

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH OF SMITHFIELD
Pastor Deb Staniszewski
November 30, 2025
First Sunday of Advent
8:30 & 10:00am



"Thriving Together in Faith and Love"

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

SILENT MEDITATION

PRELUDE

WELCOME

please stand if able

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

wk 1

We praise you, O God, for this evergreen crown that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the first candle on this wreath, rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes with all the saints and angels. Enlighten us with your grace, and prepare our hearts to welcome him with joy. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

Amen.

The first candle is lit. After the candle is lit, we sing:

Show Up

Britt Kusserow

Solo

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

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

All

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

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

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

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CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

A Sanctified Art

Friends, if you long to feel closer to God, then the Prayer of Confession is a step in the right direction. For in the Prayer of Confession, we lay our hearts before God. We pour out the truth of our lives. We do not hide anything from our Creator, and in that simple act, God somehow always feels closer. So join me in this prayer. Join me as we invite God to draw closer, to break in here.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Ever-present God,

We long to feel you close. We long to feel your presence in our lives. We long for you to break through the chaos and suffering of this world. However, if we're honest, we rarely stand still long enough to feel you in our midst. Forgive our rushing distractions. Forgive our wandering hearts, and center us in this space. Remind us that even in the time of Herod, even on the longest nights, you are always there. Amen.

Family of faith,
Even when we doubt God's presence,
Even when we fail to notice God's fingerprints in this world,
God is always moving closer to us.
Hear and believe the good news this Advent season:

**Nothing can keep God's love away.
We are seen. We are forgiven. We are not alone.
Amen.**

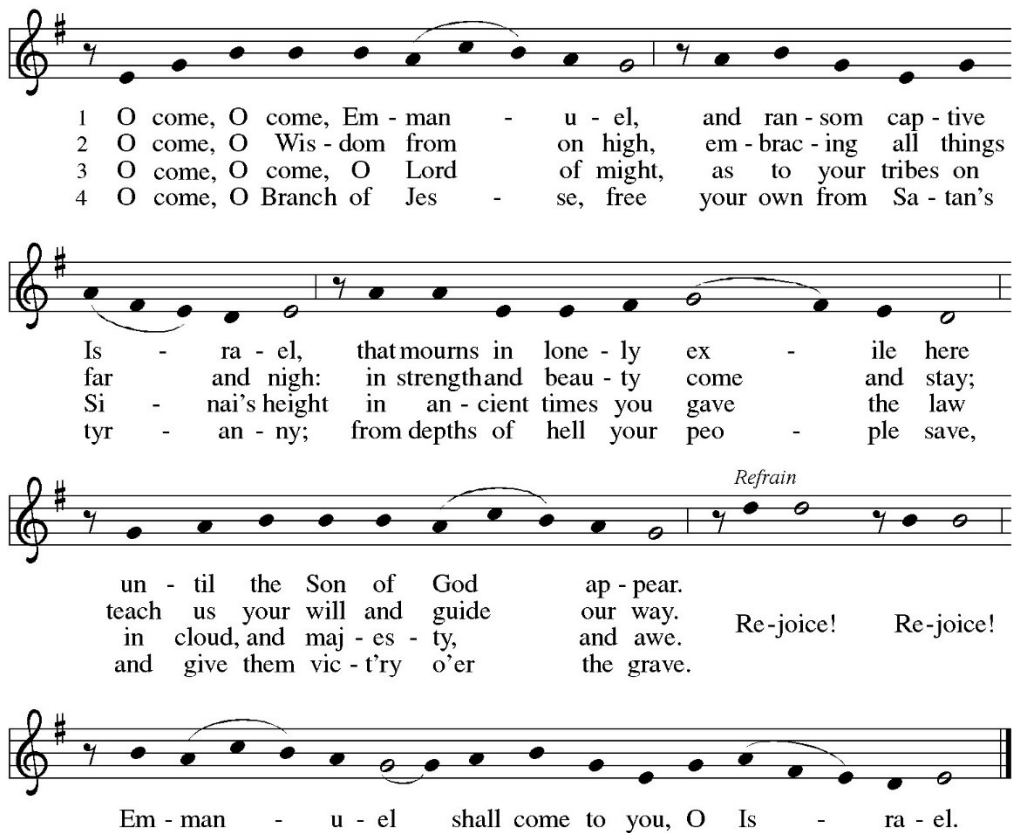
GATHERING SONG

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

(ELW 257)

*Text: *Psalterium Concilium Cathedralium*, Köln, 1710, tr. composite
Music: VERNI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.
Text vs. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress

Continued on p4



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's

Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,

Refrain
 un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.

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

- 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. *Refrain*
- 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. *Refrain*
- 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. *Refrain*
- 8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
 and ransom captive Israel,
 that mourns in lonely exile here
 until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

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.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

(ELW 139)

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people 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

Let us pray responsively.

With us in the time of Moses, you spoke through water in the desert and a pillar of smoke.

In the time of the judges, you spoke through the prophets.

In the time of Herod, you spoke through angel choruses and unlikely miracles.

In every time you have been speaking. So today, in our time, we ask that you speak again.

Break through the chatter and the distraction of our weary minds and speak to us once more.

**With hope we pray,
Amen.**

please be seated

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: LAMENTATIONS 3:55-57

A reading from Lamentations

- ⁵⁵ I called on your name, O LORD,
from the depths of the pit;
⁵⁶ you heard my plea, "Do not close your ear
to my cry for help, but give me relief!"
⁵⁷ You came near when I called on you;
you said, "Do not fear!"

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 122 responsively

- ¹ I was glad when they I said to me,
"Let us go to the house I of the LORD."
² **Now our I feet are standing
within your gates, I O Jerusalem.**
³ Jerusalem is built I as a city
that is at unity I with itself;
⁴ **to which the tribes go up, the tribes I of the LORD,
the assembly of Israel, to praise the name I of the LORD. R**
⁵ For there are the I thrones of judgment,
the thrones of the I house of David.
⁶ **Pray for the peace I of Jerusalem:
"May they pros- I per who love you.**
⁷ Peace be with- I in your walls
and quietness with- I in your towers.
⁸ **For the sake of my kindred I and companions,
I pray for I your prosperity.**
⁹ Because of the house of the I LORD our God,
I will seek to I do you good." **R**

please stand if able to welcome the gospel

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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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GOSPEL LUKE 1:5-13

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

⁵In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. ⁷But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

⁸Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, ⁹he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. ¹⁰Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. ¹¹Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

please be seated

MUSICAL OFFERING ST. PAUL'S CHOIR



SERMON PASTOR STANISZEWSKI

please stand if able to proclaim the word of God in song.

HYMN OF THE DAY

In the Time of Herod

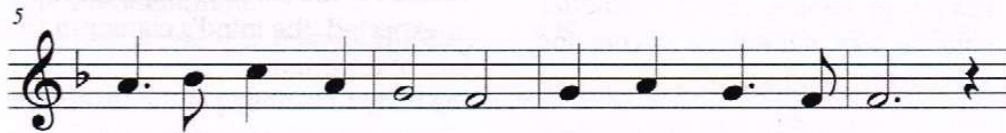
CRANHAM ("In the Bleak Midwinter")

Words by Anna Strickland, 2025

Music by Gustav Holst, 1906



In the time of Her - od, fear had ta - ken hold
Thick as fog the fear grew, slow - ly creep - ing in
Pierc - ing through the stra - tus comes the an - gels' song
In the time of Her - od, fear has ta - ken hold



Hope was bur - ied deep and hid - den, rare as gold
Day by day the peo - ple bent and drew with - in
"Do not fear!" rings hol - low when we've feared so long
Still we share a long - ing for a glimpse of hope



Or - di - na - ry peo - ple dared not speak a - loud
With the clouds so hea - vy, who could see the stars?
Still in the re - cess - es of our wea - ry souls
Or - di - na - ry peo - ple shout the truth we trust:



Dreams of the Mes - si - ah break - ing through the clouds
Hope - less - ness had trapped them, strong as pris - on bars
Some - thing is a - wak - ened— could it be our hope?
God will stop at no - thing to be here with us

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**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.**

AMEN

SERVICE OF HEALING

Our Lord Jesus healed many as a sign of the reign of God come near and sent the disciples to continue this work of healing—with prayer, the laying on of hands, and anointing. In the name of Christ, the great healer and reconciler of the world, we now entrust to God all who are in need of healing.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and especially for all who are suffering or are in any affliction.

Merciful God, you sent your Son to be our peace. Help all those who suffer any pain or grief, hopelessness or anxiety. In your great mercy,
hear us, O God.

Mighty God, mercifully grant strength to the weak and comfort to those who suffer, that their sickness and pain may be turned into health. In your great mercy,
hear us, O God.

God of peace and reconciliation, bring an end to the sickness of the world, especially violence, terrorism, war, and their causes. In your great mercy,
hear us, O God.

Holy God, Holy One, your Son prayed that your people may be one. May the gift of baptism be a power for healing the church's brokenness, and bless all efforts for renewal and Christian unity. In your great mercy,
hear us, O God.

Loving God, mend broken relationships and bring peace to our families, our congregation, this community, and the world. In your great mercy,
hear us, O God.

God of healing, your touch has the power to make us whole. We pray for those suffering from physical or mental illness. Embrace those who are sick especially those on our prayer list.
hear us, O God
Amen.

Please be seated

LAYING ON OF HANDS AND ANOINTING

Those who wish to receive the laying on of hands (and anointing) come forward. The minister lays both hands on each person's head in silence, after which he or she may dip a thumb in the oil and make the sign of the cross on the person's forehead saying:

(Through this holy anointing) may God's love and mercy uphold you by the grace and power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Please stand if able

Blessing

As you are anointed with this oil,
may God bless you with the healing power of the Holy Spirit.
May God forgive you your sins,
release you from suffering,
and restore you to wholeness and strength.
May God deliver you from all evil,
preserve you in all goodness,
and bring you to everlasting life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PEACE

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

Please share the peace as you are comfortable.



MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING

please be seated for the Offering

please stand if able for the Offertory Song

OFFERTORY SONG

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

ELW 182

Let the vine - yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath - er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your
pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

S&S Advent 26

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.

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.

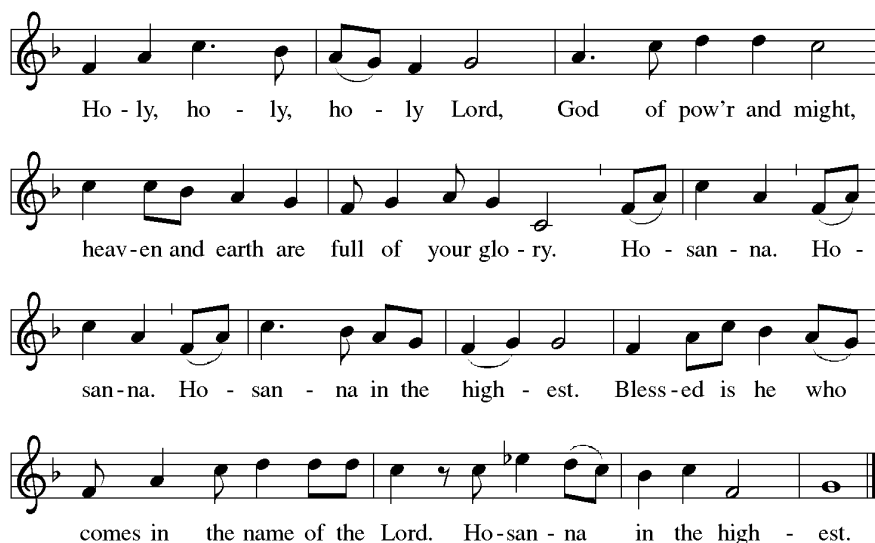
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

Advent

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.
You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



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

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

S&S Advent 26

Holy God, the Beginning and the End,
our Salvation and our Hope,
we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.
When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair,
you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.
At this end of the ages
your Son Jesus came to bring us your love
and to heal all the suffering world.
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.
 Remembering, therefore,
 his life, death, and resurrection,
 we await his coming again
 in righteousness and peace.
 Send your Spirit on us
 and on this bread and wine we share:
 strengthen our faith,
 increase our hope,
 and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.
 Through him all glory and honor is yours,
 Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
 in your holy Church,
 both now and forever.

Amen

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.**



COMMUNION SONG

"LAMB OF GOD"

(ELW p. 146)

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
 sin of the world; grant us peace.

please be seated

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

S&S Advent 26

Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

** We practice continuous Communion.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Amen.



please stand if able

BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

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

Amen

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Sanctified Art

Let us pray Responsively

Loving God In a world wracked 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.

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.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

A Sanctified Art

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.

Blessed Be the God of Israel



1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free
 2 With prom - ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,
 3 My child, as proph - et of the Lord you will pre - pare the way,



and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da - vid's tree.
 the oath once sworn to A - bra - ham, from foes to save us all;
 to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.



So have the proph - ets long de - clared that with a might - y arm
 that we might wor - ship with - out fear and of - fer lives of praise,
 Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease



God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.
 in ho - li - ness and righ - teous - ness to serve God all our days.
 to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, based on Luke 1:68-79

Music: FOREST GREEN, English folk tune

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Fear Not.

Thanks be to God.

Advent