

December 14, 2025



ADVENT
IMMINENT ARRIVAL

Point-for-Point Expectations

LIVING HOPE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

welcome to
WORSHIP

We're so glad you decided to worship with us today. You could have chosen to be anywhere this morning, and you chose to spend your time with Living Hope. Thank you! It's an honor to have you here and to have the chance to fill you with hope. Welcome to Living Hope.

CURRENT SERIES INFO

Current Series: Imminent Arrival

People eagerly anticipate the Christmas season. The Latin word *adventus* means arrival, and in the Christian church we eagerly anticipate three arrivals of Christ: the commemoration of his birth, his return on judgment day, and the moments he touches our hearts in Word and sacrament. This time of year (and always!) we get to feel the excitement of an imminent arrival. The Lord is near!

Today's Focus: Point for Point Expectations

Jesus wasn't matching up, point-for-point, with John the Baptist's expectations. John was impatient for Jesus to clearly take up the work of Messiah and make it more obvious. When Jesus didn't match his expectations he started to entertain the glimmer of a doubt. Maybe Jesus wasn't the One who is to come.

John's struggle here is an honest look at impatience and doubt in the life of a believer. Some of these same concerns might lurk in our hearts. But God dispels our doubts with his Word and points us to the many fulfilled promises of the past. We can trust that He will bring us to a future where every expectation will finally be met, point for point.



LIVING HOPE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

ABOUT LIVING HOPE

Living Hope Lutheran Church is a brand new mission church on Chattanooga's east side. We are funded by and a member of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, a collection of over 1,300 churches across the United States and Canada.

Living Hope succeeds in its mission when hope forever in Jesus brings hope for every day in life.

For more on our mission, background, and beliefs just visit our website: livinghopechatt.com

ABOUT WORSHIP

Worship at Living Hope is designed to fill you with hope! The message you hear at Living Hope will center you on your Savior, Jesus, and what he's done for you. Worship isn't just about filling up God with praise. Worship is all about *God filling you* with good news!

We follow a basic order of service, called the liturgy. In the message, in specially selected Scripture readings, and in carefully crafted songs, prayers, and creeds, the liturgy proclaims the good news (gospel) about Jesus from start to finish. Gospel-centered worship is also designed to include participation of those in attendance.

- Feel free to get up to use restrooms **at any time** during the service.
- **Restrooms** are located around the corner to your right.
- A **nursery** is available for small children out the left-hand side of the worship space. Just look for the **Kid's Zone sign** just past the info corner by the main entrance. Feel free to use that space during worship. The service will be livestreamed into the room.
- **Kid activity bags** are available on a table by the entrance to the sanctuary.
- Please fill out a **connection card**. It's our best way to stay in touch with you and thank you for joining us today! You'll find connection cards on the table at the entrance.
- Everything you need to enjoy today's worship will be found in this Worship Folder. **Songs** will also be found on the screen.

Show friends where you are—check in!

 /livinghopechatt

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ADVENT GATHERING SONG

Cantor sings 1st refrain then the congregation sings the refrain on repeat as the cantor sings the verses.

James J. Chepponis

Gently
mp

Come, come Em - man - u - el.

Come, Em - man - u - el.

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1. See the glory of God and...
2. Oh be strong, fear not and...
3. For our God comes to save us so...

Music continues to play as the call to worship and confession is spoken.

Call to Worship

The grace of our Lord (+) Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

And also with you.

Confession & Absolution

Prepare the way for the Lord,

make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

In every worship service we confess our sins then cling to the forgiveness that Jesus gives us. Confession is called the "heartbeat of the Christian."

Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all people will see it together.

Dear friends, one day Christ will come in glory to deliver his people. Therefore, let us prepare our hearts to meet him by humbly seeking his forgiveness.

Merciful Lord, shine your light into the shadows of our hearts.

For we have sinned and have failed to honor you as our Righteous Judge.

Chase away our darkness and fill us with your light.

Trusting in you we pray: Lord, have mercy on us.

In Christ Jesus, the glory of the Lord has been revealed and all people have seen the salvation of our God. With his perfect life, Christ kept the law in our place. With his innocent death, he paid the price of our redemption. Christ now comes to you through his words of light and life: I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The tempo/mood is marked *mp*. The melody consists of six measures: a dotted quarter note (G4), a quarter note (A4), a quarter note (B4), a quarter note (C5), a quarter note (B4), and a dotted quarter note (A4). The lyrics 'Come, come Emmanuel' are written below the notes. The second staff continues the melody with four measures: a quarter note (G4), a quarter note (A4), a quarter note (B4), and a dotted quarter note (A4). The lyrics 'Come, Emmanuel' are written below. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

4. Now accept one another and...
5. Oh reform, for God's reign has...
6. Oh prepare the way and...

Prayer of the Day

Hear our prayers, Lord Jesus Christ, and come with the good news of your mighty deliverance. Drive the darkness from our hearts, and fill us with your light; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

GOD'S WORD

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 35

¹The desert and the parched land will be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.

Like the crocus, ²it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God.

³Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way;

⁴say to those with fearful hearts, "Be strong, do not fear; your God will come,
he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution
he will come to save you."

⁵Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

⁶Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

⁷The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

⁸And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness;
it will be for those who walk on that Way.

The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it.

⁹No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there.

But only the redeemed will walk there,

¹⁰and those the LORD has rescued will return.

They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads.

Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

Epistle Reading

James 5:7–11

⁷Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. ⁸You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. ⁹Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

¹⁰Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. ¹¹As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

Children's Message

Children are invited to come forward into the front for the children's message. They will be given a special message designed just for them that ties in with the sermon.

Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord

CW 315



1 Let the earth now praise the Lord, who has tru - ly
2 What the fa - thers most de - sired, what the proph - ets'
3 A - bram's prom - ised great re - ward, Zi - on's help - er,
4 Sav - ior, hear my wel - come cry— loud ho - san - nas



kept his word and at last to us did send
heart in - spired, what they longed for man - y_a year
Ja - cob's Lord— him of two - fold race be - hold—
lift - ed high! King of glo - ry, en - ter in;



Christ, the sin - ner's help and friend.
stands ful - filled in glo - ry here.
tru - ly came, as long fore - told.
cleanse my soul of ev - 'ry sin.

5 Crush for me the serpent's head
that, set free from doubt and dread,
I may cling to you in faith,
safely kept through life and death,

6 And, when you shall come again
as a glorious king to reign,
I with joy may see your face,
freely ransomed by your grace.

The Gospel centers our worship as it shares with us the good news about Christ. We stand out of respect for our Savior as we hear about his words and deeds

Please Stand

Sermon Reading

Matthew 11:2–11

²When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples ³to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?”

⁴Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: ⁵The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. ⁶Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

⁷As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? ⁸If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. ⁹Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written:

“ ‘I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

The gospel of the Lord
Praise be to Christ!

Please be seated

Point-for-Point Expectations

Questions to consider while hearing the sermon:

1. What does impatience sometimes stem from?
2. Why is John in prison now?
3. What big question does John have for Jesus?
4. Instead of God's promised glory and peace what do we still deal with here on earth?
5. What benefit did John have that we don't get to have?
6. What does Jesus point to in order to give assurance?
7. The blind could see and the deaf could hear but there was more coming...
What would Jesus do next?
8. Why does Jesus say all these things about John in verses 7-11?
9. How can John's question for Jesus in this account actually bring you comfort?
10. What happens to John next? And why could he face it unafraid?

My sermon notes:

Please Stand

Christians have used the Nicene Creed since the fourth century to unite themselves together and to obey God's invitation to "confess with our mouth and believe with our hearts" (Romans 10:9).

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen.

Offering

We collect offerings out of thanks for what God has done for us so that we can support gospel work here and around the world. You can give using the envelope provided in your worship folder. You'll also find instructions there for how to give online if you'd prefer. Thank you for supporting our gospel ministry! If you are a guest with us don't feel obligated to contribute. This service is our free gift to you!

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord God, you are worthy to receive thanks and praise from all people. You created the world and all who live in it, and in your mercy you saved us. We give thanks to you for the grace of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Though in very nature God, he took the nature of a servant and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. He offered himself as a sacrifice for sin and redeemed us from its curse and penalty. He rescued us from the terrors of death and restored eternal life with you. He conquered our enemies and gained for us the kingdom of grace and glory.

Bless us as we receive your Son's body and blood, and lead us to remember his suffering, death, and resurrection. Forgive our sins and fill us with the hope of new life in heaven. Hear our praise and receive our thanks as we worship you—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

When Jesus' disciples asked him how to pray he gave them the words of this prayer. (Matt. 6:9-13 and Luke 11:2-4) Since Jesus advises we pray this way, we say "The Lord's Prayer" every Sunday.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

To our worship guests seeking an altar at which to commune: Since the Lord's Supper is an expression of outward unity in the faith as well as an inner union with Christ, we ask that those who are not communicant members of our fellowship please schedule a meeting with the pastor before coming to the Lord's Table. We ask this in loving obedience to the Scriptures and not in judgment of anyone's faith, sincerity or standing before God. See the announcement about our communion practice at the back of this worship folder for more info as well.

Holy Communion

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

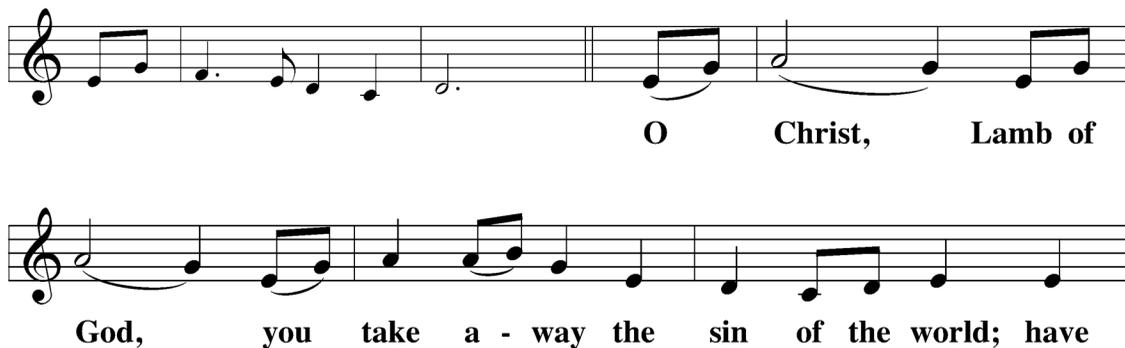
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to the Lord.

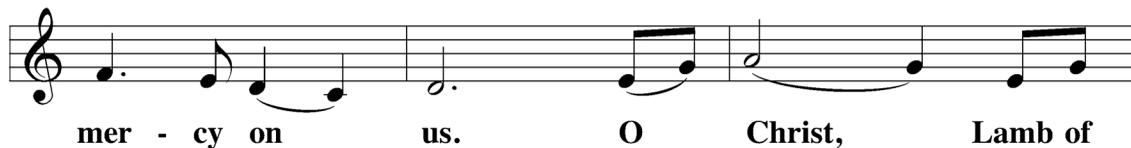
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared when he called people to repentance and pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:



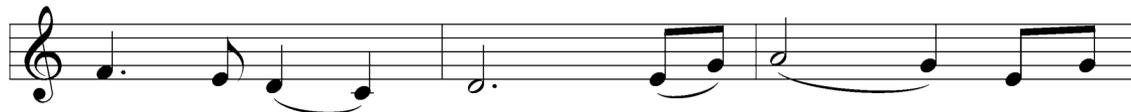
O Christ, Lamb of
God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of



God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have



mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of



God, you take a - way the sin of the world;



grant us your peace. A - men. A - men.

Words of Institution

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

As you wait to go up to the table take some moments to examine your heart.

Acknowledge sin. Trust God's forgiveness through Christ. Recognize the real presence of Jesus' body and blood together with the bread and wine. (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)

Distribution

Personal Prayer: Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear much fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.

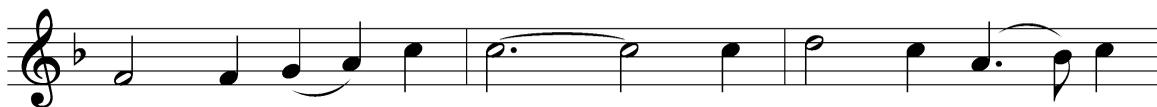
Simeon sang this song as baby Jesus was presented to him in the temple. Simeon could now depart this world with joy, having seen his Savior face to face. We also depart worship today in peace having seen our Savior here in Word and Sacrament.

Lord, Bid Your Servant Go in Peace

CW 950



1 Lord, bid your ser - vant go in peace, your
 2 This is the Sav - ior of the world, the
 3 With saints of old, with saints to come, to



word is now ful - filled. These eyes have seen sal -
 Gen - tiles' prom - ised light, God's glo - ry dwell - ing
 you we lift our voice; to Fa - ther, Son, and



va - tion's dawn, this child so long fore - told.
 in our midst, the joy of Is - ra - el.
 Spir - it blest be hon - or, love, and praise.

Text (sts. 1–2): James Quinn, SJ, 1919–2010; (st. 3): Henry V. Gerike, b. 1948

Tune: American

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Text (st. 3): © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: License no. 151146301

Tune: Public domain

The historical “blessing of Aaron” (Numbers 6:24-26) has been spoken over God’s people for over 3,500 years.

Blessing

M: Brothers and sisters go in peace.

Live in harmony with one another; serve the Lord with gladness.

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.

C: Amen.

Hark the Glad Sound! The Savior Comes

CW 313



1 Hark the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior
2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's
3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing
4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of Peace, your wel - come



prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -
bond - age held; the gates of brass be -
soul to cure, and with the trea - sures
shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal



pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.
fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702–1751, abr., alt.

Tune: Thomas Haweis, 1734–1820, alt.

Text and tune: Public domain

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming Services

New worship series - Imminent Arrival. People eagerly anticipate the Christmas season. The Latin word *adventus* means arrival, and in the Christian church we eagerly anticipate three arrivals of Christ: the commemoration of his birth, his return on judgment day, and the moments he touches our hearts in Word and sacrament. This time of year (and always!) we get to feel the excitement of an imminent arrival. The Lord is near!

Christmas Eve—Wednesday December 24 @ 6:30PM

There will be a hot chocolate bar with cookies after the Christmas Eve service. If able, please bring a plate of your favorite Christmas cookies to share. Thanks!

Christmas Day—Thursday December 25 @ 11:00AM

(abbreviated devotion service with Lord's Supper— 11AM instead of our normal 10AM with a light brunch beforehand)

Lessons and Carols Service—Sunday December 28 @ 10:00AM

Thank you to today's musicians and vocalists!

Emily Knutson; piano



Sunday School and Bible Study—After worship at 11:30

Sunday School for children and Sunday Study will take place after worship today. The adults are doing a study on the book of Judges called Broken Saviors as we take a deep dive into a very rich and messy book of the Bible full of applications for us today.

Children will meet with their appropriate age groups and are taught by a team of teachers with full background checks.

December Fellowship Event—Friday December 19th @ 5:30PM

Join us Friday, December 19th, at church starting at 5:30 for a fellowship meal followed by Christmas hymn singing. (And other fun things!) For the potluck meal we will have soups, with salad and bread for sides. There is a sign up sheet on the table in the fellowship area for these items. Contact Gretchen Bassett (text or call) at 423-584-1981 with any questions.

Living Hope Small Groups

Find more information on the small groups bulletin board in the lobby about available groups to get involved with.

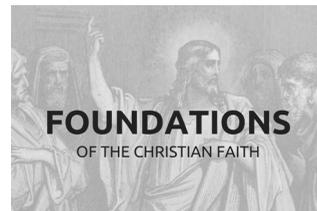
- Theology on Tap and Women's Group — (ON BREAK)
- Men's Group—Mondays every other week at 7am. (next meeting Mon. Dec 15)
- Hands of Hope—Thursdays twice a month at 10am. (next meeting Thurs Dec 18)

Foundations Bible Study

If you're interested in membership here at Living Hope, Foundations is our "next step" class, but even if you're not interested in membership, you'll find it to be a good overview of what God has to say to you in his Word. If you're interested in attending the course just check the box on your connection envelope that says "I'd like to attend a membership class" in order to jump into a new group class or individual class. There are both in-person or online classes available!

In person classes are available on Saturdays at 11:00am at church.

Online classes are available on Thursdays at 7:30pm. Message pastor for a class link.



Living Hope Food Pantry Stock-up

Our church food pantry is running low, and we are asking our church family for help in blessing our neighbors. We'd love donations of pop-top canned items and family-friendly non-perishables. This would be things like:

baked beans, mac n' cheese, ramen, canned pastas, soups, vegetables, peanut butter, jam, and other easy staples.

Every item you give helps a family sit down to a comforting meal. We give this food out to people who contact us directly for help and to our neighbors in Cromwell Hills. If you're able, please drop donations on the table in the fellowship area. Thank you for sharing Christ's love in this way!

New Church Library

Our member Mary Snyder is heading up a new library program here at Living Hope. We'd love our members to make use of the solid Biblical teaching in some of the resources we'll have available. Here's some notes about our new church library.

- The library is located in the gathering area on the bookshelves by the window.
- Books in the library include copies of The People's Bible, audio books, and religious oriented texts and biographies.
- There is a sign out sheet in a binder near the books. Please sign on the appropriate line for the book borrowed and also sign the book back in when returned.
- If anyone would like to donate to the library, please contact Mary Snyder. Donated books should be religious in nature.

Connection Envelopes

We'd love to get your valuable feedback on our worship service today. If this is your first time at Living Hope we also want the opportunity to give you a gift to say "thanks for being our guest!" You can place your connection envelopes in the offering plate as it passes or in the basket located at the entrance of the sanctuary. Also feel free to just hand it to pastor.

Members' Minute

Birthday Blessings:

David Dyer—December 16

Mike Frederickson—December 20

Communion at Living Hope

Communion is important to us at Living Hope and we seek to honor the biblical view of *close communion*. Before coming up for communion, all adults should ask themselves these questions:

1. Do you confess your sins and seek to turn away from the sins you confessed?
2. Do you recognize that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is the only way sin is forgiven?
3. Do you recognize that in the Sacrament you receive Jesus' true body and true blood along with the bread and the wine? (*1 Corinthians 11:27-29 + 1 Corinthians 10:15-17*)
4. Do you believe that the Bible *IS* God's inspired Word and does not just contain some truths of God?
5. Do you believe that Living Hope Lutheran Church teaches only the truth of God based on His inspired Word? (A summary of these teachings is taught in the *Foundations* course.)

Service Teams — This week

Sunday Setup Team—Mayer
Snack Provider—Hansen, Thom
Ushers—Ludwig, Frizzell
Acolyte—Will Hynson

Service Teams — Next week Dec 21

Sunday Setup Team—Open
Snack Provider—Cundiff
Ushers—Rice, Schulz
Acolyte—Emi Ludwig

Pastor Eric Melso
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