



JOYFULLY TAKING GOD'S LOVE INTO THE WORLD

December 21, 2025 - 8:00AM
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Year A

PRELUDE

"The Angel Gabriel" – setting, Kristina Langlois

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH:

We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, open our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

The Thoreson family

Light all four candles.



LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLES SONG

"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"

ELW # 240, verse 4

CONFESS & FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, [☩] one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure. **Amen.**
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.

[☩] You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior. **Amen.**

(stand) GATHERING HYMN "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

ELW #265

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.

KYRIE ELW page 147, setting four

In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mercy.**
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 mercy.**
For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.
Lord, have mercy.
Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord. **Amen.**

HYMN OF PRAISE *ELW* page 149, setting four *(the congregation is invited to sing all of the Hymn of Praise)

This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia.
Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain,
whose blood set us free to be people of God.
Power and riches and wisdom and strength,
and honor and blessing and glory are his.
This is the feast of victory for our God.
Alleluia.

Sing with all the people of God
and join in the hymn of all creation:
Blessing and honor and glory and might
be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.
This is the feast of victory for our God,
for the Lamb who was slain has begun his
reign.
Alleluia. Alleluia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. **Stir up your power, Lord Christ, 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.**

(*sit*) READING: Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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

CHILDREN'S SERMON

(*stand*) GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *ELW* page 151; setting four

Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?
♪ **You have the words of eternal life.**
Alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

The holy Gospel according to Matthew
Glory to you, O Lord

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 our Lord. . . **Praise to you, O Christ.**

(*sit*) SERMON

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.

(sit) PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Response: **Hear our prayer.**

RECONCILING IN CHRIST (RIC) STATEMENT

SHARING OF THE PEACE

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

People may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace and "peace be with you" or words of their choice.

OFFERING "As Lately We Watched" – Austrian Carol – setting, Zach Unke
Your gift continues our purpose of "Joyfully taking God's love into the world!" Thank you!



OFFERING MUSIC

GREAT THANKSGIVING ELW Page 152-153; setting four

♪ 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 ... we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

♪ **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

THE LORDS 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.

INVITATION

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

LAMB OF GOD ELW Page 154; setting four

♪ **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.**

COMMUNION SONG

"What Feast of Love"

ELW #487

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

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

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray. **God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BENEDICTION

May God who comes among us, Father, \pm Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always. **Amen.**

(Stand) SENDING HYMN

"Joy to the World"

ELW #267

BLESSING

Go in peace. Keep awake. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

"Joy to the World" – setting, Marilyn Biery

Preaching/Presiding: Pastor Brian Julin-McCleary

Cantor: Sandy Gardner

Communion Servers: Mary Ann, Carol Mae, Chris

Greeter: Jana Burjes

Sound/Video: Sandy

Musician: Steve Peters

Reader: Chris Isley

Ushers: Roger Burjes, Dave Fischer

Welcome Center Host: Tina Meyer

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