

Sunday, December 1, 2024 - The First Sunday of Advent

Enter to worship. As the prelude begins, worshippers are encouraged to conclude conversation and quietly prepare to enter into the experience of worship.

PRELUDE

Scott Bourdeau, organist

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came - P. Manz - © 1990 Morning Star

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel - C. Callahan - © 1994 Morning Star

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Flowers today are from Joel & Gidget Schauske & Family

You are a blessing.

(Assembly responses are in **bold** print)

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING LITURGY

Lighting the First Candle of Advent is the Burress Family; Justin, Jordan, Avery, Quinn, and Sloan

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

Let us begin with the good news! Let us begin by trusting that we are a blessing, loved by a gracious God.

Let us begin with music and singing!

Let us begin with warmth and welcome. Let us begin with hope.

Yes, let us begin with hope.

Today we light the candle of hope to shine a light in a worn and weary world.

May this be our foundation. May this be our fresh start. May this be our new beginning.

May hope flow forth from here. Amen!

The Advent wreath is lit.

CHOIR ELW 245 vs. 1,2,5 Creator of the Stars of Night

CALL TO WORSHIP

Inspired by Isaiah 43:1-4 and Luke 1:26-29

God says,

“Do not be afraid.”

God says,

“I have called you by name.”

God says,

“I will be with you.”

God says,

“You are precious and honored in my sight.”

At the beginning of this season,

at the start of this week,

at the opening moments of this time of worship,

may we wrap ourselves in these words. May we begin again.

Let us worship our Holy God!

CALL TO CONFESSION

In the Gospel of Luke, the angel Gabriel tells Mary two things: that she is highly favored, and that she is going to have a child.

Mary's response to this news is simple. With awestruck authenticity, she asks, "How can this be?"

Everytime we approach the prayer of confession, I ask myself this same awestruck question, "*How can this be?*" How can God's mercy know no end? How can God be so gracious with someone as fickle as me?

Regardless of the week we've had, this good news never changes. So join me in speaking the truth of our lives. Join me in the prayer of confession, and may God's mercy leave you awestruck. Let us pray:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Affirming God,

Your first words to creation were words of love. You looked at this earth and said, "It is good."

**You spoke affirmations through the prophets. You spoke blessings over Mary.
You spoke belonging through Christ.**

**At every turn, you have reiterated that we are a blessing,
made in your image, held in your love.**

Forgive us for forgetting this truth.

Forgive us for measuring our worth by society's measuring stick instead of yours.

We believe.

Help our unbelief.

In Christ's name we pray, amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

Family of faith,

I don't know the last time someone told you that you are good, just as you are.

I don't know the last time you heard that you are loved and created in the image of God.

I don't know the last time you trusted those words and truly believed that you are a blessing.

However, in case it has been a while, hear these words from Isaiah:

God says,

"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you.

I have called you by name.

You are mine."

We are forgiven. We are loved. Let it leave you awestruck.

Thanks be to God! May we believe it. Amen.

GATHERING HYMN

HYMN 258 Unexpected and Mysterious

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

KYRIE



Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **☩ Lord, have mer - cy.**
Lord, have mer - cy:



Chri - ste e - le - i - son: **☩ Christ, have mer - cy.**
Christ, have mer - cy:



Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **☩ Lord, have mer - cy.**
Lord, have mer - cy:

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.

By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

CHOIR

O Come, Lord Jesus, Come

David Angerman (1995 Harold Flammer Music)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Affirming God,

How often do you speak to us, and how often do we miss it?

How often do you whisper blessings over us that we refuse to hear? Open our hearts.

**Create space in us to not only hear these words,
but to believe the good news tucked between them.**

**We are hungry for your wisdom,
so speak to us now.**

With hope and curiosity, we listen.

**With hope and curiosity,
we dare to begin again.**

Amen.

The assembly is seated

FIRST READING: Isaiah 43:1-7

⋮
P: The Word of the Lord **C: Thanks be to God**

The assembly stands.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the
words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL : Luke 1:26-38

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

...

P: The Gospel of the Lord C: Praise to you, O Christ

The assembly is seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

The assembly stands.

HYMN OF THE DAY

HYMN 265 The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We believe in a blessing God who calls us Beloved.

We believe that this blessing showed up in the life of Mary, and was also bestowed upon the hemorrhaging woman,

the poor in spirit,

the children,

the crowds,

the Jews,

the Gentiles,

the faithful and the doubting.

So in faith, we trust that God's blessing,

like ripples on the water,

forever reaches toward us.

And with wild hope,

we believe

that because of this blessing,

we are covered in love.

We are more than enough.

Thanks be to God!

Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

God of blessings,
Once again, we find ourselves standing at the beginning of the month,
at the beginning of this Advent season, at the beginning of this new day, bringing our hearts to you.

Meet us here, gracious God.
Hear our prayers and offer your words of blessing. To start, we bring you prayers of deep gratitude.

First, we want to say thank you for the the people who, like the angel Gabriel, help us see you in our midst. Thank you for faith mentors, for friends that greet us with hugs and smiles at church, for the saints who have gone before us, for Sunday school teachers and youth advisors. Thank you for these saints and the ways they always point us toward you. Pour out your blessings on them.

Similarly, we give you thanks for the people who, like Mary, have shown us what it looks like to trust our belovedness. Thank you for the folks in our lives who have acted with fierce bravery, trusting their call and your words of blessing. Their faith and conviction inspires our own.

In addition to prayers of gratitude, we also offer prayers for guidance. For even though we count this day as a new beginning, the words and messages of the past cling to us like quicksand.

Blessing God, today we lift up those of us who have ever been told that we are unworthy or are not enough by this demanding society.

We pray for those of us who have ever been discouraged from chasing a dream
or have been made to feel small.

We pray for those of us who know insecurity and dance with self-doubt.
We pray for all who hear your words of blessing and want to respond, "*How can this be?*"

Let this day be a new beginning, Creator God.
Erase our memories of self-doubt.
Erase the "*How can this be?*" questions from our minds.
Erase our insecurities and fears,
and in their place, fill our hearts with trust.
Fill our spirits with conviction.
Fill our minds with the knowledge that, like Mary, we are made in your image. Like Mary, we are good.

God of blessings,
Once again, we find ourselves standing at the beginning of the month,
at the beginning of this Advent season, at the beginning of this new day, bringing our hearts to you.

*So on this new day, we pray: speak your words of blessing once again.
And as you do, we will lift our voices together to pray the words your son taught us to pray, saying. . .*

(Conclude the prayer)

... We remember especially those whom we name aloud... **Marie** Becker, **Carole** Bergner, **Wally** Brandt, **John** Carlson, **Sharon** Cobb, **Alicia** Doudna, **Jane** Frakes, **Ron** Hupe, **Connie** Kretzmann, **Carenna** Reisen, **Sandy** Weckler, **Russ** Zage, and all whom we remember in our hearts and lift before you ... *(silence for reflection)*

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The assembly is seated.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* - P. Manz - © 1970 Concordia Publishing House

The assembly stands and sings as the offerings are brought forward.



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 dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence,
Lord, and give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

Creator God,
you made the whole 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 this food
that we may live in expectation
for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

***About Communion:** This is Christ's table and meal of grace! All are welcome! Ushers will guide you forward. Receive the bread (gluten free available); wine or white grape juice is received from a cup from the gold tray..If you have difficulty coming forward for the distribution, please let one of the ushers know and they will ask the pastor to bring you communion in the pew. Children may come forward for a blessing.*

COMMUNION DIALOG

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

It is indeed right and salutary that we should at all times and in all places offer thanks and praise to you,

O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everliving God.

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 again to judge the world in righteousness.

And so, 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, God of pow-er and
might, heav - en 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.

PRAYER OF GREAT THANKSGIVING

Loving God,
We come to this Table today longing for a new beginning.

In a world that so often feels like it's ending,
we crave the hope of a new beginning.
We long to heal from the endings and crash landings of our hurting world and start again, rooted
in your good news.

So week by week, bit by bit, we return to your Word.
Week by week, bit by bit, we return to each other.
Week by week, and bit by bit, we repeat the truths that we so often need to hear, trusting that by
your grace, it is never too late to start again.

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.

So in this spirit of beginnings, we come to your Table.
Once more we ask that you would meet us here.
Pour out your Spirit on this ordinary meal, that in this bread and cup we may glimpse a new day.

May the sight of everyone being welcomed at this Table remind us that all are loved by you.

May the evidence that there is food for all remind us that no one is meant to go hungry.

May the fact that our own sin, shame, and doubt do not keep us from this Table remind us that you
welcome and love us as we are.

And may all of these Communion truths serve as building blocks for a new day, for a new
beginning.

With hope in our hearts, we pray.
With hope in our hearts, we gather.
With hope in our hearts, we begin again.
Meet us here.
Allow this joyful feast to be the start of something new.

With joy and hope, we weave our voices together
to pray the words your son taught us to pray, saying . . .

THE LORD'S PRAYER

INVITATION TO THE TABLE

When we come to this Table, for just a moment, we get a glimpse of God's promised day. We get a glimpse of a world where all are fed and all are welcomed.

And for just a moment we can believe the angels when they say,
"Be not afraid."

For just a moment, Mary's words tumble through our minds—
words of justice and hope, words like, "the hungry have been filled" and "the humble have been lifted."

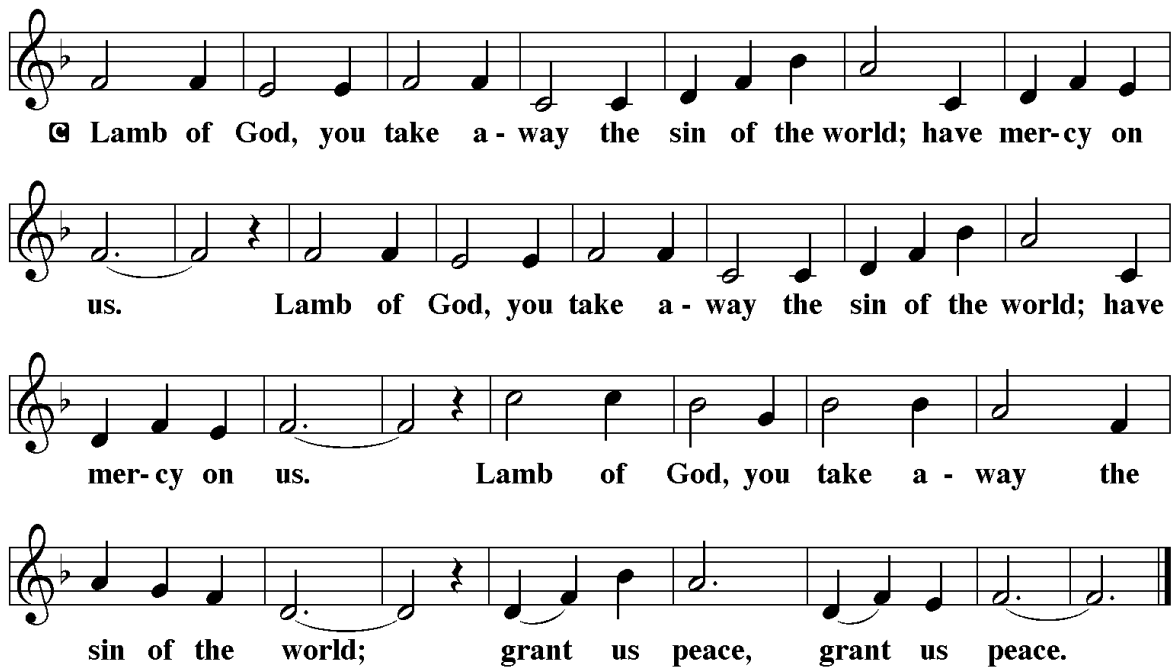
So come to this Table.

Come catch a glimpse of what could be.

Come end your waiting, for love is hovering close. This is what it's all about.

God is all around us.

So come. This good news is for you. All are welcome here.



☐ Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on
us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

The assembly is seated.

COMMUNION HYMN

HYMN 257 O Come, O Come Emmanuel

The assembly stands.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

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

Amen.

CANTICLE



☞ Thank - ful hearts and voic - es raise; tell ev - 'ry -
one what God has done. Let all who seek the
Lord re - joice and bear Christ's ho - ly name.
Send us with your prom - is - es, O God, and
lead us forth in joy with shouts of thanks -
giv - ing. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Nourishing God,
Sometimes we tell ourselves that too much has taken place to begin again.

We think the world is too far gone.
We think we have made too many mistakes.
We tell ourselves that we couldn't possibly begin again.

But then we come to this Table and we get a glimpse of your kingdom. We come to this Table and all are welcomed, all are seen, all are fed. And just like that, we have hope.
Just like that, we begin again.

Thank you for the gift of this fresh start.
Thank you for planting hope deep in our bones.
Thank you for meeting us in ordinary bread and juice to remind us that it's never too late to build your kingdom here.
We are grateful.
We are *so* grateful.

Amen

BENEDICTION

As you leave this place,
 may you have the wisdom to lean on one other.
May you have the courage to hold onto hope,
 the compassion to do the good that is yours to do,
 and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing. For in a world full of dead ends,
Advent invites us to begin again.
So start here.
Start now.
Start with love and begin again.
In the name of Christ,
our new beginning,
go in peace.

SENDING HYMN

HYMN 239 **Hark the Glad Sound**

DEPART TO SERVE

POSTLUDE *Hark the Glad Sound!* - P. Manz - © 1990 Morning Star

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Principal Pianist and Sanctuary Choir Director: Judith Jackson

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