

December 8, 2024

Second Sunday of Advent
Bethany Lutheran Church (ELCA)

Introduction to the day

Forerunners and messengers advance the advent of our God. While John the baptizer's voice in the wilderness may be the principal focus of the day, Malachi's prophecy could as easily herald the coming Christ as forerunner of the LORD of hosts. Finally all the baptized are called to participate in the sharing of the gospel. In so doing we prepare the way for the coming of Jesus and assist all people in capturing a vision of the "salvation of God."

This worship is being streamed live via Facebook and will be posted to our Website and X (formerly Twitter). The camera captures anyone in the first few pews of our worship space and beyond extending to the altar.

PRELUDE

LIGHTING OF CANDLES Choir song, "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" during lighting of candles. **RINGING OF BELL**

WELCOME

The gathered people of God respond with the words printed in bold.

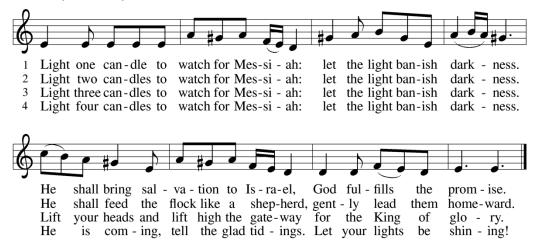
PRAYER AND LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE

Let us pray.

We praise you, O God, for this circle of light that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, kindle within us the fire of your Spirit, that we may be light shining in the darkness. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may welcome others as you have welcomed us. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

Amen.

Two blue candles are lit as the gathered people of God sing verses 1-2 of "Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah" (ELW 240).



The people of God stand.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, \pm one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy,

we confess that we have sinned.

We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.

We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

God of might,

we confess that we have sinned.

We have turned away from our neighbors.

We have trusted false promises.

God in our midst,

we confess that we have sinned.

We plead: come to us.

Bring your mercy to birth in us.

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through + Christ Jesus, whose day draws near. **Amen.**

GREETING (ELW p. 184)

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 188)

Let us pray.

A brief silence is kept before prayer.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming give to all the people of the world knowledge of your salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

CHOIR ANTHEM Advent Grace

The people of God are seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING: Malachi 3:1-4

God announces a covenant with Israel. A messenger like Malachi (his name means "my messenger") will prepare the way for the coming of the Lord by purifying and refining God's people, as silver and gold are refined.

A reading from Malachi.

¹ See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. ² But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap; ³ he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the descendants of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, until they present offerings to the LORD in righteousness. ⁴ Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasing to the LORD as in the days of old and as in former years.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM Luke 1:68-79

- ⁶⁸ Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel, you have come to your people and set them free.
- ⁶⁹ You have raised up for us a mighty Savior, born of the house of your servant David.
- ⁷⁰ Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies, ⁷¹ from the hands of all who hate us,
- 72 to show mercy to our forebears, and to remember your holy covenant.

⁷³ This was the oath you swore to our father Abraham:

⁷⁴ to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

free to worship you without fear,

- 75 holy and righteous before you, all the days of our life.
- ⁷⁶ And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way,
- ⁷⁷ to give God's people knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins.
- ⁷⁸ In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
- ⁷⁹ to shine on those who dwell in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

SECOND READING: Philippians 1:3-11

The apostle Paul was the pastor of many new churches. He writes in this letter about his joy to be in partnership with the Christians of Philippi. Listen to how tender-hearted Paul, sometimes a stern preacher, is with his friends as he encourages them to grow in love and knowledge.

A reading from Philippians.

³ I thank my God every time I remember you, ⁴ constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, ⁵ because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. ⁶ I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ. ⁷ It is right for me to think this way about all of you, because you hold me in your heart, for all of you share in God's grace with me, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel. ⁸ For God is my witness, how I long for all of you with the compassion of Christ Jesus. ⁹ And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight ¹⁰ to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, ¹¹ having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

The people of God stand to welcome the gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Halle, Halle, Hallelujah (ELW 172)



GOSPEL: Luke 3:1-6

John the Baptist is a herald of Jesus, whose way is prepared by "repentance for the forgiveness of sins." As we hear the careful record of human leaders, we sense the spectrum of political and religious authority that will be challenged by this coming Lord.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ² during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴ as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight.

⁵ Every valley shall be filled,

and every mountain and hill shall be made low,

and the crooked shall be made straight,

and the rough ways made smooth;

⁶ and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The people of God are seated.

SERMON

The people of God stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY Comfort, Comfort Now My People (ELW 256)



and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

APOSTLES' CREED (ELW p. 189)

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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's creation.

Each petition ends with, "Lord, in your mercy" and the people of God sing "O Lord, Hear My Prayer" (ELW 751).



Text: Psalm 102:1–2; Taizé Community, adapt.
Music: HEAR MY PRAYER, Jacques Berthier, 1923–1994
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Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE (ELW p. 189)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

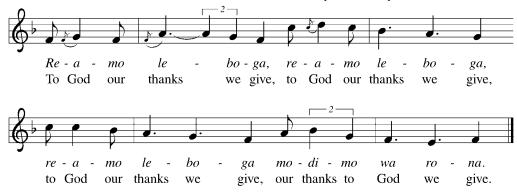
And also with you.

The people of God are seated.

OFFERING (ELW p. 190)

We are grateful for your gifts, and they are needed to continue the work of the church. For those worshipping online, options on ways to give are found on our website (www.wbbethany.org). Thank you! After the offering is gathered, the people of God stand and sing the hymn on the next page as the gifts are brought forward.

OFFERTORY HYMN To God Our Thanks We Give (ELW 682)



Text: Botswanan traditional, as taught by Daisy Nshakazongwe; tr. I-to Loh, b. 1936 Music: REAMO LEBOGA, Botswanan traditional, as taught by Daisy Nshakzongwe Text and music © 1986 World Council of Churches and the Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music

OFFERING PRAYER (ELW p. 190)

Let us pray.

Creator God, you made the world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DIALOGUE (ELW p. 190)

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.

PREFACE (ELW p. 190)

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,

that we should at all times and in all places

give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,

through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,

through whom you will also make things new

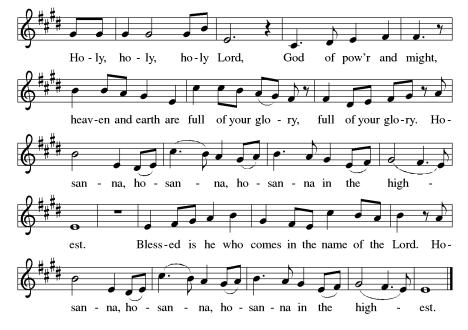
in the day he comes to judge the world in righteousness.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,

with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,

we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 190)



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE (ELW p. 190)

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 191)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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 TO COMMUNION (ELW p. 191)

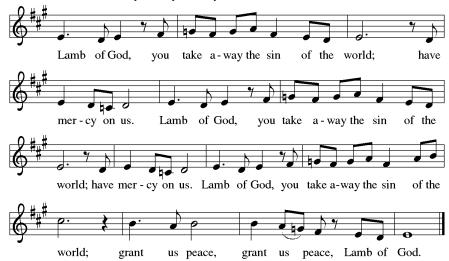
God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

The people of God are seated.

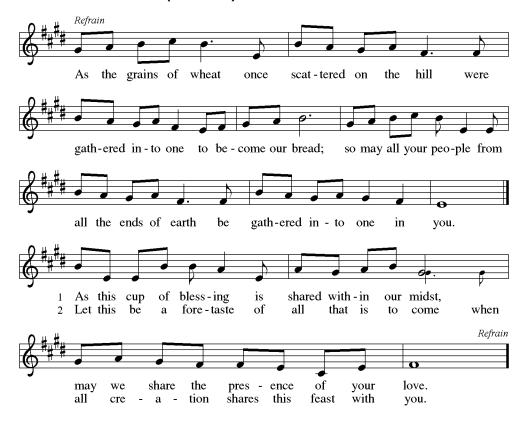
COMMUNION

Communion today will be distributed around the altar. The cups in the center of the tray contain white grape juice. All other cups are wine. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request. All gathered who believe Jesus Christ is their Lord and Savior are invited to come to Holy Communion with repentant hearts believing that Christ forgives our sins and guides our lives. Strengthened, forgiven, and nourished through this meal the Spirit sends us forth in service and to proclaim the good news of Christ's love. Children and adults who do not take communion may come forward for a blessing.

COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 191)



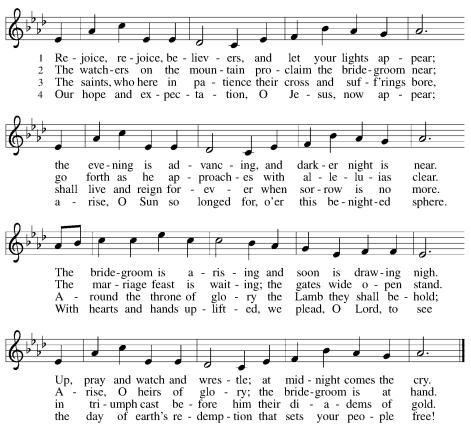
As the Grains of Wheat (ELW 465)



Text: Didache, 2nd cent.; Marty Haugen, b. 1950 Music: AS THE GRAINS, Marty Haugen Text and music © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.

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Rejoice, Rejoice Believers (ELW 244)



The people of God stand.

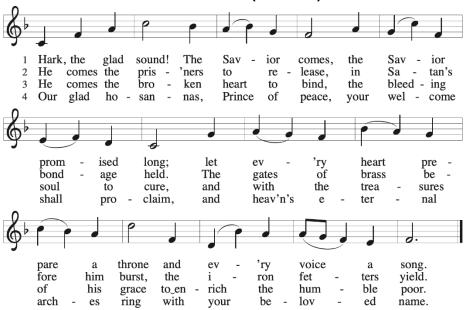
PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (ELW p. 191)

Let us pray.

Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.

Amen.

SENDING SONG Hark the Glad Sound (ELW 239)



BLESSING (ELW p. 192)

God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and light, God, our hope for the journey,

 \pm bless and keep you now and forever.

Amen.

DISMISSAL (ELW p. 192)

Go in peace. Christ is with you.

Thanks be to God.

Please join us for fellowship and refreshments in the Great Hall following worship.

OUR WORSHIP ASSISTANTS		
Ministers of:	Today	December 15
Music	Jill Barnhart	Jill Barnhart
Proclamation (Lector)	Jill Barnhart	Bethany's Children
Hospitality (Greeter)	Dave & Kami Poppen	Jon & Laura Twing
Technology	Cole Crosthwaite & Tate Frantz	Dale Swenson
Worship (Altar Care)	Stacy Beyer & Cindy Knoop	Stacy Beyer & Cindy Knoop



Thank you for worshipping with us today. Just as Jesus welcomed the stranger, we believe all are welcome here. Please join us again next week. For more information about our life together in Christ, visit: www.wbbethany.org

2024 Angel Tree



This year, Bethany Lutheran Church is supporting two families for the Angel Tree Program. The Sign-up Genius is below - please sign up for as many gifts as you would like. We would like to have all of the items collected at the church by December 13th. If you'd like to contribute but prefer not to shop, we welcome donations and will handle the shopping on your behalf. You can make a donation during the offering by designating it as an **Angel Tree contribution**. Thank you for your generosity and support!

Please contact Kami Poppen @dkpoppen@hotmail.com or (319) 471 -3723 with any questions!

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0E4EAAA622ABF85-53538528-2024"







The Advent Wreath

One of the best known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting in the midst of growing darkness strengthen some of the Advent images found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens is clearly an image of everlasting life, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself. Christians use the wreath as a sign that Christ reaches into our time to lead us to the light of everlasting life. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent and the growth of light. On each Sunday in Advent we will say a prayer (see below) prior to the lighting of candles on the Advent wreath.

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