forgive us for losing sight of hope.
 Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.
 Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.
 Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams,
 and to not be afraid of either.
 With gratitude we pray, Amen.

Friends,
 No matter what you hold onto,
 and no matter what you let slip through your hands,
 God is holding onto you.
 That good news will never change.
 So hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:
 Today is a new day. Today, we have reason to hope. Today, we are forgiven.
 And the same will be true tomorrow.
 Thanks be to God for a love like that.
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN #240 "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" vs. 4



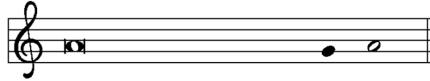
- 1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
- 4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: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

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.**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



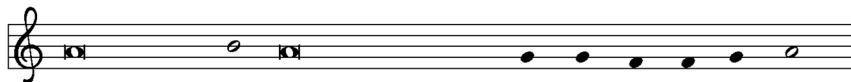
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - - men.

Assisting minister



Glo-ry to God in the high-est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav-en-ly King, al-might-y God and Fa-ther, we



wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo-ry.



Lord Je-sus Christ, on-ly Son of the Fa-ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a-way the sin of the world: have mer-cy on us;



you are seat-ed at the right hand of the Fa-ther: re-ceive our prayer.



For you a-lone are the Ho-ly One, you a-lone are the Lord,



you a-lone are the Most High, Je-sus Christ, with the Ho-ly Spir-it,



in the glo-ry of God the Fa-ther. A-men.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Holy God, the stories of Advent are stories many of us have heard before. We've arranged the nativity scenes. We've read the children's books. We've seen the movies. We've sung

the songs. But as we come to your scripture this morning, we pray: help us begin again. Clear the distractions from our minds. Center us in this space. Move through the protective barriers we surround ourselves with and speak to us here and now. We are listening. We are hopeful. **Amen.**

Please
be
seated.

FIRST READING

Matthew 1:18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah[a] 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. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. 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. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Word of God, Word of Life.
Thanks be to God.

HANDBELL CHOIR

“Christ, You are the Fullness”

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:5-10

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,
“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;
in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.
Then I said, ‘See, I have come to do your will, O God’
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

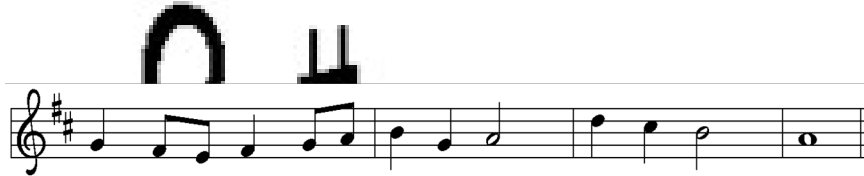
When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Word of God, Word of Life.
Thanks be to God.

Please stand as you are comfortable in body or spirit.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

“Alleluia” p. 124



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL

Luke 1:46-55

Glory to you, O Lord.

And Mary said,
 “My soul magnifies the Lord,
 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
 for he has looked with favor on the lowly state 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;
 indeed, 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 imagination 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 come to the aid of his child 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 our Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ!

Please be seated.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY/MEDITATIVE MUSIC “Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming”

Please stand as you are comfortable

APOSTLES' 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 OF INTERCESSION

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

God our uniter, increase communication and cooperation in our relationships with those of other traditions and religions. Root your church in the radical message of your incarnation, and enable us to pursue your justice in the world. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our creator, we praise you for the beauty that surrounds us. Awaken in us a renewed sense of care for the wildlife in our communities. Form us into faithful stewards of what you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our sovereign, Mary proclaims a new way of life that lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. Nurture in local governments and municipalities a desire to care for all who are overlooked and ignored. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our beacon, as the northern hemisphere begins its slow turn toward more daylight, remind us that even in the deepest nights, you are there. Comfort the lonely and bereaved. Hold closely the frightened, anxious, depressed, and ill, especially.... Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our guide, shepherd the leadership of this congregation. Bless the council and staff in discerning future ministry and open their hearts to the voices of the community. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

God our life, you remember the promises you have made to your people. In gratitude for those who have died, we praise you for your faithfulness throughout history. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

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

Please be seated.

SENIOR CHOIR ANTHEM

“As The Dark Awaits the Dawn”

Please stand as you are comfortable in body or spirit.

OFFERING PRAYER

Loving God, we give you thanks for the grace and love you show us. As we share and give, may your love be revealed in our lives, in the lives of others, and in the world. **Amen.**

THE LORD’S SUPPER

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

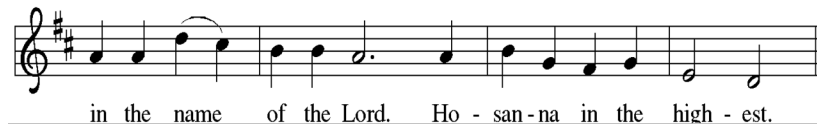
We lift them to the Lord.

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,
... with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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



Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup...

... hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God...

... your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

...one God, now and forever.

Amen.

...we will lift our voices together to pray the words your son taught us to pray, saying:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

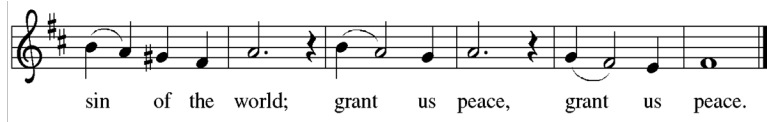
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Please be seated.

COMMUNION HYMNS

“Lamb of God” p. 154

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



- #905 "We Are Waiting for Jesus"
- #907 "Filled with Hope and Gratitude"

Please stand as you are comfortable in body or spirit.

POST COMMUNION PRAYER & BLESSING

BENEDICTION

As you leave this place,
 may you have the wisdom to lean on one other.
 May you have the courage to hold onto hope,
 the compassion to do the good that is yours to do,
 and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing.
 For in a world full of dead ends,
 Advent invites us to begin again.
 So start here.
 Start now.
 Start with love and begin again.
 In the name of Christ,
 our new beginning,
Amen.

SENDING HYMN

"Hope is Worth the Risk"

Col - lege stu - dents ga - ther pro - test - ing for peace
 Young girls in I - ran to pro - test the re - gime
 In Tai - wan the drea - mers flood the streets with blooms
 Li - ber - i - an wo - men scarred by ci - vil war
 Eth - nic mu - sic rings out from the Bal - tic Sea
 Age to age and coast to coast peo - ple have stood

Stand - ing firm in spite of vio - lence from po - lice
 Take off their hi - jabs to let their hair be seen
 Sun - flo - wers and li - lies li - ber - ty's per - fume
 Keep the peace talks go - ing by barr - ing the doors
 As the peo - ple sing their right to li - ber - ty
 Risk - ing some - thing big in hope of some - thing good

8
 Em-pires will fight with force or po-li - tics Still the Spi-rit whis-pers, "Hope is worth the risk"

SENDING

Go in peace. Follow Jesus.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Welcome to Messiah Lutheran Church



Children belong in worship!
Worship kits and a nursery space is available. God rejoices in the joyful noise of children and so do we!



God calls us to welcome everyone!
Messiah seeks to be a welcoming community and to share the love of God with our neighbors. If you are new, please introduce yourself to our pastors.



Worship should be accessible!
Hearing devices (and T-Coil) and large print bulletins are available. We invite you to sit or stand as you are comfortable. All gender and family restroom facilities are available on the first level, please see signs in the Narthex.



All are welcome at Jesus' table!
During communion grape juice and gluten-free options are available. Those not wishing to commune may come forward for a blessing. Those not able to come forward may receive communion in their pew, please notify the usher.



God calls us to pray!
Private prayer requests may be made by writing them on the back of the Welcome Card. If you would like to be added to the prayer list or receive a pastoral care visit, please contact the church office.

Messiah Evangelical Lutheran Church

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906.225.1119 — www.messiahlutheranmqt.org

Preacher:	Pr. Molly Hunter
Liturgist:	Pr. Andrew Plocher
Assisting Minister:	Terry Langenberg
Reader:	Judy Quirk
Ushers:	Cathy Seblonka, Sten Taube
Communion Assistants:	Mike Coyne, Terry Langenberg, Larry Pagel
Greeters:	Joan Tasson, Jan Vickstrom
Organist:	Kathy Strazzinski
Senior Choir Director:	Sara Parks
Audio Technician:	Traci Zini
Livestream Technician:	Traci Zini
Nursery:	Maddie Dykema
Flower Delivery:	
Refreshments:	Sherry Labbe, Penny Streeter

Acknowledgements:
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Thank you for your generosity!

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