

First Evangelical Lutheran Church

Reverend Tracy S. Megli

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Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025

9:30 am



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Mission Statement

First Lutheran church **strives to inspire hope**
for a wounded world;

Gathers in worship
that both **uplifts** and **challenges**;

And **builds life-affirming relationships**
inside and outside the walls of our building.

As a Reconciling in Christ congregation, First Lutheran Church
welcomes all because God welcomes all,
and we recognize that our differences are gifts to our communal life.

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP

DECEMBER 14, 2025

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

Prelude

Lo How a Rose E'er Blooming

arr: Clayton J Foor

Please stand when the () indicates standing. Know the communion of Saints, both living & departed, stand for you if you should choose to remain seated for any reason.*

***The Pastoral Greeting**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

A: And also with you.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God,

**we confess that we look to ourselves
for the peace and security only you can provide.**

**We reach for swords and spears,
reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.**

**We become impatient while waiting
and weary of keeping awake.**

**Free us from self-reliance,
and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.**

**Increase our trust in God's timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.**

Amen.

God judges us not as we deserve,
but according to God's own righteousness.

✝ You are freed and forgiven,
saved by grace,
and ready to welcome the Savior.

Amen.

*The Gathering Song

ACS 901

Now the Heavens Start to Whisper



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow-ing thin.
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon-light now be - gin to drift a - way.
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis-dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with-in:
Dia - mond bril-liance through the dark-ness shines the hope of com-ing day.
come to bless with fire and fra-grance hours of yearn-ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom-ise, deep-ly plant-ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
Christ, the morn-ing star of splen-dor, gleams with-in a world grown dim.
In the lone - ly, in the strang-er, in the out-cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost-line, hearts grow soft to wel-come him.
Heav-en's em - ber fans to full-ness; hearts grow warm to wel-come him.
Child who comes to grace the man-ger, teach our hearts to wel-come you.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: SUO GÂN, Welsh melody

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Please be seated

Children's Time

Please be seated

The Lighting of the Advent Wreath

JOY

L: The Messiah's coming was punctuated by joy: "The angel said to the shepherds, 'Do not be afraid; for see – I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people; to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger. "

Luke 2:9b-12

L: Joy to the world! The Lord is come; let earth receive her King!

The third candle is lit.

L: Praise to you, O God, who gives us courage to start again.
You fasten righteousness around your waist
and baptize with the Holy Spirit's fire.
Bless us as we mirror your mighty fire in these simple flames,
and teach us to mirror your justice in the paths we prepare.
We ask that peace abound,
until none hurt or destroy over all the earth.

A: Amen.

Come, Child of Light

by Lloyd Larson

The musical score is written on three staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff contains the first five measures, the second staff contains measures 6 through 9, and the third staff contains measures 10 through 12. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Come, O Child of Hope we pray En-ter our hearts and

show us Your way. Pro-mise of God, Hea-ven's pure Light, Hope for our world

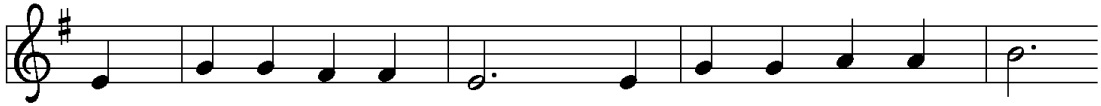
shi - ning bright! Come, O Child of Hope, we pray.

Come, O Child of Peace we pray.
Enter our hearts and show us Your way.
Promise of God, Heaven's pure Light,
Peace for our world shining bright!
Come, O Child of Peace, we pray.

Come, O Child of Joy we pray.
Enter our hearts and show us Your way.
Promise of God, Heaven's pure Light,
Joy for our world shining bright!
Come, O Child of Joy we pray.

*Kyrie

ELW Setting 10



- 1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
- 2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
- 3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

*The Prayer of the Day

P: Let us pray.

P: Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

A: Amen.

The First Reading

Isaiah 35:1-10

- ¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.

³ Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.
⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
“Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you.”

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God’s people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

R: Word of God; Word of Life.

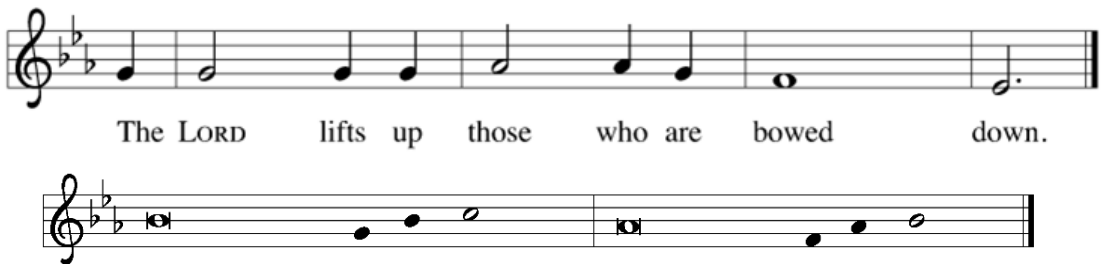
A: **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 146:5-10

(sung responsively)

The accompanist will introduce the refrain, followed by the Cantor singing it once.

Then the congregation sings it with the Cantor. R indicates repeat the refrain.



**⁵ Happy are they who have the God of Jacob | for their help,
whose hope is in the | LORD their God;**

**⁶ who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that | is in them;
who keeps promis- | es forever;**

**⁷ who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and
food to | those who hunger.**

The LORD sets the | captive free.

**⁸ The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up
those who | are bowed down;
the LORD | loves the righteous. R**

**⁹ The LORD cares | for the stranger;
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates
the way | of the wicked.**

**¹⁰ The LORD shall | reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. | Hallelujah! R**

The Second Reading

James 5:7-10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

R: Word of God; Word of Life.

A: **Thanks be to God.**

*The Announcement of the Gospel Reading

ELW Setting 10



Al - le-lu - ia! Lord and Sav - ior: o - pen now your sav-ing word.



Let it burn like fire with-in us; speak un - til our hearts are stirred.



Al - le-lu - ia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

P: The Holy Gospel according to St Matthew.

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

***The Reading of the Gospel**

Matthew 11:2-11

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” ⁴ Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

P: The Gospel of our Lord.

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

The Sermon

We observe a brief silence for reflection

*Hymn Of The Day

Christ Be Our Light

ELW 715



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for
2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for
3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for
4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for
5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell

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*** The Apostle's Creed**

We now confess our faith with the whole Church in all times and places, using the words of the Apostle's 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 of the People

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. (*We pray especially for Peggy*) In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant (*especially we pray for Global Refuge and Lutheran Social Services*). God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith (*especially Mary, mother of Jesus, John of the Cross and . . .*). May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace,
hear our prayer.

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.
Amen.

***The Peace**

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

A: And also with you.

P: Let us offer one another the sign of the Risen Christ's peace.

*As a Reconciling in Christ congregation, we welcome all because God welcomes all,
and we recognize that our differences are gifts to our communal life.*

Anthem

Waiting, Wandering, Wondering

*Ruth Elaine
Schram*

***The Offering Prayer**

P: Nourishing God,
you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.
Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,
that we may rejoice and be for the world
signs of your kingdom come.

A: Amen.

*The offering plates will be available on the table in the Narthex.
Please place your offering there, as you leave.*

*The Great Thanksgiving

The musical notation consists of four staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The notes are quarter notes, and the lyrics are written below the staves. The first staff has two measures: 'The Lord be with you.' and 'And al - so with you.' The second staff has two measures: 'Lift up your hearts.' and 'We lift them to the Lord.' The third staff has one measure: 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.' The fourth staff has one measure: 'It is right to give our thanks and praise.'

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

P: 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;
who on this day overcame death and the grave
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life.
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 Setting 10

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might,
heav'n 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.

*Words of Institution

P: 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. For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

A: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

*Lord's Prayer

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

A: 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.

The Celebration of Holy Communion

*Lamb of God

ELW Setting 10



1 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
2 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;
3 O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world a - way;



you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

The Invitation to Communion

P: Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

Please come to the communion rail and kneel (or stand). We will receive communion by intinction. Receive the bread, dip into the wine or white grape juice, then take and eat.

Eat This Bread, Drink This Cup



Eat this bread, drink this cup. Taste and see the good-ness of God.



Bread of life, cup of love, we re-joice in your pres-ence.



- 1 I will bless the Lord at all times, praise with heart and voice;
- 2 Look up - on the Lord, be ra - dant, nev - er turn a - way.
- 3 An - gels fold their wings a - round us, guard through good and ill.
- 4 Saints of God, bow down and wor - ship, bless the ho - ly name.



in my God I glo - ry for - ev - er: lis - ten and re - joice!
 God will save in ev - 'ry af - flic - tion, hear us when we pray.
 Those who seek the Lord will lack noth - ing; taste, and have your fill.
 Rise to tell God's great - ness for - ev - er, won - drous deeds pro - claim!

Text: Jeremy Young, b. 1948, refrain; *With One Voice*, stanzas, based on Ps. 34

Music: STONERIDGE, Jeremy Young

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*The Communion Blessing

P: May the nourishment of the body and blood of our Savior
 Jesus Christ give you renewed strength and life.

A: Amen.

***The Prayer After Communion**

P: God our host,
at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness.
Send us forth, eager to share the feast,
welcome the stranger,
and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

A: Amen.

Community Updates

***The Blessing**

P: May God who comes among us,
Father, ✙ Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.

A: Amen.

*Sending Song

ELW 253

He Came Down



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
- 3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
- 4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have light; hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have joy;

Text: Cameroon traditional

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional

*Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Keep awake.

A: **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

Good King Wenceslas

arr: Clayton J Foor

Worship Assistants

Reader & Communion Assistant: *Sara Brightwell*

Crucifer: *Bruce Torkelson*

Usher(s): *Bruce & Nat Torkelson*

Music Director: *Clayton Foor*

Cantor: *Sara Brightwell*

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