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December 21, 2025

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

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Rev. Ken Bersche

Maggie Kent, Secretary

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## Prelude

## Invocation

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

*Matthew 28:19b*

**Amen.**

## Confession and Absolution

O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love,

**And with Him is plentiful redemption.**

*Psalm 130:7*

Holy and gracious God,

**We confess that we have sinned against You this day. Some of our sin we know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which we are ashamed—but some is known only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ we ask forgiveness. Deliver and restore us that we may rest in peace.**

*Time of Silence*

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

**Amen.**

*Philippians 1:6*

## Processional Hymn *Please Stand*

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

♪ O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie! Above thy deep and dreamless sleep  
The silent stars go by; Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.  
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.

♪ For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above While mortals sleep, the angels keep  
Their watch of wond’ring love. O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,  
And praises sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!

♪ How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv’n! So God imparts to human hearts  
The blessings of His heav’n. No ear may hear His coming; But in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him, still The dear Christ enters in.

♪ O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin, and enter in,  
Be born in us today. We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!

*Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 361—Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–93; Text: Public domain*

## Kyrie

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace from above and for our salvation let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

For this holy house and for all who offer here their worship and praise let us pray to the Lord.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**Amen.**

## Prayer

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

## Psalmody *Please Be Seated*

Psalm 24

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,

**For he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers.**

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his holy place?

**He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.**

He will receive blessing from the Lord and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

**Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.**

Lift up your heads, O gates!

**And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.**

Who is this King of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle!

**Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in.**

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory!

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

## Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 7:10–17

<sup>10</sup>Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: <sup>11</sup>“Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” <sup>13</sup>And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>For before the boy knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good,

the land whose two kings you dread will be deserted. <sup>17</sup>The Lord will bring upon you and upon your people and upon your father's house such days as have not come since the day that Ephraim departed from Judah—the king of Assyria!”

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## The Epistle

Romans 1:1–7

<sup>1</sup>Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, <sup>3</sup>concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup>and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup>through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, <sup>6</sup>including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

<sup>7</sup>To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the Word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## Gradual Hymn

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

♪ Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;  
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”

Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;

With th’ angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”

~Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

♪ Christ, by highest heav’n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,  
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin’s womb.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail th’ incarnate Deity!

Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! ~Hark!...

♪ Hail, the heav’n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!

Light and life to all He brings, Ris’n with healing in His wings.

Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die,

Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth. ~Hark!....

Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 380 -Text: Charles Wesley 1707-88; Tune: Felix Mendelssohn 1809-47;  
Setting: William H. Cummings 1831-1915; Public Domain; LSBHymnLicense.net #100012386.

## Holy Gospel *Please Stand*

Matthew 1:18–25

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the first chapter.

**Glory to You, O Lord.**

<sup>18</sup>Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

<sup>23</sup>“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup>but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to You, O Christ.**

## Nicene Creed

### Children’s Message *Please Be Seated*

#### The Hymn

“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.

~Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

♪ O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, Who ord’rest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show, And teach us in her ways to go. ~Rejoice...

♪ O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes on Sinai’s height  
In ancient times didst give the Law In cloud and majesty and awe. ~Rejoice...

♪ O come, Thou Branch of Jesse’s tree, Free them from Satan’s tyranny  
That trust Thy mighty pow’r to save, And give them vict’ry o’er the grave. ~Rejoice...

♪ O come, Thou Key of David, come, And open wide our heav’nly home;  
Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to misery. ~Rejoice...

♪ O come, Thou Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;  
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death’s dark shadows put to flight. ~Rejoice...

♪ O come, Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of all mankind;  
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace. ~Rejoice...

Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 357—Text: Latin, c. 12th cent.; Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum, 1710,  
Köln; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–66, alt.; Text: Public domain

#### Proclamation of the Word

“Love Moves In and Rules”

Psalm 24

#### Offering and Musical Offering

#### Admonition to Communicants *Please Stand*

#### Lord’s Prayer

#### Words of Our Lord

## The Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**Amen.**

## Distribution Hymn *Please Be Seated*

“From Heaven Above to Earth I Come” (vv. 1-7)

- ♪ “From heav’n above to earth I come To bear good news to ev’ry home;  
Glad tidings of great joy I bring, Whereof I now will say and sing:
- ♪ “To you this night is born a child Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;  
This little child of lowly birth Shall be the joy of all the earth.
- ♪ “This is the Christ, our God Most High, Who hears your sad and bitter cry;  
He will Himself your Savior be From all your sins to set you free.
- ♪ “He will on you the gifts bestow Prepared by God for all below,  
That in His kingdom, bright and fair, You may with us His glory share.
- ♪ “These are the signs that you shall mark: The swaddling clothes and manger dark.  
There you will find the infant laid By whom the heav’ns and earth were made.”
- ♪ How glad we’ll be to find it so! Then with the shepherds let us go  
To see what God for us has done In sending us His own dear Son.
- ♪ Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes, And see what in the manger lies.  
Who is this child, so young and fair? It is the Christ Child lying there.

Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 358—Text: Martin Luther, 1483–1546;  
tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.; Text: Public domain

## Prayer of the Church *Please Stand Each petition is concluded with the following:*

Lord, in Your mercy,

**Hear our prayer.**

## Benediction

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.

*Numbers 6:24–26*

**Amen.**

## Recessional Hymn *Please Be Seated*

“Lift Up Your Heads”

- ♪ Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold, the King of glory waits.  
The King of kings is drawing near; The Savior of the world is here.  
Life and salvation He doth bring; Therefore rejoice and gladly sing.  
To God the Father raise Your joyful songs of praise.
- ♪ A righteous Helper comes to thee; His chariot is humility,  
His kingly crown is holiness, His scepter, pity in distress.  
The end of all our woe He brings; Therefore the earth is glad and sings.  
To Christ the Savior raise Your grateful hymns of praise.

♪ How blest the land, the city blest, Where Christ the ruler is confessed!  
O peaceful hearts and happy homes To whom this King in triumph comes!  
The cloudless sun of joy is He Who comes to set His people free.  
To God the Spirit raise Your happy shouts of praise.

♪ Fling wide the portals of your heart; Make it a temple set apart  
From earthly use for heav'n's employ, Adorned with prayer and love and joy.  
So shall your Sov'reign enter in And new and nobler life begin.  
To God alone be praise For word and deed and grace!

♪ Redeemer, come and open wide My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide!  
O enter with Thy grace divine; Thy face of mercy on me shine.  
Thy Holy Spirit guide us on Until our glorious goal is won.  
Eternal praise and fame We offer to Thy name.

*Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 341—Text: Georg Weissel, 1590–1635; tr. Catherine Winkworth, 1827–78, alt.;  
Text: Public domain*

## Postlude