

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD
LITTLETON, COLORADO

December 20 - 21, 2025

4:00 p.m. Saturday, 8:00 & 10:30 a.m. Sunday

Love



FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

NOTHING TO FIGURE OUT

AS WE GATHER

Though Matthew is already telling of the birth of Jesus Christ, it is not yet the account we look forward to hearing on Christmas Eve. But this one, lighter on details, is heavy with the promise Jesus' birth fulfills. This Sunday, we hear of Joseph's own angel visit, of the name that shall be given to this child, and of His birth to save His people from their sins. All of this is prefigured in the voice of the Advent prophet Isaiah and framed in the essential message of the church by the words of Paul. Each of the readings appointed for today remind us that God has it all figured out, and even though it all unfolded in time before us, it was appointed by God from the beginning of time. As we remember again all that happened, we also happily remember that God still has it all in hand and that Christ is not only the fulfiller of the past but also the author of the future.

✠ PREPARATION ✠

Prelude "Of the Father's Love Begotten" John Cook
Pastoral Greeting
Opening Hymn "Lift Up Your Heads Ye Mighty Gates" *LSB 341*
Verses 1-4

INVOCATION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
People: **Amen.**



LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH *John 1:5, 9; 3:16; Psalm 36:5–9*

Pastor: We light the fourth Advent candle as we prepare for the arrival of the Savior, who would come to His people in human flesh and who promises to come again. In a world of darkness, a light shines. Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

People: **The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

Pastor: The fourth Advent candle has been known as the angel candle and the candle of love. As our Advent season soon ends, we await the angelic message of the good news of a Savior. We have come to know the love of the one true God this season and always as we have prepared to celebrate His birth. We know God's promises come to fruition in Jesus, who later made known His Father's love in His being born into this world; in His life, ministry, teaching, preaching, healing; and ultimately in His dying and rising. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

People: **The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.**

Pastor: Guided by the light of love, we respond with the psalmist: "Your steadfast love, O LORD, extends to the heavens, Your faithfulness to the clouds.

People: **Your righteousness is like the mountains of God; Your judgments are like the great deep; man and beast You save, O LORD.**

Pastor: How precious is Your steadfast love, O God! The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.

People: **They feast on the abundance of Your house, and You give them drink from the river of Your delights.**

Pastor: For with You is the fountain of life;

People: **in Your light do we see light."**

Four Advent candles are lit.

HYMN

"Light One Candle"

BOB 145

(Please note this order for singing):

- Verse 1
- Verse 2
- CHORUS
- Verse 3
- CODA (Last Line)



VERSE

1. Light one can - dle for hope, one bright can - dle for hope, He brings hope to
2. Light one can - dle for peace, one bright can - dle for peace, He brings peace to
3. Light one can - dle for love, one bright can - dle for love, He brings love to

3rd time to Coda 1. 2.

ev - 'ry heart, He comes! He comes! comes! He comes!
ev - 'ry heart, He
ev - 'ry heart, He

CHORUS

Light one can - dle for joy, one bright can - dle for joy,
D.C. al Coda

Ev' - ry na - tion will find sal - va - tion in Beth - l'em's ba - by boy.

Coda

comes! He comes! He brings love to ev' - ry heart, He comes! He comes!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalm 130:7; Philippians 1:6*

Pastor: O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love,

People: and with Him is plentiful redemption.

Silence for self-examination.

Pastor: Holy and gracious God,

People: I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but some is known only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ I ask forgiveness. Deliver and restore me that I may rest in peace.

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

People: Amen.

BAPTISM OF VALIANT STORM BECKER (8:00)

LSB 268

ADVENT VERSE “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

LSB 357
Verses 5-6

5 O come, Thou Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen
6 O come, Thou Day - spring from on high, And cheer us

wide our heav'n - ly home; Make safe the way that
by Thy draw - ing nigh; Dis - perse the gloom - y

leads on high, And close the path to mis - er - y.
clouds of night, And death's dark shad - ows put to flight.

Refrain

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el

Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

✂ WORD ✂

INTROIT 1 Samuel 2:1b, 2, 5b–7; antiphon: Luke 1:46b–47 (4:00 and 10:30)

People: **My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.**

Pastor: My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in Your salvation.
There is none holy like the LORD;
there is none besides You; there is no rock like our God.
The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.
The LORD kills and brings to life;
He brings down to Sheol and raises up.
The LORD makes poor and makes rich;
He brings low and He exalts.

People: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning,
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

**My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.**



PRAYER OF THE DAY (4:00 and 10:30)

Pastor: Let us pray.
Into the darkness, You bring light, and into our lives, You make known Your perfect and everlasting love.

People: **Make us ready for the celebration of our Savior's birth, that we receive Him as He comes to us as a humble infant, bringing to fruition the new covenant of Your love;**

Pastor: through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 7:10-17

("The virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel.")

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. The Lord

will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!”

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Epistle: Romans 1:1-7

(Long promised by God, the Savior, Jesus Christ, has come.)

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

**To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Congregation, please rise.

GOSPEL VERSE *“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”* (St. 1: LSB 338)

*Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us; Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art,
Dear desire of ev'ry nation, Joy of ev'ry longing heart.*

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-88, alt. Public domain

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

Holy Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

(“The birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way.”)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

**“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”**

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

Hymn of the Day

“Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love”

LSB 900

Sermon

"Go Ahead. Put God to a Test"

Pastor John Larson

Text: Isaiah 7:10-17

Apostles' Creed (4:00 and 10:30)

(found in the back of the hymnal)

Prayer of the Church

Pastor: Lord, in your mercy ...

People: Hear our prayer.

Sharing of the Peace

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: And also with you.



*You may now greet one another in the name of the Lord using...***Peace be with you!**

Offering (10:30 am and 4:00 pm - collected in back; 8:00 am – collected in the pews)

Offering Music (8:00) “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”

Dino Kartsokanis

✠ HOLY COMMUNION AT ASCENSION ✠

The Lord, our Host, invites to his Supper those who are baptized into the Christian faith, confess him as Savior, have been instructed and have examined themselves, truly repent of sins, believe the Risen Lord is present in the sacrament with his true body and blood, and resolve to live faithfully and obediently. For those with an intolerance to alcohol, the center ring of the tray contains grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available to those with wheat allergies. Children who have not been instructed, yet desire a blessing, are invited to come forward with arms crossed. When receiving the bread and wine, the communicant may respond with “Amen!”, a word of affirmation and belief.

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

Preface

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

Proper Preface

Pastor: It is our privilege and our duty, at all times and in every place, to give You thanks and praise, O Lord, God Almighty, eternal Father of the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ, whom we know and in whom we rejoice as the fulfillment of all the promises given down through the ages and the herald of all that is come. With angels and archangels; the blessed apostles and prophets; the virgin Mary; Joseph, faithful guardian; and all the company of heaven, we join in their eternal song of praise and sing:



ADVENT COMMUNION

Sanctus (Divine Service, Setting One)


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!

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Matthew 6:9-13

People: 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, 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.

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC

Duet (4:00 and 8:00) “A Christmas Medley”

arr. Brent Jorgensen
Anita Baresel, soloist
Danielle Baresel-Pavlik, violin

Special Piano Music (10:30) “Away in a Manger”

Dino Kartsokanis

Hymn “I Come O Savior, to Thy Table”

LSB 618

Hymn “Jesus, Priceless Treasure”

LSB 743

(Verses as time permits)

General Communion Blessing

Post-Communion Canticle “Joy to the World” (*St. 1, Advent Section, LSB 387*)

Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let ev'ry heart prepare Him room
And heav'n and nature sing, And heav'n and nature sing,
And heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748. Public domain.

CLOSING SENTENCES *John 1:5, 9*

Pastor: The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

People: The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Benediction *Numbers 6:24-26*

Pastor: The Lord bless you
 and keep you.
 The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
 The Lord look upon you with favor and ✕ give you peace.

People: **Amen.**

Closing Hymn “Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise” *LSB 917*

Congregational Concerns

Dismissal

Pastor: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude “O Come All Ye Faithful” Eric Thiman

***Many thanks to all those who purchased the beautiful poinsettia plants
that decorate our sanctuary for Christmas:***

Kim and Dan McCormick, Ron and Ann Kaneko, Gary Selzer, Gloria Gaudreault, Ken
and Diane Cole, Carolyn Helstrom, Tracy Huggins, Andy and Mavis Slifka,
John and Lori Rolling, Pastor John and Marilyn Larson.



✕ **SERVING IN WORSHIP** ✕

OFFICIANT / PREACHER

Pastor John Larson

MINISTER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP

Michael Zehnder

ORGANIST / PIANIST

Diana Gaide

ELDERS

4 p.m. Jim Wert; 8 a.m. Arvin Michel; 10:30 a.m. Michael Lawrenz

ACOLYTES

8:00 a.m. Tobin Lawrenz; 10:30 a.m. TBD

LECTORS

4 p.m. Curt Engle; 8 a.m. Norm Finrock; 10:30 a.m. Jackie Warren

COMMUNION SERVERS

4:00 p.m. Curt Engle; 10:30 a.m. Jackie Warren

ALTAR GUILD

Charmaine Rohde, Gloria Mielke, Tanya Schmitt



❖ ❖ ❖

Ascension Lutheran Church
1701 West Caley Avenue, Littleton, Colorado 80120
www.alutheran.org
(303) 794-4636 office@alutheran.org
Extended Day Preschool
303-730-2514 director@alcpreschool.com