

**Family of Christ Lutheran Church**  
**Advent 4**  
**December 21, 2025**

**Welcome, Announcements and Prayer Requests**

**Confession and Assurance of Pardon**

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

Give thanks to the Lord, for the Lord is good!

**God's mercy endures forever.**

Beloved, as we move through this season of waiting and watching, let us together confess our sin.

*Silence for reflection*

God of steadfast love, **we confess that we turn away from your promises to follow false gods of power and wealth. We allow ourselves to wither away; our songs of praise becoming silent on our lips as we trample your creation and take your gifts of life for granted. We seek out shadows to hide our faults, refusing to accept your full gift of grace. Forgive us. Protect us. Revive us. Help us to believe so that we may be ready on the day of your return. Amen.**

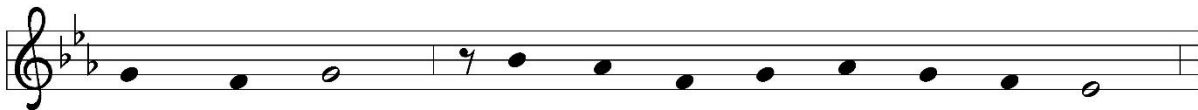
God does not let us stand alone or languish. We abide in the assurance of God's steadfast love; + forgiven and freed by grace upon grace, we are renewed and restored to welcome the Son of God. **Amen**

## Gathering Hymn: ELW 245

### Creator of the Stars of Night



1 Cre - a - tor of the stars of night, your peo - ple's ev - er -  
2 When this old world drew on toward night, you came; but not in  
3 At your great name, O Je - sus, now all knees must bend, all  
4 Come in your ho - ly might, we pray, re - deem us for e -  
5 To God the Fa - ther, God the Son, and God the Spir - it,



last - ing light, O Christ, re - deem - er of us all,  
splen - dor bright, not as a mon - arch, but the child  
hearts must bow: all things on earth with one ac - cord,  
ter - nal day; de - fend us while we dwell be - low  
Three in One, praise, hon - or, might, and glo - ry be



we pray you hear us when we call.  
of Mar - y, bless - ed moth - er mild.  
like those in heav'n, shall call you Lord.  
from all as - saults of our dread foe.  
from age to age e - ter - nal - ly. A - men.

Text: Latin hymn, 9th cent.; tr. *Hymnal* 1940, alt.  
Music: CONDITOR ALME SIDERUM, plainsong mode IV  
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*Please be seated*

### **Greeting**

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.**

### **Lighting of the Advent Wreath**

From the beginning you have been

**the Word, the Light, the Life.**

Illumine our shadowed places;

**chase away anything that keeps us from your love.**

We light the fourth candle of this wreath, our own light shining even as we await the dawning of the light that cannot be overcome.

### **Sing verse 4 Advent Candle Lighting: *Chesed (to the tune Love Has Come ELW 292)***

**Love will come as God's Word incarnate!**

**Love will shine as a light for our souls!**

**Share the grace upon grace that surrounds us,  
claiming us all as God's beloved!**

**Love! Love! God's steadfast love is with us!**

**Love! Love! Sing praise to God on high!**

### **Prayer of the Day**

Creator of light and life, you spoke love into being from the very beginning.

**Your love endures and shines in every gloomy place in this world.**

In Christ, your Word becomes flesh, dwelling among us in grace and truth.

**Open our eyes to see your light breaking into our world.**

As we await the coming of Christ, form us by your Word and fill us with your steadfast love. **Amen.**

### **First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> When God began to create the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup> the earth was complete chaos, and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. <sup>3</sup> Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Psalm 118: 1, 25-29**

<sup>1</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good;  
God's mercy endures forever.

<sup>25</sup> Hosanna! O LORD, save us!  
We pray to you, LORD, prosper our days!

<sup>26</sup> Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the LORD;  
we bless you from the house of the LORD.

<sup>27</sup> The LORD is God and has given us light.  
Form a procession with branches up to the corners of the

altar.

<sup>28</sup> You are my God, and I will thank you;  
you are my God, and I will exalt you.

<sup>29</sup> Give thanks to the LORD, for the LORD is good;  
God's mercy endures forever.

*Please rise as you are able.*

### Halle, Halle, Hallelujah



### **Gospel: John 1:1-18**

The holy Gospel according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one

thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> (John testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.' ") <sup>16</sup> From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God. It is the only Son, himself God, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

This is the Gospel of our Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **Sermon**

### **Hymn of the Day: ELW 248 People, Look East**

1 People, look east. The time is near  
of the crowning of the year.

Make your house fair as you are able,  
trim the hearth and set the table.

People, look east, and sing today--  
Love, the Guest, is on the way.

2 Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare,  
one more seed is planted there.

Give up your strength the seed to nourish,  
that in course the flow'r may flourish.

People, look east, and sing today--  
Love, the Rose, is on the way.

3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim,  
one more light the bowl shall brim,  
shining beyond the frosty weather,  
bright as sun and moon together.

People, look east, and sing today--  
Love, the Star, is on the way.

4 Angels announce with shouts of mirth  
him who brings new life to earth.

Set ev'ry peak and valley humming

with the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east, and sing today--  
Love, the Lord, is on the way.

### **Affirmation of Faith**

Let us confess our faith in the God of enduring love.

**We believe in God, whose steadfast love endures for all time.**

**From the beginning, God, with a Word, set creation in motion,**

Light and life,

a gift and a covenant

A promise to never leave us on our own.

**Through the ages, we witness to the power of God's  
presence:**

Standing in the fire, protecting us from cruel worldly  
powers;

Breathing new life into our dry bones;

Sparking our songs of joyful justice and mercy;

Giving us the power to become the children of God.

**In the quiet of the night, we experience the good news of the  
Christ Child:**

Born in a humble manger,

Word made flesh,

Prince of Peace,

The one who brings salvation,

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

**As we await the fullness of time, we are alive with the Spirit:**

Proclaiming justice for the poor and oppressed,

Sharing the good news of great joy for all people,

Living bound to extravagant grace,



Loving neighbors with the same love we have received.  
**From age to age, generation to generation, we carry on in faith, for we believe God's steadfast love endures forever.**

*Please be seated*

### **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*

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of steadfast love,

**hear our prayer.**

The whole cosmos breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join the heavens and all of creation in announcing this holy birth. God of steadfast love,

**hear our prayer.**

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we see the Word made flesh in the faces of our neighbors. God of steadfast love,

**hear our prayer.**

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or

who are ill, especially those on our prayer list and those whose names and needs we lift before you now, either silently or aloud (*brief pause*). God of steadfast love,

**hear our prayer.**

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of steadfast love,

**hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us, and we are held in your love. God of steadfast love,

**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.**

### **Sharing of the Peace**

The peace of Christ be with you all.

**And also with you.**

Please share a sign of Christ's peace with those around you.

### **Offering Is Collected**

### **Offering and Elements Are Brought to the Table**

### **Offering Song:**

## Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

### *Offering Song*



Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of  
bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were sown, that we may be  
fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the hopes and the dreams of all; u -  
nite them with the prayers we of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your  
pres - ence, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

Text: John W. Arthur, 1922-1980  
Music: Richard W. Hillert, b. 1923  
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## **Offering Prayer**

Generous God, **you have lavished us with your lovingkindness.**  
**Bless these gifts we offer, that they may become hands of**  
**mercy, voices of hope, and signs of your enduring grace.**  
**Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

## **Communion**

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

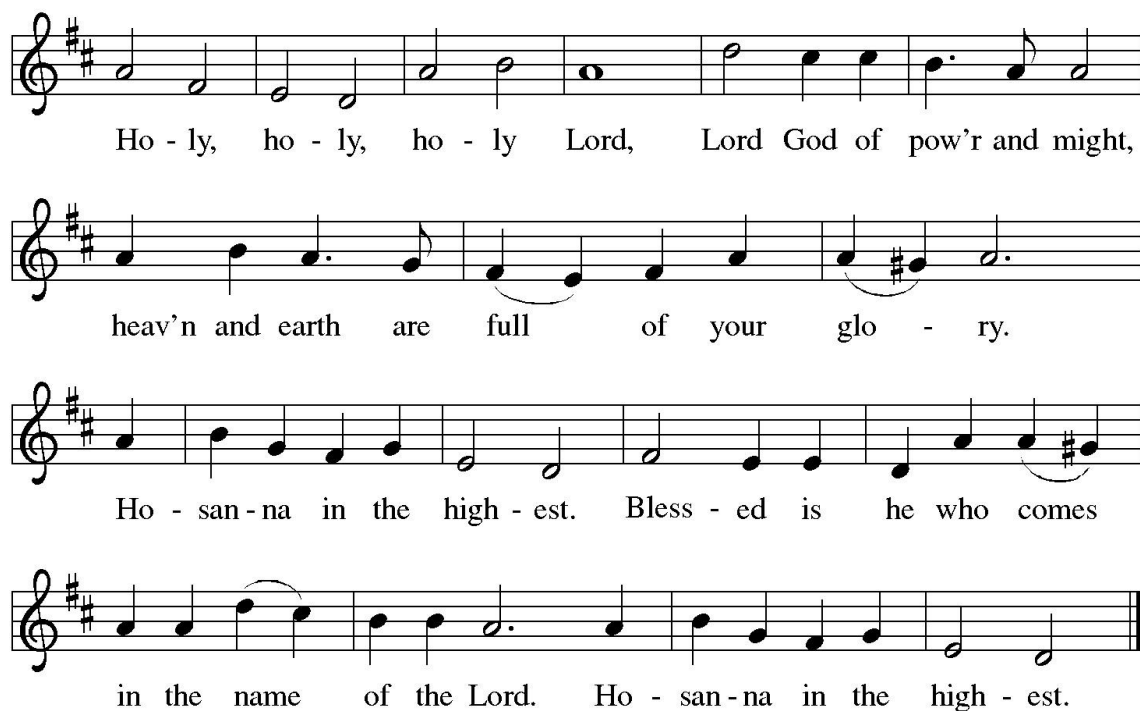
Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

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 all things new in the day when 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:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r 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.

Holy are you, God of enduring love. You created the world in all of its beauty, forming us from the dust to be caretakers, made in your image to share your love with all creation. When we found ourselves in exile, burned with the fires of oppression, you stood with us, sheltering us, assuring our safety and showing the world the power of your love.

As we failed, time and again, to live as your people, you called to us through the prophets, breathing new life into our dry bones, showing us how to live through your Spirit.

Even when we showed we preferred the shadows to your Light, you still sent your Son, Word made Flesh, to live among us, and to bring us the fullness of grace.

In the night in which Jesus was handed over, He took bread, gave thanks, and broke it. He gave it to the 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. When he had given thanks he gave 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.

Remembering, therefore, the fullness of his love for us, shown in his life, death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his promised coming to make all things new. Shower us with your Holy Spirit, that through this bread and wine we share we may be strengthened to sing of the greatness of God and to work for justice and peace in all the earth. Through him all glory and honor is yours, Almighty God, in your holy Church, now and forever.

**Amen.**

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

US:

**Lord's Prayer**

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us today our daily bread.**

**Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

**Invitation to Communion**

Friends in Christ, God invites all people to this table of mercy and grace, where Christ meets us in bread and wine. Here, the weary find rest, the hopeful are renewed, and all are welcomed into the love of God. Come, not because you are perfect, but because God's love is perfect and given freely. **Amen.**

## **Communion Hymn: ELW 253 He Came Down**

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

Text: Cameroon traditional

Music: HE CAME DOWN, Cameroon traditional

## **Post-Communion Blessing**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

## **Prayer after Communion**

**Steadfast God, you have met us again at this table of grace and fed us with love that endures beyond fear and failure. As you have dwelt among us in Christ—light in the darkness, bread for the journey, hope for the weary—send us forth in your Spirit to love boldly, serve faithfully, and proclaim your**

**goodness to all creation. Through the Incarnate One, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### **Blessing**

We stand in the fire,  
**and God is present there with us.**

We find new life in the valleys,  
**because God's unending love sparks hope in our dry bones.**

We sing of a world turned up-side down,  
**proclaiming that God's love changes everything.**

We await the promised coming of the Word made flesh,  
**that we may witness to God's lasting love.**

And may the Spirit of Love surround us; may the Creator of all sustain us; and may the promised + Son of light and life dispel the shadows around and within us, from this day forth and forever more. **Amen.**

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

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come!  
Let earth receive her king;  
let ev'ry heart prepare him room  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n and nature sing,  
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

2 Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!  
Let all their songs employ,  
while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains



repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat the sounding joy,  
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

3 No more let sin and sorrow grow  
nor thorns infest the ground;  
he comes to make his blessings flow  
far as the curse is found,  
far as the curse is found,  
far as, far as the curse is found.

4 He rules the world with truth and grace  
and makes the nations prove  
the glories of his righteousness  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders of his love,  
and wonders, wonders of his love.

### **Dismissal**

Go in peace. God is with you.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **Announcements:**

- **Christmas Eve Worship:** Dec. 24, 7 p.m.
- **Annual Meeting:** Jan. 18<sup>th</sup>, right after worship

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Pastor Jane Brda, SAM  
Ellen Mueller — Music

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