

**Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 21, 2025
Lord of Life Lutheran Church**



CALL TO WORSHIP

Here in worship—

we pray together,
we stand together,
we sing together,
we listen together.

**Here in worship—
we are not alone.**

So when life gives you reason to grieve, to fear, or to worry,
remember this moment.

We are not alone.

Let us worship our with-us God.

GATHERING HYMN

All Earth is Hopeful

#266

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

In a world full of fear, where do you see the presence of love?

We see love all around us.

We see love when people hold open the door.

We see love in a warm embrace, a homemade casserole, a phone call after a long day.

We see love in random acts of kindness and intentional acts of empathy.

We see love all around us.

You are right. Even in a fearful world, love is all around us.

Today we light the candle of love as a reminder of this good news.

May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, love is here.

Love is world changing. Love is shining bright.

We only have to look for it.

Candles are lit..

God is with us

Thanks be to God!

Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION

Friends, every day we are given choices—

the choice to be a friend, to be an ally, to extend a welcoming hand.

Some days we choose wisely, but from time to time, we inevitably get it wrong.

That is one of the many reasons we need the Prayer of Confession.

In this moment of prayer, we are able to practice the art of forgiveness.

So join me in this transformative moment.

Join me receiving grace. Let us pray.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION AND WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

When you were afraid, did I stay by your side?
Did I offer my hand, or did I leave you alone?
When you were afraid, did I choose solidarity?
Did I see your fear, or did I only see mine?

**Friend, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes.
Fortunately, God offers grace, and we do too.
So take a deep breath, and let's start again.**

Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.

Now we must ask—

**when you were afraid,
did we stay by your side?
Did we offer our hands,
or did we leave you alone?
When you were afraid,
did we choose solidarity?
Did we see your fear?
Or did we only see ours?**

Friends, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes.
Fortunately, God offers grace, and I do too.
So take a deep breath, and let's start again.

**Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.
We accept your grace and would love to start again.**

May it be so, with God's help.

Alleluia, amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

**Immanuel, we turned off alarm clocks.
We poured cups of coffee. We slipped shoes onto our feet and combed back fly-away hairs.
We traveled to this room and settled into this space, all in hopes of drawing closer to you.
So as we hear your Word read aloud, help us to feel your presence in our midst.
For we are reaching out our hands. We are reaching out our hearts.
Speak to us now. With hope we pray, amen.**

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel	vs 1.	#257
Angels We Have Heard on High	Refrain	#289
The First Noel	vs. 1	#300
Away in a Manger	vs. 1	#277
Go Tell It on the Mountain	Refrain	#290
Joy to the World	vs. 1.	#267

SCRIPTURE 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.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

He came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have love;
hallelujah forevermore

HOLY 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.

SERMON**MUSICAL OFFERING**

Suzanne Bowen

HYMN OF THE DAY*Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*

#242

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We have seen the valley.
We have seen a sky without stars.
We have seen the longest night,
and still we believe.

We believe in a with-us God.
We believe in the hope of tomorrow.
We believe that good news
is louder than fear.
We believe this good news
is for all people.

So even when our knees shake,
even when our voice trembles,
even when fear is all around us,
we will hold onto that good news.

We will reach for each other.
We will look for God in our midst.
We will sing songs of joy.

We will proclaim:
Unto us, love is born.
We have seen the longest night,
and we have seen unimaginable love.
So still, we believe.
Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERTORY

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

#254

OFFERTORY PRAYER

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

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

THE 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.

Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil;

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

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COMMUNION BLESSING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE BLESSING

May you remember that good news is louder than fear.

SENDING

Go in peace, and
be not afraid!

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He Came Down

Text: Cameroon traditional; Music: Cameroon traditional; arr. John L. Bell, b. 1949

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