



## Shepherd of the Hill Lutheran Church – ELCA

“Encouraging faith and proclaiming God’s love by Gathering, Growing and Giving.”

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

Service of the Word

December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

**This worship is being live streamed. Your presence in the sanctuary signifies your agreeing to be on our live broadcast.**

NOTE: **Bold text** indicates worshippers’ response, and \* means please stand as able.

PRELUDE

Michelle Young

WELCOME & MINISTRY MESSAGES

Pastor Ron Gerl

*Reader:* Sarah Larson

*Acolyte:* Cade Larson

*Video:* Dave Young

*Ushers:* Rita & Keith Lee, Tim Jenson

### **GATHERING**

\* GREETING The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C: And also with you.**

\* GATHERING HYMN

Hark, the Glad Sound!

LBW#35

#### **Hark, the Glad Sound!**

Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes, the Savior  
promised long; let ev'ry heart prepare  
a throne and ev'ry voice a song.

He comes the pris'ners to release, in Satan's  
bondage held. The gates of brass before  
him burst, the iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind, the bleeding  
soul to cure, and with the treasures  
of his grace to enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace, your welcome  
shall proclaim, and heav'n's eternal  
arches ring with your beloved name.

Text: Philip Doddridge, 1702-1751

Public Domain

\* CONFESSIOIN Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation.

**Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Everlasting God, **you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world.**

**Amen.**

\* FORGIVENESS Hear these words of assurance: God clothes us with garments of salvation and covers us with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all.

**Amen.**

\* PRAYER OF THE DAY Stir up your power, **O Lord, and come. Take away the hinderance of our sins and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, that we may receive you in joy, and serve you always; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirt, now and forever.**

**Amen**

#### ADVENT WREATH READING/ LIGHTING

#### **Fourth Sunday of Advent: LOVE**

John 3:16-19, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil." (NIV)

Lighting of candle 1-4

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

LBW#34 verses 1-4

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.

**Refrain:** Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

O come, O Wisdom from on high, embracing all things far and nigh:  
in strength and beauty come and stay; teach us your will and guide our way. **Refrain**

O come, O come, great Lord of might, Who to your tribes on Sinai's height.  
In ancient times once gave the law In cloud, and majesty, and awe. **Refrain**

O come, O Branch of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny;  
from depths of hell your people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. **Refrain**

Text: Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" was reprinted with  
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## **Advent Wreath Prayer Week 4 — LOVE**

Heavenly Father, the whole meaning of Christmas can be explained in one little four-letter word...LOVE. You sent your gift of pure love to us that first Christmas. Love descended from heaven to be born of a virgin. Love lay in the scratchy hay of a manger in a meager barn in Bethlehem. All of your love, God, was robed in the delicate skin of a baby and wrapped in swaddling clothes. This final week of Advent helps us to reflect on the magnitude of love that was made manifest in Jesus. There is no greater gift than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends. You willingly gave the gift of your life because of your love. Your righteous blood covered our sin. You redeem and restore us when we confess you as Lord and Savior of our life. At that moment, you give us the gift of your love for all eternity. We receive grace upon grace and mercy upon mercy at that moment. Father, this final week of Advent, fill our hearts and minds with the significance of that truth. Thank you, Lord, for loving us enough to send Jesus. In Jesus' precious name we pray. **Amen.**

## **GROWING**

Our first reading is from the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Samuel.

### **2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16 (NIV)**

*Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the Messiah, God's anointed.*

<sup>1</sup>After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent." <sup>3</sup>Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you." <sup>4</sup>But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying: <sup>5</sup>"Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?' <sup>6</sup>I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. <sup>7</sup>Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'" <sup>8</sup>"Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. <sup>9</sup>I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. <sup>10</sup>And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have

a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning <sup>11</sup> and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

<sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."  
Here ends the first reading. **C: Thanks be to God.**

Please join in reading Psalm: Luke responsively.

**Psalm: Luke 1:46b-55**

<sup>46b</sup>My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>**my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,**

<sup>48</sup>for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed:

<sup>49</sup>**you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.**

<sup>50</sup>You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup>**You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,**

<sup>52</sup>casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.

<sup>53</sup>**You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.**

<sup>54</sup>You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, to remember the promise of mercy, <sup>55</sup>**the promise made <sup>1</sup> to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.**

Our second reading is from Romans 16<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Romans 16:25-27** (NIV)

*Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.*

25 Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Here ends the second reading.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

\*Please stand as you are able.

The Holy Gospel according to Luke 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

**Gospel: Luke 1:26-38** (NIV)

*In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.*

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

MESSAGE

**"The Faith of Mary"**

*Pastor Ron Gerl*

\* HYMN OF THE DAY

*Come, Thou Long- Expected Jesus*

LBW#30

**Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus**

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.

Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king;  
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

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\*THE APOSTLES' CREED (*professed together*)

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell.\* On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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**

\*Or, He descended to the dead. \*\* universal

## Prayers of Intercession

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

*A brief silence.*

You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world. **Merciful God, receive our prayer.**

As fields and crops lie dormant, bless them with holy rest. Prepare them to thrive, that they provide abundant food in due season. Protect animals who hibernate and provide for all who scavenge for food in the lean season. **Merciful God, receive our prayer.**

You raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems of oppression, especially systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols that obscure your call to justice. **Merciful God, receive our prayer.**

Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill (*especially*) Gordy and Audrey. Rescue all who experience abuse or who live under threat of violence, especially refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers in search of a safe and stable home. **Merciful God, receive our prayer.**

You are pleased to make your home among us. Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends, families, and chosen families in celebration. Grant safety to all who travel. Sustain the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes. **Merciful God, receive our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

Blessed are you for Mary and all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise of mercy. Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known. **Merciful God, receive our prayer.**

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy.

**Amen.**

The OFFERING PLATE is located at the entrance of the church sanctuary. Your generous giving supports God's ministry at Shepherd of the Hill.

\*OFFERING HYMN

We are an Offering

ELW#692

### **We are an Offering**

We lift our voices we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you: we are an offering.  
Lord use our voices, Lord use our hands, Lord use our lives, they are yours: we are an offering. All that we have, all that we are, all that we hope to be, we give to you, we give to you. We lift our voices, we lift our hands, we lift our lives up to you: We are an offering, we are an offering.

Text: Dwight Liles, b. 1957

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\* OFFERING PRAYER God our provider, **by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

\* LORD'S 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, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

\* BENEDICTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

\* BLESSING The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit  $\mp$  remain upon you now and forever. **Amen.**

\* SENDING HYMN

Good Christian Friends, Rejoice

LBW#55

**Good Christian Friends, Rejoice**

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
give ye heed to what we say: Jesus Christ is born today;  
ox and ass before him bow, and he is in the manger now.  
Christ is born today! Christ is born today!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye hear of endless bliss: Jesus Christ was born for this!  
He has opened heaven's door, and we are blest forevermore.  
Christ was born for this! Christ was born for this!

Good Christian friends, rejoice with heart and soul and voice;  
now ye need not fear the grave; Jesus Christ was born to save!  
Calls you one and calls you all to gain the everlasting hall.  
Christ was born to save! Christ was born to save!

Text: Medieval Latin carol; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818-1866

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\* DISMISSAL Go in peace and serve the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**



THIS WEEK AT CHURCH AND BEYOND OUR DOORS

TODAY:	12/24		- NO Sunday School
		8:45 am	- Adult Bible Study
		10 am	- 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday in Advent Worship Service
MONDAY:	12/25		- <b>MERRY CHRISTMAS</b>
		7 pm	- AA Meeting
TUESDAY:	12/26	4-6 pm	- Food Pantry
WEDNESDAY:	12/27	5-9 pm	- Confirmation class to Action City!
FRIDAY:	12/29	10-Noon	- Food Pantry
SUNDAY:	12/31		- NO Sunday School OR Adult Bible Study
		10 am	- Carol / Hymn sing Worship Service

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 Sunday school Coordinators: Jaime Folczyk [mjfolczyk@yahoo.com](mailto:mjfolczyk@yahoo.com) and Holly Sweeney  
[hollysweeney65@gmail.com](mailto:hollysweeney65@gmail.com) Giving questions contact: Barb Vadnais [barbvadnais1@gmail.com](mailto:barbvadnais1@gmail.com)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***Pastor Ron is on vacation 12/25/2023 - 1/1/2024.  
He will be back on 1/2/2024.***

If emergency contact Kris Jenson 715-563-1402 or Barb Vadnais 715-308-0252.

**NO Sunday school 12/24 or 12/31.**

**YES Adult Bible Study 12/24, NO Adult Bible Study 12/31.**

**Service 12/31 will be a Carol / Hymn Sing service.**

- *Confirmation starts back 1/3/24 and Sunday School 1/7/24.*



Confirmation class going to Action City:

Wednesday 12/27/23

Leave from church at 5 pm, should be back to church at 9 pm.

\*Bring the special socks if you got 'em 😊



Effective 10/16 Secretary will be in office Mondays 9:30-11:30 am or occasional Wednesday 6-8 pm depending on her schedule. *\*Week of Christmas unsure\**

MAILING ADDRESSES for those folks who you may want to send words of care, concern, cheer or sympathy. **Please let the secretary know if you would like to be added and/or know someone who might like to be.**

- Audrey Bracher:  
Meadowbrook at Bloomer 1840 Priddy St, Room 112 B, Bloomer, WI 54724

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