

The 2nd Sunday of Advent
at First Lutheran Church in St. Helens, Oregon
Sunday, December 8, 2024, at 10:00 AM



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."

All are welcome in our worship! *Your presence here is a gift from God. We particularly welcome visitors and guests, and we would love to have you join us for coffee hour immediately following the worship service.*

Follow this worship bulletin as your guide to the service from beginning to end. Leaders speak the words in regular type; **people speak (or sing) the boldface words.** Please rise, whether physically or simply with your heart, during the portions of the liturgy marked by an asterisk*.

To get ready for Zoom worship (at home)

We celebrate Holy Communion together via Zoom as well as gathered in person. Please have bread/cracker(s) and a cup of wine/grape juice ready if you and those with you plan to take part. If you do not have access to wine/grape juice, you may receive Communion without the cup; Christ is fully present as the "Bread of Life."



GATHERING

*The Holy Spirit calls us together
as the people of God.*

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP – PRELUDE AND SILENT PRAYER

Dr. Denise Reed

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Robert Neubert

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † 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.

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.



* **Gathering Hymn**

Prepare the Royal Highway

ELW 264



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

* **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

(SING) - ELW 257 VERSE 1

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

LITANY

At every beginning there is a yearning for the one who is coming. O Emmanuel,
Prepare us for your coming.

We gather together to get ready for what? Only heaven knows. O Emmanuel,
Prepare us for your coming.

We wait for the day when God will create a prevailing peace on the earth, and natural-born enemies turn into newborn friends. O Emmanuel,
Prepare us for your coming.

We get ready for God to come close by laying our lives open to Jesus, asking him to sort through all our mixed motives. O Emmanuel,
Prepare us for your coming.

Jesus, we welcome your presence now with the lighting of these candles, whose flames bring warmth to winter and fill this place with the glow of hope.

Amen

Light the first and second candle.

O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.



HYMN OF PRAISE



1 Glo-ry be to God in heav-en; peace, good-will to all the earth.
2 Glo-ry be to Christ for - ev - er, Lamb of God and Lord of love.
3 Ho - ly One we now ac-claim you; Lord a - lone, to you we call;



Might-y God of all cre - a - tion, Fa - ther of sur - pass - ing worth:
Son of God and gra - cious Sav - ior, you have come from heav'n a - bove;
Ho - ly One in faith we name you, God most high, yet near to all:



we ex - alt you, we a - dore you, we lift high our thanks and praise.
on the cross you died to save us; now you reign at God's right hand.
Je - sus Christ, with God the Spir - it, in the Fa - ther's splen - dor bright.



Saints and an - gels bow be - fore you; here on earth our songs we raise.
Hear our prayer; re - store, for - give us; in your prom - ise firm we stand.
For the peace that we in - her - it, glo - ry be to God on high!

* PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

FIRST READING - Malachi 3:1-4

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

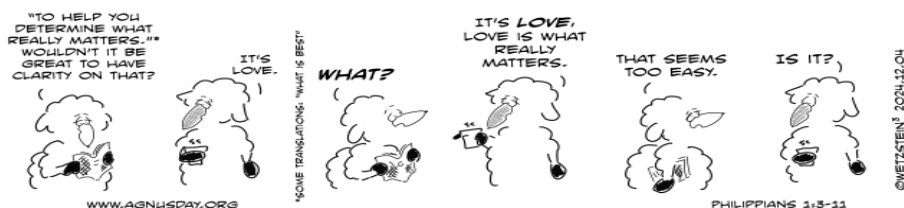
⁶⁸ Blessed are you, Lord, the God of Israel,
you have come to your people and set them free.
⁶⁹ **You have raised up for us a mighty Savior,
born of the house of your servant David.**
⁷⁰ Through your holy prophets, you promised of old to save us from our enemies,
⁷¹ from the hands of all who hate us,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

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.



*** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



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.

***GOSPEL – Luke 3:1-6**

The Good News of Jesus Christ 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 our Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

Pastor Robert Neubert

SERMON

Pastor Robert Neubert



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounc - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
 way for God with - in, and let us all our
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
 has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

* APOSTLES' (BAPTISMAL) CREED

With the whole people of God, we make public profession of our faith.

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 again 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**

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

Refining God, move through your church. Root out practices that harm your people, and kindle a fire for sharing the gospel among bishops, pastors, deacons, and all the baptized. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Renewing God, transform your creation. Steer us from habits that harm what you have made, and guide us in practices that preserve and restore creatures and habitats. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Ruling God, teach the nations your ways. Strengthen organizations and communities that broker peace and care for refugees, immigrants, and all caught in the center of conflict. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Rescuing God, restore your people who are in any need. Heal all who are suffering especially *Carlene Clore, Doreen Gordon, Marilyn Hensley, Sandy Hora, Brian Morse, Joan Heide, Wendy Rude, Jayne Schilling, Joan Johanson and Amanda Bailey* and all those we lift up upon our hearts or our lips. Provide comfort and strength, and nurture sustained wholeness for the future. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Reforming God, fill this congregation with your presence. Enrich our seasonal preparations, and bless the efforts by worship committees, music ensembles, staff, clergy, and lay leaders as they work in the weeks ahead. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Reassuring God, we remember those who have died and rest in you. Guide us in deep gratitude for their life, and allow us to learn from their faithful witness. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

*** SHARING THE PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you!

Greet those around you with gestures that signal Christ's peace.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"PREPARE YE"

FLC CHOIR

OFFERING AND MUSICAL OFFERING

Thank you for joining us today! If you would like to support the ministries of First Lutheran, you may place your offering in the wooden bowl when it is passed to you. You may also make your offering by mail, through our website or by using the QR code seen here, with offerings going through VANCO.



As the Grains of Wheat

Refrain

As the grains of wheat once scat-tered on the hill were
gath-ered in - to one to be - come our bread; so may all your peo-ple from
all the ends of earth be gath-ered in - to one in you.

1 As this cup of bless-ing is shared with-in our midst,
2 Let this be a fore-taste of all that is to come when

Refrain

may we share the pres - ence of your love.
all cre - a - tion shares this feast with you.

* OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray together. (*brief silence*)

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.

* GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

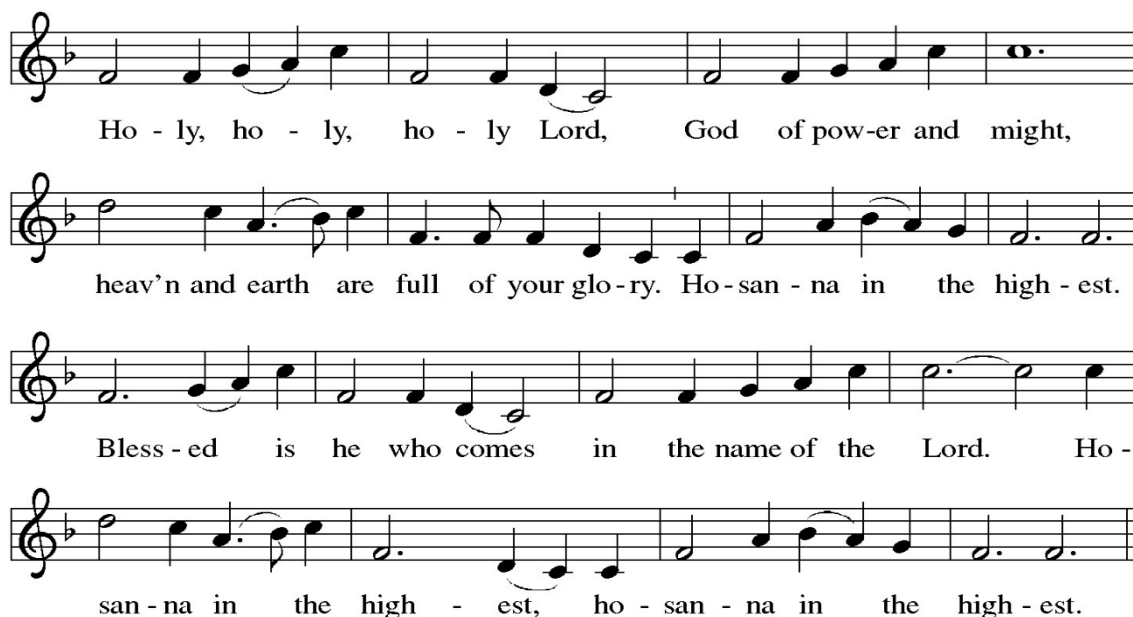
Lift up your hearts.

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



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.

* THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

* THE LORD'S PRAYER

We pray together, as Jesus taught us:

Eternal Spirit,

Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,

Source of all that is and that shall be,

Father and Mother of us all,

Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

**The way of your justice be followed by the peoples
of the world!**

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

**Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.**

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

**For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.**

* INVITATION TO COMMUNION

About our communion practice: All are welcome at the Lord's Table. The music ministers commune first, along with worshipers on Zoom. The communion server and pastor commune last. An usher will invite you forward, or you may request that Communion be brought to you.

You may kneel or stand at the altar rail. Receive the bread in your hand or hands and eat it. Ask if you prefer a gluten-free wafer.

Take a cup of wine (red) or grape juice (white) from the assisting minister's tray and drink it.

Your group will leave the table together after communing. Place your empty cup in the basket on the way back to your seat.

We believe that Christ is truly present at the Lord's Table in the consecrated bread and wine, and Christ welcomes all who wish to receive the Holy Sacrament.

Anyone who does not wish to commune is welcome to still come forward. Please signal your wish for a blessing by crossing your arms over your chest.

Lamb of God



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;



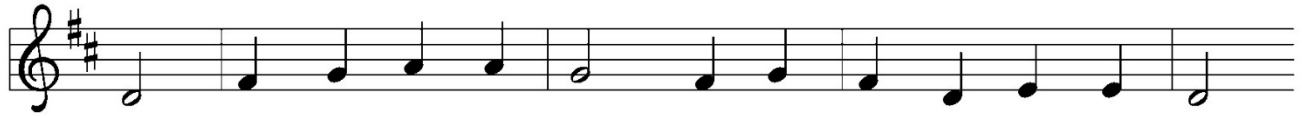
you suf-fered death our lives to save: have mer-cy now, we pray.
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mer-cy now, we pray.
e - ter-nal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.

"Lamb of GOD."





1 O Lord, how shall I meet you, how wel - come you a - right?
 2 I lay in fet - ters, groan - ing; you came to set me free.
 3 Love caused your in - car - na - tion; love brought you down to me.
 4 Re - joice, then, you sad - heart - ed, who sit in deep - est gloom,



Your peo - ple long to greet you, my hope, my heart's de - light!
 I stood, my shame be - moan - ing; you came to hon - or me.
 Your thirst for my sal - va - tion pro - cured my lib - er - ty.
 who mourn your joys de - part - ed and trem - ble at your doom.



Oh, kin - dle, Lord most ho - ly, your lamp with - in my breast
 A glo - rious crown you give me, a trea - sure safe on high
 Oh, love be - yond all tell - ing, that led you to em - brace
 All hail the Lord's ap - pear - ing! O glo - rious Sun, now come,



to do in spir - it low - ly all that may please you best.
 that will not fail or leave me as earth - ly rich - es fly.
 in love, all love ex - cel - ling, our lost and fall - en race.
 send forth your beams so cheer - ing and guide us safe - ly home.



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.



Refrain
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.

* BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you
and keep you in God's grace.

Amen.

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray together. 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 ~

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

*** BLESSING .**

God of endings and beginnings,
God in the darkness and the light,
God, our hope for the journey,
✠ bless and keep you now and forever.
Amen.



*SENDING SONG

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

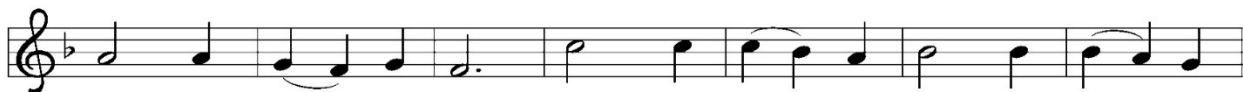
ELW 631



1 Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel - ling, Joy of heav'n, to
2 Breathe, oh, breathe thy lov - ing Spir - it in - to ev - 'ry
3 Come, Al - might - y, to de - liv - er; let us all thy
4 Fin - ish then thy new cre - a - tion, pure and spot - less



earth come down! Fix in us thy hum - ble dwell - ing, all thy
trou - bled breast; let us all in thee in - her - it; let us
life re - ceive; sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, nev - er -
let us be; let us see thy great sal - va - tion per - fect -



faith - ful mer - cies crown. Je - sus, thou art all com - pas - sion,
find thy prom - ised rest. Take a - way the love of sin - ning;
more thy tem - ples leave. Thee we would be al - ways bless - ing,
ly re - stored in thee! Changed from glo - ry in - to glo - ry,



pure, un - bound - ed love thou art; vis - it us with
Al - pha and O - me - ga be; end of faith, as
serve thee as thy hosts a - bove, pray, and praise thee
till in heav'n we take our place, till we cast our



thy sal - va - tion, en - ter ev - 'ry trem - bling heart.
its be - gin - ning, set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
with - out ceas - ing, glo - ry in thy per - fect love.
crowns be - fore thee, lost in won - der, love, and praise!

* SENDING

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.



POSTLUDE