

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SMITHFIELD

Pastor Deb Staniszewski

December 21, 2025 - 9:30 am

Fourth Sunday of Advent

“Thriving Together in Faith and Love”

What Do You Fear?

Good News is louder than fear.

PRELUDE (words for following)

Come And See

Bill Hood

Unfamiliar season, stars are shining bright.
A story is unfolding under pale moonlight.
Whispers in the silence, gentle lullaby.
A miracle arising. Come and see the light.

Come and see the wonder, Come and see the grace.
God is man among us in this humble place.
In the heart of the winter love takes on a face.
Word becomes flesh. Come and see.

Even in the chaos world is calling still.
A steady light is glowing completed on a hill.
Air is full of wonder, world holds its breath.
A moment to remember, come and see what's next.

Come and see the wonder, Come and see the grace.
God is man among us in this humble place.
In the heart of the winter love takes on a face.
Word becomes flesh. Come and see.

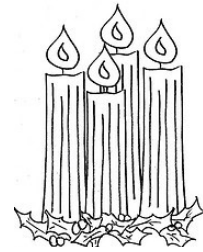
Concordia Christmas 2024 - Come and See
Transcribed cpm

Welcome & Announcements

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

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.



The fourth candle on the wreath is lit.

Show Up Britt Kusserow

Solo

Sun set-ting ear - ly, get out the can - dles, so much re - vealed in a spark.

4

What do you pic - ture in these grow-ing sha - dows, what do you fear in the dark?

All

8

I be-lieve that a God, born in-to em-pire, car-ries the mes - sage that hope

12

is e-nough. A lit-tle brave can - dle against grow-ing sha - dows.

15

Fear - ful or not we show up, we show up.

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The King Shall Come

John Brownlie - ELW 260 - arr. CPM

The King shall come when morning dawns, and light triumphant breaks;
When beauty gilds the eastern hills, and life to joy awakes.

Not as of old a little child to bear, and fight, and die,
But crowned with glory like the sun that lights the morning sky.

O brighter than the rising morn when Christ, victorious, rose,
And left the lonesome place of death, despite the rage of foes.

O brighter than that glorious morn shall dawn upon our race
The day when Christ in splendor comes, and we shall see his face.

The King shall come when morning dawns, and light and beauty brings:
Hail, Christ the Lord! Your people pray: Come quickly, King of kings.

arr. © 1999 CPM.

GREETING (adapted from ELW Service of the Word)

As the nights grow longer, and the shadows settle in,

we ponder your marvelous designing.

When our hearts are wintering, weary with grief and woe,

we ponder and seek your wisdom beyond our understanding.

In each moment fleeting, each fragile life beholding, in each gift of your bestowing,

we ponder and trust your promises fully.

Come, O Christ, and set us free.

Come, Emmanuel, bring in your reign of justice and peace.

We wait for a new heaven and a new earth,

where righteousness is our home.

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Alleluia! Christ is Here

Greg Ronning

Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is here.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Salvation appears.

God's Word is spoken and heard; we are set free.

A light unto our path; we all can see.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is here.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Salvation appears.

God's presence to have and to hold in the bread and the wine.

The feast of victory, God's love divine.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is here.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Salvation appears.

Blessing, honor, glory and might, be to God and the Lamb.

All the people of God are singing forever, Amen!

Alleluia! Alleluia! Christ is here.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Salvation appears. Al-le-lu-ia!

Alleluia Christ is Here from the Alleluia Liturgy by Greg Ronning. Used by permission.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together. Lord Christ,

Stir up your power, 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.

be seated

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READING - Isaiah 41:5-10

⁵ The coastlands have seen and are afraid;

the ends of the earth tremble; they have drawn near and come.

⁶ Each one helps the other, saying to one another, "Take courage!"

⁷ The artisan encourages the goldsmith, and the one who smooths with the hammer encourages the one who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, "It is good," and they fasten it with nails so that it cannot be moved.

⁸ But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend;

⁹ you whom I took from the ends of the earth and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant; I have chosen you and not cast you off";

¹⁰ do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM - Psalm 80: 3-7, 17 -19 - *read responsively*

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?

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 away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹ **Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

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stand if able

Waiting for You Christopher Grundy

We are wait - ing for you we know that you al ways a bid e.

We are wak ing to your pres ence and our hearts are o pen wide,

o pen wide, o - pen wide.

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The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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.

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

be seated

ANTHEM (words for following)

O Come All Ye Faithful

John F. Wade arr. Steve Young

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye unto Bethlehem.
Come and behold him, born the king of angels;
O come, let us adore him, he is Christ the Lord.

O sing, choirs of angels, sing in exultation;
O sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God, glory in the highest;
O come, let us adore him, he is Christ the Lord.

Emanuel, Emmanuel come!
He is born, the newborn King,
Let our heart rejoice and sing.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be all glory giv'n!
Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing:
O come, let us adore him, he is Christ the Lord.

Concordia Christmas 2023 - Navidad
Transcribed cpm

SERMON



stand as able

Joseph Was Troubled

Carolyn Winfrey Gilette

Joseph was troubled by what he knew!
Mary was pregnant; what should he do?
He wanted justice -- not to cause shame.
He would dismiss her, placing no blame.

Joseph was sleeping; that night he dreamed.
Nothing was really as it had seemed.



"Don't be afraid -- make Mary your wife.
God has a plan for your baby's life."

Hearing that message, Joseph obeyed,
Seeing a new path God's love had made.
He stood by Mary, waiting that birth,
Seeing God's Son there -- Savior of earth!

God, when our troubles seem far too great,
Help us to listen, wonder and wait;
Sometimes the world is not as it seems.
Give us your vision; give us your dreams.

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RESPONSE TO THE WORD

We confess our faith together:

**We believe in God the Father
Maker of all things.
We believe in his Son Jesus Christ,
Lord and Savior of the world.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
Giver of life and light.
We belong to the Body of Christ, the Church,
God's family everywhere.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

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.

✠ We are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.
Amen.

PRAYER SONG

Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying

Ken Medema - ELW 752

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

PRAYERS OF INTERSESSION

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

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The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill (*especially*). God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Amen.

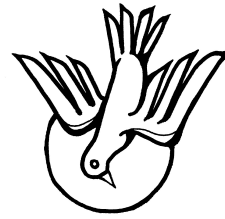
Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us pow'r, send us grace.

THE PEACE

The peace of the Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

We share the peace.



be seated

OFFERING

stand as able

OFFERTORY

Create in Me

Mary Rice Hopkins - W&P 35

Create in me a clean heart, O God, that I might serve you;
Create in me a clean heart, O God, that I might be renewed.
So fill me and heal me and bring me back to you.
Create in me a clean heart, O God, that I might serve you.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together. Nourishing God,
**you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal,
satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of
your kingdom come. Amen.**

COMMUNION GREETING

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.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night 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

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

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

Sara Thomsen

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, give us your peace,

Give us your peace.

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Here is life. God is with us.

Come, receive what God has promised.

Communion is continuous; lectern side communes first, followed by pulpit side.

Grape juice is available in filled glasses; gluten free wafers are available if requested.

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BLESSING & PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen

Let us pray together Loving God,

in a world racked with fear, you gather us together. You set the table. You meet us here. You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits. You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot win every time. So with renewed courage, with renewed hope, with renewed conviction, send us out into the world. Help us to feed others as you have fed us. With gratitude we pray. Amen

BENEDICTION

In a fearful world, may you look for God's Spirit.

May you reach out for each other's hands.

May you choose courage whenever you can.

And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear.

In the name of the One who calls,

The One who sends,
And the One who journeys with --
Go in peace and *be not afraid*.

Amen.



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People, Look East

Eleanor Farjeon / ELW 248 / original v.3 added

People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the guest, is on the way.

Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish, that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the rose, is on the way.

Birds, though you long have ceased to build, guard the nest that must be filled.
Even the hour when wings are frozen God for fledging time has chosen.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the bird, is on the way.

Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim one more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather, bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the star, is on the way.

Angels, announce with shouts of mirth, Christ who brings new life to earth.
Set every peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Lord, is on the way.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING

Go in peace. Fear not!
Thanks be to God!

