



Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 20 / 21, 2025

St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church

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Today's service is televised locally

Channel 14 - Comcast: Monday at 6:00 p.m. & Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. & Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.

Channel 3 - Nuvera: Mondays at 6:00 p.m. & Tuesday at 1:00 p.m. & Thursdays at 10:00 a.m.

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

December 20/21, 2025

Welcome, Visitors! Please scan the QR code to sign our guest register.



PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP: Almighty God and Father: You sent your only begotten Son Jesus Christ to this earth so that by becoming a human being, just like us, he might live a perfect life and die an innocent death in our place to pay the debt for our sin and to justify in your sight. Accept our prayers, praises, and offerings as we come before you in humble worship confessing the great truth that Immanuel has come, and God is truly with us. Comfort us through your Word and Sacrament. In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Service Setting 4

OPENING HYMN

Peace Came to Earth

CW 330

- 1 Peace came to earth at last that chosen night
when angels clove the sky with song and light
and God embodied love and sheathed his might—
Who could but gasp: Immanuel! Who could but sing: Immanuel!
- 2 And who could be the same for having held
the infant in their arms and later felt
the wounded hands and side, all doubts dispelled—
Who could but sigh: Immanuel! Who could but shout: Immanuel!
- 3 You show the Father none has ever seen,
in flesh and blood you bore our griefs and pain,
in bread and wine you visit us again—
Who could but see: Immanuel! Who could but thrill: Immanuel!
- 4 How else could I have known you, O my God!
How else could I have loved you, O my God!
How else could I embrace you, O my God!
Who could but pray: Immanuel! Who could but praise: Immanuel!

Stand

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

Amen.

CONFESSiON OF SINS

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Let us confess our sins to the Lord.

Holy God, gracious Father, I am sinful by nature and have sinned against you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have not loved you with my whole heart; I have not loved others as I should. I deserve your punishment both now and forever. But Jesus, my Savior, paid for my sins with his innocent suffering and death. Trusting in him, I pray: God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Silence for meditation and reflection

Our gracious Father in heaven has been merciful to us. He sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave his life as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

LORD HAVE MERCY



In peace let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



For the peace from a - bove and for our sal - va - tion,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



For the peace of the whole world, for the well - be - ing



of the Church of God, and for the un - i - ty of all,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

For this ho - ly house and for all who of - fer here their
wor - ship and praise, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**

Help, save, com-fort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. **A - men.**

GLORY TO GOD

Glo - ry to God in the high - est and peace to his peo - ple on earth.

Lord God, heav-en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther. We

wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your

glo - ry. Glo - ry to God in the high - est and peace to his

peo - ple on earth. Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly

Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God, you

take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on

us; you are seat - ed at the right hand of the

Fa-ther: re - ceive our prayer, re - ceive our prayer.

Glo - ry to God in the high - est and peace to his peo - ple on



earth. For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the



Lord, you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ,



with the Ho - ly Spir-it in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.



Glo - ry to God in the high - est and peace to his peo-ple on earth.



Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the burden of our sins, and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Be seated

FIRST LESSON

Isaiah 7:10-14

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹ “Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.”

¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.”

¹³ Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also?”

¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM OF THE DAY

Forever I Will Sing

Psalm 89

Refrain



For - ev - er I will sing the good - ness of the



LORD, the good - ness of the LORD.

Tone



I will sing of the LORD's great love for- / ever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known through all gener- / ations.
I will declare that your love stands firm for- / ever,
that you have established your faithfulness in / heav'n itself.
The heavens praise your / wonders, LORD,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the / holy ones. *Refrain*

Who is like you, LORD God Al- / mighty?
You, LORD, are mighty, and your faithfulness sur- / rounds you.
Blessed are those who have learned to ac- / claim you,
who walk in the light of your / presence, LORD.
They rejoice in your name / all day long;
they celebrate your / righteousness.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son
and to the Holy / Spirit,
as it was in the be- / ginning,
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. *Refrain***

SECOND LESSON

Romans 1:1-7

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God—² the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³ regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, ⁴ and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵ Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. ⁶ And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷ To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:
Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Stand

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Refrain



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Tone



Come to us, Em - man - u - el; come and set your peo - ple free.

Refrain

GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not

consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

CW 327

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

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

2 O come, O Root of Jesse, free your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save, and give them vict'ry o'er the grave.
(Refrain)

3 O come, O Dayspring from on high, and cheer us by your drawing nigh;
disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadows put to flight.
(Refrain)

4 O come, O 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.
(Refrain)

SERMON

Immanuel Has Come

Isaiah 7:10-14

Stand

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Be seated

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Brief intercessory prayers may be added in a fitting place.

Almighty God and Father, we thank you for all your mercies, especially for the gift of your Son, through whom you have revealed your gracious will. We praise you for the Holy Spirit and his working through the means of grace.

Plant your Word in our hearts, and cause it to produce fruit in our lives.

Strengthen and defend your Church, that by your Word and sacraments faith may grow and love toward all may increase.

Support all who spread the light of your truth throughout the world.

Keep our children in the grace of their baptisms. Enable their parents to train them in lives of faith.

Raise up Christians to serve you in the ministry of the Word and in all godly walks of life.

Preserve our nation in justice and honor. Guide and bless all who make, administer, and judge our laws.

Give them wisdom that they may promote justice and hinder evil.

Let your blessing rest on planting and harvest, commerce and industry, medicine and science, the arts and culture. Protect all who travel, and care for those whose work is difficult or dangerous.

Be with all who devote themselves to any useful task.

Comfort all who are in sorrow or need, sickness or adversity. Remember those who suffer persecution for the faith. Have mercy on those for whom death draws near.

Grant them your love, and take them into your tender care.

Hear us, Lord, as we pray in silence.

Silent prayer

We remember with thanksgiving those who have loved and served you, who now rest from their labors. Console those who are mourning or living with sadness.

Keep us in the true faith, and bring us at last to the joys of heaven.

Grant us these things, Father, for the sake of Jesus, who died and rose again.

Amen.

OFFERING

THE SACRAMENT

Stand



The Lord be with you.



And also with you.



Lift up your hearts.



We lift them up to the Lord.



Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is right to give him thanks and praise.

It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whose wonderful and mysterious birth you have opened our eyes to the glory of your grace and renewed in our hearts the fervor of your love. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

HOLY HOLY HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er, God of 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! 8

Blessed are you, O Lord of heaven and earth. We praise and thank you for sending your Son, Jesus Christ, and we remember the great acts of love through which he has ransomed us from sin, death, and the devil's power.

By his incarnation, he became one with us.
By his perfect life, he fulfilled your holy will.
By his innocent death, he overcame hell.
By his rising from the grave, he opened heaven.

Invited by your grace and instructed by your Word, we approach your table with repentant and joyful hearts. Strengthen us through Christ's body and blood, and preserve us in the true faith until we feast with him and all his ransomed people in glory everlasting.

Amen.

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my $\text{\texttildelow{}}\text{}$ body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you; this is my $\text{\texttildelow{}}\text{}$ blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Amen.

LAMB OF GOD

0 Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

0 Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.

0 Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us your peace.

A - men. A - men.

Be seated

DISTRIBUTION HYMN *Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love* CW 496

- 1 Jesus! Name of wondrous love, name all other names above,
unto which must ev'ry knee bow in deep humility.
- 2 Jesus! Name decreed of old, to the maiden mother told,
kneeling in her lowly cell, by the angel Gabriel.
- 3 Jesus! Name of priceless worth to the fallen here on earth
for the promise that it gave, “Jesus shall his people save.”
- 4 Jesus! Name of mercy mild, given to the holy Child
when the cup of human woe first he tasted here below.
- 5 Jesus! Only name that's giv'n under all the mighty heav'n
whereby those to sin enslaved burst their fetters and are saved.
- 6 Jesus! Name of wondrous love, human name of God above;
pleading only this, we flee helpless, O our God, to thee.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN *At the Name of Jesus* CW 547

- 1 At the name of Jesus ev'ry knee shall bow,
ev'ry tongue confess him King of glory now;
'tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,
who from the beginning was the mighty Word.
- 2 At his voice creation sprang at once to sight,
all the angel faces, all the hosts of light,
cherubim in heaven, stars upon their way,
all the heav'ly orders in their great array.

- 3 Humbled for a season to receive a name
from the lips of sinners unto whom he came,
faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious when from death he passed;
- 4 Bore it up triumphant with its human light,
thro' all ranks of creatures to the central height,
to the throne of Godhead, to the Father's breast,
filled it with the glory of that perfect rest.
- 5 In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue
all that is not holy, all that is not true.
Crown him as your captain in temptation's hour;
let his will enfold you in its light and pow'r.
- 6 Christians, this Lord Jesus shall return again
in his Father's glory, with his angel train;
for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,
and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

Stand

Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good;
his mercy endures forever.

Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

BLESSING

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.

Amen.

PREACHER

PRESIDING MINISTER

ORGANIST

Pastor Jeff Bovee

Pastor Rob Guenther

Jon Roux

Acknowledgments

Setting Four from Christian Worship

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THIS WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

Sunday	8 & 9:30 am	Worship
	11 am	Sunday School Christmas Service
	2 pm	Pastor Gaertner's Visitation
	3 pm	Pastor Gaertner's Funeral
Wednesday	4 pm	Children's Christmas Eve Service
	7 pm	Candlelight Service
Thursday	9 am	Christmas Day Service
Friday		Office Closed
Saturday	6:30 pm	No Worship Service
Sunday, Dec 28	8, 9:30 & 11 am	Worship
Wednesday, Dec 31	6:30 pm	New Year's Eve Service
Thursday, Jan 1		Office Closed

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Attendance for this past weekend was 567.

Fruits of Faith:

\$17,585 Home Operations ~ Needed: \$889,895 / YTD: \$877,737
\$2,265 WELS Missions ~ YTD: \$97,244 (2025 Goal: \$87,000)
\$540 MVL ~ YTD: \$59,597 (2025 Goal: \$57,000)
\$45 Building Fund
\$5,110 K-12 Education Assistance
\$400 St. Paul's School Building Fund
\$500 Endowment Fund
\$272 Altar and Flowers
\$1,487 Gifts for Called Workers/Staff
\$60 Food + Fellowship
\$20 Organ Fund
\$300 Martin Luther College
\$.25 Lutheran Charities
\$131 Miscellaneous Income
\$100 Technology Equipment

Grand Piano on the Wish List ~ St. John's Worship Committee would like to replace the piano in the front of the church. The existing piano was not designed for a large space seating 350 people, but for a house or small music studio. The council has approved that a new 5-foot Yamaha grand piano (to be placed in the front of the sanctuary near the lectern) be added to the wish list. This piano would enrich our worship as it fills the church with sound. It's known for its stability of tuning and action and delivers a clear sound that would accompany the congregation and choirs well. The cost is approximately \$21,400 for the piano, delivery and installation, and all needed accessories. If you are interested in contributing to this worship enhancement, please note "Piano" on your offering envelope or electronic gift. To God be the glory!

Active Threat Training Available ~ St. John's is hosting active threat training provided by Protect His House. This training is being offered at no cost to all interested St John's and St. Paul's members. Training will cover situational awareness, action planning, and tactics to respond to threatening situations. The class will be held at St. John's LC, Saturday, January 24th from 9am - 12pm. Registration is required. Use promo code SJLCFREE at registration. Use the QR code on the posters found around church, or go to <https://phhtraining.com/event/phh-level-1-active-threat-awareness-seminar-new-ulm-minnesota/> to register.

AREA ANNOUNCEMENTS

New Beginnings ~ On Saturday, January 10th at 7:00 pm, St. Paul's New Ulm will be hosting a special presentation about New Beginnings: A Home For Mothers, a WELS affiliated program. Ruth Westphal, the program manager will be here to present.

About the Cover ~ The prophecy was that a virgin mother would give birth to a child, and that his name would be Immanuel, which means in Hebrew, "God with Us." The prophecy which was made some 700 years earlier was fulfilled, as the Virgin Mary gave birth to her firstborn son who had no human father. The son born to her was the God-man Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior who took on our human flesh so that we might become the children of the living God.