



What do you fear?

EVEN IN OUR FEAR, WE
ARE CALLED FORWARD

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday, December 21, 2025

Advent Lutheran Church

www.adventharleysville.org

ADVENT LUTHERAN CHURCH WELCOME STATEMENT

Advent Lutheran Church of Goschenhoppen, a welcoming community of God, believes ALL people are made in God's image and boundless love and ALL are valued equally within our congregation. We are empowered by God through faith to nurture and celebrate the vast diversity among individuals – single, married, partnered, divorced – embrace their uniqueness in all aspects of life including race, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expressions, physical or mental abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds and age. We at Advent, affirm and welcome you to share life with us and participate in God's ministry statement.

WELCOME FRIENDS AND GUESTS If you are a guest, we ask that you please sign our visitor register located on the table in the Narthex, and help yourself to one of the Welcome Bags. Please come back and worship with us.

LITURGY. Hymns can be found in the Evangelical Lutheran Worship book - our red hymnal in the pew rack, or placed under the chairs.

** indicates, please stand, as you are able.*

MASKS - Masks are optional. Love your neighbor.



WE LOVE CHILDREN IN WORSHIP!



- Worship activities are located in the narthex cubbies.
- A staffed nursery is available for infants through age 6. The nursery is the last door on the right.
- Children's Church (kindergarten-5th) grade begins after the children's sermon. Children will return to worship during the passing of the peace.

FOR 8:30 am: Join us for fellowship following worship! All are welcome.

*** Members, please remember to check your mailboxes today ***



Advent Lutheran Church

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Harleysville, PA 19438
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Prelude

Prepare your hearts for worship in a quiet time and space during the prelude.

GATHERING

*Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, \ddagger one God, our maker, our helper, and our keeper. Amen.

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 there are other times when we get it wrong.

That is one of the many reasons we need this time of Confession. In this moment of prayer, we are able to ask for, and to receive, forgiveness. And we are able to forgive. So join me in this transformative moment. Join me receiving grace. Let us pray.

When others were afraid, did we stay by their side? Did we offer our hand, or did we leave them alone?

When others were afraid, did we choose solidarity? Did we see their fear, or did we only see our own?

God, forgive us for the times we failed to live out your gracious love. Amen

Friend, none of us is perfect. We all make mistakes. Fortunately, God offers grace. We are forgiven. We are loved. We are renewed. So take a deep breath, and let's start again.

When others are afraid, O God, help us to stay by their side. Help us to offer our hand, and to not leave them alone.

When others are afraid, O God, help us to choose solidarity. Help us to see their fear, and not just our own.

God, help us to live out your gracious love. Amen

May God, who has given us the desire to do this, give us the courage and love to live it out.

Amen

***Gathering Hymn**

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

Hymn #257

***Greeting**

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.

Candle Lighting Liturgy – Hope

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn (v.4)

Hymn #242

4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer
and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share
and bring us at last into glory.

***Prayer of the Day**

A: The Lord be with you

C: And also with you.

A: Let us pray...

C: Immanuel, we turned off alarm clocks. We poured cups of coffee. We slipped shoes onto our feet and combed back fly-away hairs. We tuned in online or 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 experience 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.

First Lesson: 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.

L: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

***Gospel Acclamation**

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia,

al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Repeat alleluia

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 1st chapter.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

***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.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children's Sermon

Pastor Mark

Children ages kindergarten-5th grade are dismissed for Children's Church

Sermon

Pastor Mark

***Hymn of the Day Joseph was Troubled**

Joseph was troubled by what he knew!

 Mary was pregnant; what should he do?
 He wanted justice — not to cause shame.
 He would dismiss her, placing no blame.

Joseph was sleeping; that night he dreamed.

 Nothing was really as it had seemed.
 "Don't be afraid — make Mary your wife.
 God has a plan for your baby's life."

Hearing that message, Joseph obeyed,
 Seeing a new path God's love had made.
 He stood by Mary, waiting that birth,
 Seeing God's Son there — Savior of earth!

God, when our troubles seem far too great,
Help us to listen, wonder and wait;
Sometimes the world is not as it seems.
Give us your vision; give us your dreams.

***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.

***The Prayers**

***The Peace**

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

C: And also with you.

MEAL

Offertory

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

Hymn #247

***Offertory Prayer**

A: Generous God, in times of fear we remember your promises, and in difficult times we experience your presence. Use and transform the gifts we bring. Take our offerings, and bless them to be a blessing in and through this congregation. Take this bread and wine, and bless it to be a source of your promise and presence. Take our lives, and help us to live in your hope.

C: Amen

*Communion Liturgy

P: Those of you worshiping with us online are invited to share communion with us. I invite you to have your bread and your wine or grape juice before you as we gather to receive communion. What we share is not a private ceremony, but an act of worship within this community gathered by a God who transcends time and space. It is "for you" – Christ promises to be there for you. Trust that. And this sacrament is also for all people; we celebrate in the assembly. We are one community in worship.

*Dialog

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

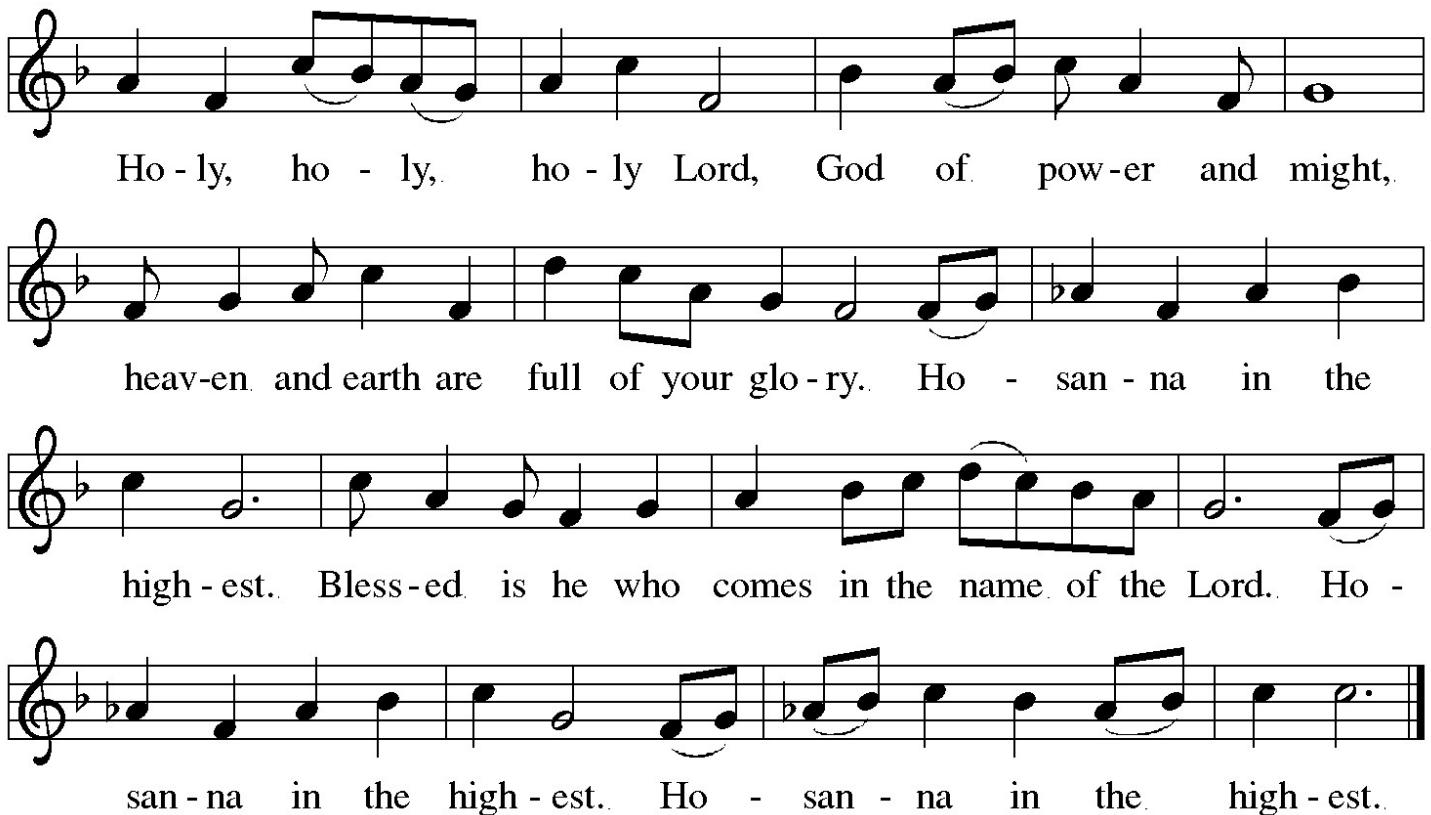
C: We lift them to the Lord.

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

C: It is right to give you thanks and praise.

*Preface It is indeed right...join their unending hymn:

*Holy, Holy, Holy



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo-ry. 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. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*Thanksgiving at the Table

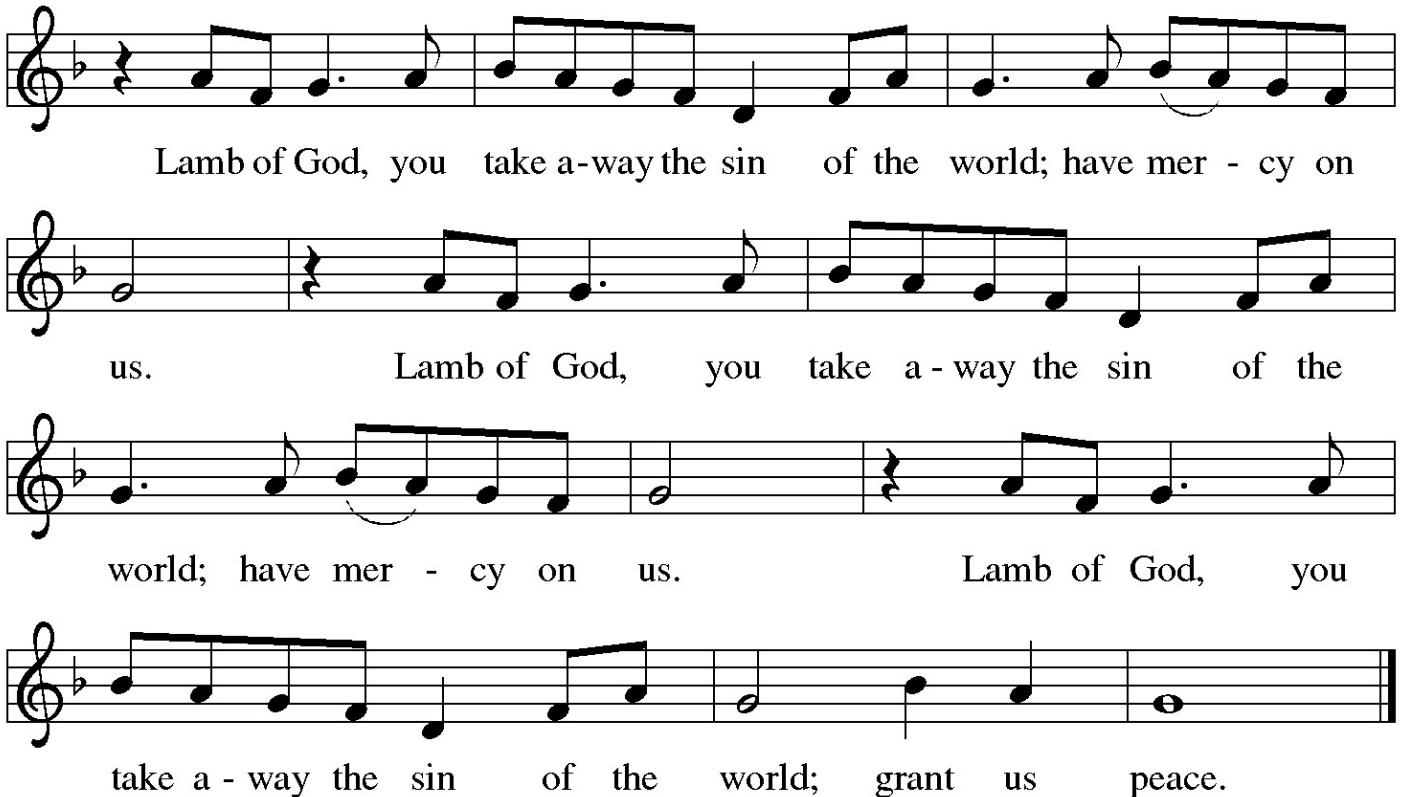
*Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your reign, 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.**

P: Here is life. God is with us. Come receive what God has promised. Come, not because you are perfect, but because you are forgiven.

*Lamb of God



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.

Communion

Those worshiping in-person are invited to come forward as the ushers direct you. You may receive bread and dip it into the wine or grape juice; or you may pick up one of the sealed wafer/grape juice packets or a sealed gluten free wafer and hear the words of promise before returning to your seat to open it.

Those worshiping online are invited to use your own bread and wine or grape juice at this time, saying to each other, or to yourself, "The body of Christ given for you," and "The blood of Christ shed for you." For all of us, Christ promises to be present in, with, and under the bread and wine/juice.

Children who have not yet received their first communion may come forward (in person) for a blessing, or someone in the room (worshiping online) may pause to provide that blessing, saying "Remember, God loves you" or "You are a beloved child of God."

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|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Communion Hymn: | <i>Light One Candle</i> | Hymn #240 |
| | <i>Creator of the Stars</i> | Hymn #245 |

Post Communion Blessing

P: Now may the body and blood of our savior Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace.

C: Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

A: Loving God, in a world racked 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,

C: Amen.

Announcements

*Benediction

P: In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach 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. May the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with empower you to go in peace and *be not afraid*.

C: Amen.

***Sending Hymn:** *Joy to the World* Hymn #267

*Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Live in hope.

C: Saved by God's Grace, Renewed through Word and Sacrament, We are Sent as Disciples to Share the Gospel of Jesus. Thanks be to God.

Postlude

For the season of Advent this year, we are using a special series by "A Sanctified Art."

This Advent series takes seriously the angels' message time and time again; "Do not fear." And it trusts that Christ's birth truly is good news of great joy for all people. The resources look closely at the fear and terror looming in the background during the time of King Herod and invite us to consider the fears we hold now. Fear can divide and paralyze us and even be used as a tool for oppression. But what if we formed a different relationship with fear? Can we acknowledge fear without letting it rule us? Might we catalyze our fears into love and action? What if naming our fears helps us see more clearly how God is breaking in and where God is at work?

As you journey through this season, may your hope become gritty and resilient. May you remember: hope that trembles is still hope. This season, let us insist on hope and trust that good news is greater than fear.

Liturgy, graphics and music adapted from Prayer by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

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Biblical Reference: Matthew 11:2-11 Tune: Oliver Holden, 1793 ("All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name") [\(MIDI\)](#)

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2025 Council Members

| Name and Position/Team |
|--|
| Amy Coll, President, Social Ministry |
| Don Roessler, VP, Mutual Ministry |
| Diana McClure, Treasurer, Finance Team |
| Eileen Solomon, Sec., Worship & Music |
| Zach Boyer, Christian Ed |
| Judi Greene, Fellowship |
| Bruce Rhoades, Property |
| Helen Nace, Stewardship |
| Rich Lantz, Welcome Team |
| Carrie Johnson, Welcome Team |

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