



This candle is lit on the fourth Sunday of Advent, symbolizing the love of God that was made manifest through the birth of Jesus. This central theme of love reflects the unconditional and sacrificial love that God demonstrated by sending His Son into the world for humanity's sake (John 3:16).

Known as the
"The Angel's Candle".

First Lutheran Church

December 21, 2025

4rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Today Isaiah prophesies
that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel.
The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation
and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us.
During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel,"
a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons,
ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas.
On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate
the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

MACHT HOCH DIE TÜR

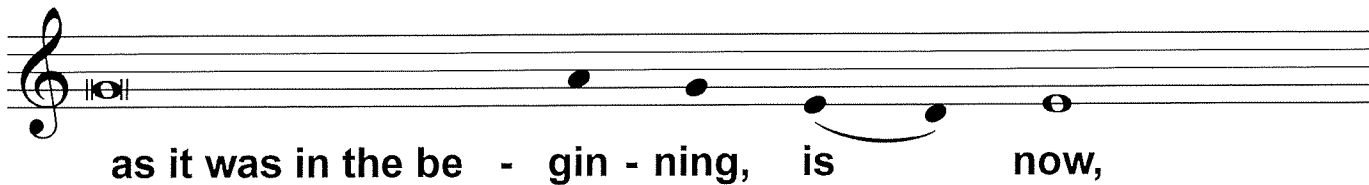
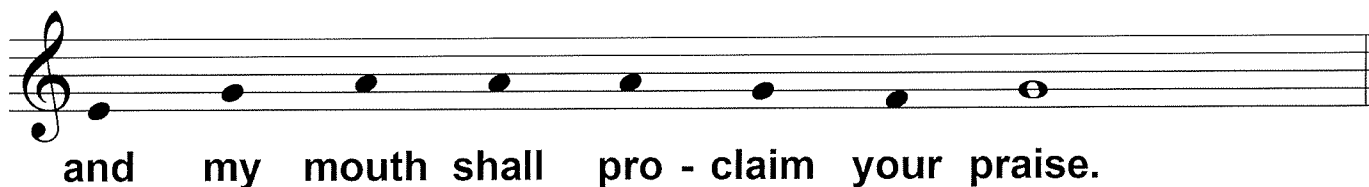
Emily Porter

Fling Wide the Door, Unbar the Gate

(Please stand)

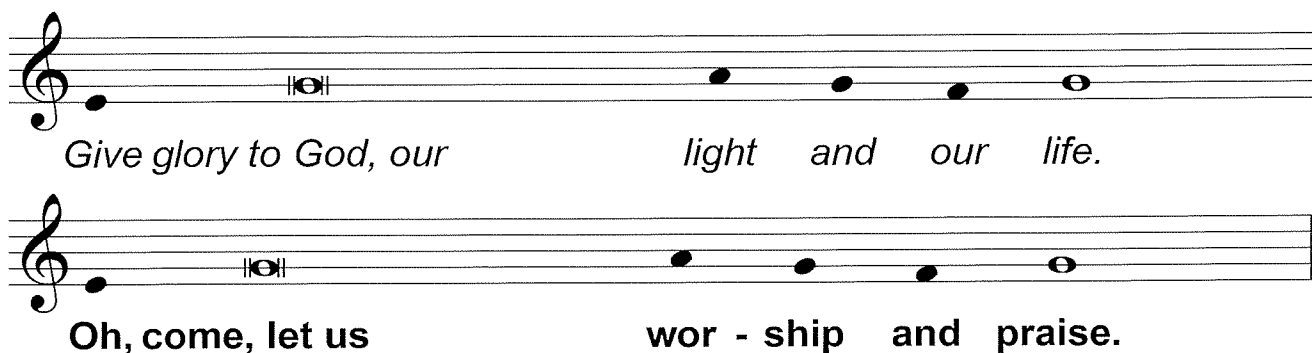
MORNING PRAYER

OPENING DIALOGUE AND DOXOLOGY



PSALMODY

INVITATORY



Give glory to God, our light and our life.

Oh, come, let us wor - ship and praise.

MORNING PSALM OF PRAISE

PSALM 95:1-7

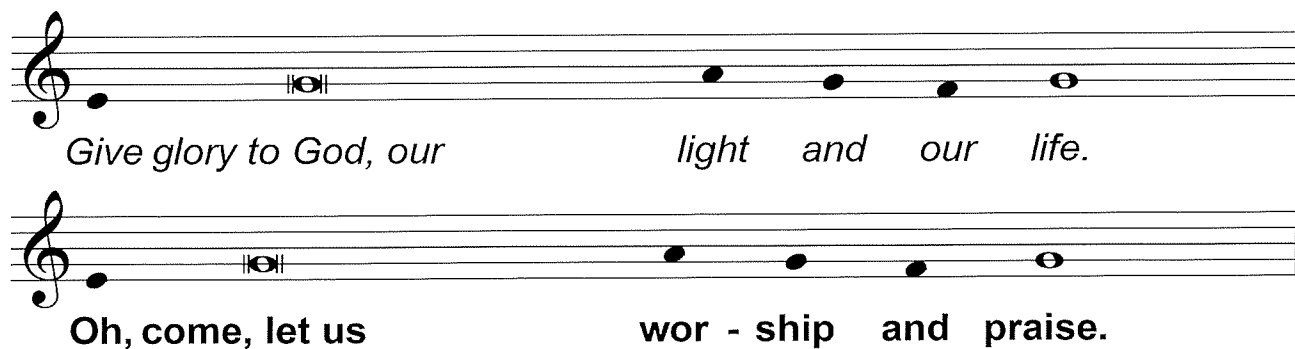


Come, Let us sing to the Lord; let us shout for joy to the

rock of our sal - va - tion.

The Cantor will sing the verses.

FINAL INVITATORY



Give glory to God, our light and our life.

Oh, come, let us wor - ship and praise.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

P: At every beginning there is a yearning for the one who is coming.

L: O Emmanuel,

C: Surprise us by your coming.

P: We gather together to let God's good news reorient our lives.

L: O Emmanuel,

C: Surprise us by your coming.

P: We wait for the day when all the world will see the sign
that God is with us.

L: O Emmanuel,

C: Surprise us by your coming.

P: We are shocked by how God comes close, even at this very moment.

L: O Emmanuel,

C: Surprise us by your coming.



Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.

Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.

Light threecan-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.

Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is-ra-el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.

He shall feed the flock like a shepherd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.

Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.

He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

P: 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.

C: Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

(Please be seated)

++ Children may go to Sunday School

FIRST READING

ISAIAH 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

R: A reading from Isaiah, the seventh chapter.

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

R: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

ROMANS 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

R: A reading from Romans, the first chapter.

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: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

(Please stand)

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.

GOSPEL

MATTHEW 1:18-25

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew, the first chapter.

Glo - ry to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just

when he had resolved to do 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 as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

P: This is the gospel of our Lord.





1 Fling wide the door, un - bar the gate; the King of glo - ry
 2 He is the rock of our be - lief, the heart of mer - cy's
 3 Oh, hap - py towns and bless - ed lands that live by their true
 4 Come, Lord, our Sav - ior, Je - sus Christ; our hearts are o - pen



comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the
 gen - tle self. His king - ly crown is ho - li - ness; his
 king's com-mands. And bless - ed be the hearts he rules, the
 wide in trust. Oh, show us now your love - ly grace, up -



Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion
 scep - ter is his love - li - ness; he brings our sor - rows
 hum - ble plac - es where he dwells. He is the right - ful
 on our sor - rows shine your face, and let your Ho - ly



to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and
 to an end. Now glad - ly praise our king and friend, and
 Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, cre -
 Spir - it guide our jour - ney in your grace so wide. We



praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word.
 wor - ship him with song for sav - ing us from wrong.
 a - tor of the world, our on - ly strength for good.
 praise your ho - ly name, from age to age the same!

Text: Georg Weissel, 1590–1635; tr. Gracia Grindal, b. 1943

Music: MACHT HOCH DIE TÜR, J. A. Freylinghausen, *Geistreiches Gesangbuch*, 1704

(Please be seated)

REFLECTION

REVEREND MARK SCHURING

(Please stand)

CANTICLE

BLESSED BE THE GOD OF ISRAEL

ELW # 250



1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free
2 With prom-ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,
3 My child, as proph-et of the Lord you will pre-pare the way,



and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da-vid's tree.
the oath once sworn to A - bra-ham, from foes to save us all;
to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.



So have the proph-ets long de-clared that with a might-y arm
that we might wor - ship with-out fear and of - fer lives of praise,
Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease



God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.
in ho - li - ness and righ - teous-ness to serve God all our days.
to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.

Text: Carl P. Daw Jr., b. 1944, based on Luke 1:68-79

Music: FOREST GREEN, English folk tune

(Please be seated)

OFFERING AND ORGAN MEDITATION

GABRIEL'S MESSAGE

Robert Lau

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

(Please stand)



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
 2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
 4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
 all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
 "To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
 in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
 thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
 "My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
 and Chris - tian folk through - out the world will ev - er say:



most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
 most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,
 "Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."

Text: Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924

Music: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE, Basque carol

OFFERING PRAYER

L: Let us pray.

Nourishing God,

you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

Satisfy our parched places,

that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come.

C: Amen.

(Please kneel)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: 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.

L: 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.

Each petition concludes:

P: God of grace,
C: hear our prayer.

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

(Please stand)

LORD'S PRAYER

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

**C: 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.**

SENDING

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

C: Oh God,
your everlasting love for us is always trustworthy and sure.
We are grateful for the goodness you have shown us through the years,
and we ask now for confidence to go forward into the future.
Bless our community of faith, bless our healing,
bless the changes that are before us, bless our pastoral leaders
who will shepherd us through this time of transition.
We thank you now for the wisdom you will show us
as we align with your will, and servant or servants
you are already preparing to send us in your blessed time.
Help us to keep looking to you to define our ministry and our future.
In his name and for the sake of Jesus Christ,
our Savior and Lord, Amen.

BLESSING





Events in Review

<u>Sunday</u>	Dec 21
10:00AM	Church Service
<u>Monday</u>	Dec 22
10:00AM	Bible Study at Willows
5:15PM	Bell Choir Practice
<u>Tuesday</u>	Dec 23
<u>Wednesday</u>	Dec 24
7:00 PM	Christmas Eve Service
<u>Thursday</u>	Dec 25
	Christmas Day
<u>Friday</u>	Dec 26
<u>Saturday</u>	Dec 27

Next Week

<u>Sunday</u>	Dec 28
10:00AM	Church Service
<u>Monday</u>	Dec 29
10:00AM	Bible Study at Willows
5:15PM	Bell Choir Practice
<u>Tuesday</u>	Dec 30
<u>Wednesday</u>	Dec 31
6:00 PM	Worship & Music
<u>Thursday</u>	Jan 1
<u>Friday</u>	Jan 2
<u>Saturday</u>	Jan 3



If you have a prayer request for today, please raise your hand during announcements and a host will give you a green card to fill out.

Numbered Offering Envelopes for 2026 are available on the table in the lobby.



Altar flowers were given today in

Memory of

Pauline & Maury Smith

By

Alice Smith

Jeff & Fran Smith

Poinsettia Order forms for Christmas are available on the lobby table. Last day to have names printed in bulletin is TODAY.



The Mitten Tree is up in the lobby and ready to receive donations.



December Monthly Scroll along with Jan-March 2025 Portals of Prayer are now available on the lobby table

Cookie Sign up sheets are located on the Information Board in the hallway. The time is before and after Church Service. Approximately 4 dozen cookies are needed each week.



End of Year GIVING Statements

If you would like an End of Year Giving Statement.

Please sign the Sheet on the Information Board or let the office know.

Due to the amount of statements not picked up last year, these will not be automatically printed for everyone.

We will be happy to print a statement for anyone who still would like to have one.

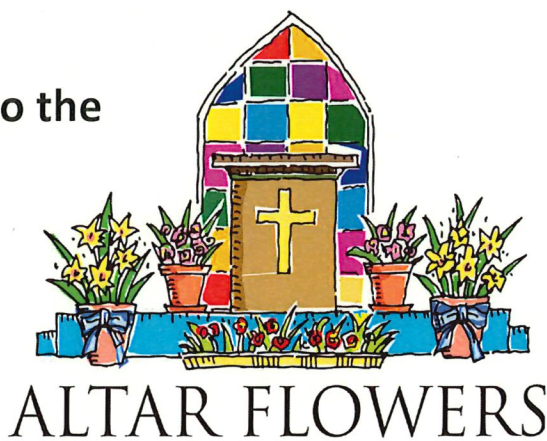
(If you have any questions, please contact Gloria)

This year we are starting a new procedure for ordering the Altar Flowers.

We can no longer send out an invoice for payment reminder, so instead we are asking for payment using the new Altar Flower Envelopes.

- 1) Pick the date that you want to reserve as a dedication.**
- 2) Fill out the Altar Flower Envelope with the information requested and place money into envelope.**
- 3) Return it with the offering collection or bring to the office and leave in basket.**

(If you have any questions, please contact Gloria)



ALTAR FLOWERS

Contact Us



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419-447-1323

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Interim Pastor

Pastor Mark Schuring

(740) 360-2306

theskipster55@gmail.com

Our Worship Leaders

Altar Guild: Mike & Bonnie Oberlander
Cantor: Elijah Shiley
Facebook Camera: The Rosses
Host: Janet Zirger/Sharon Losey
Reader: Shelley Ross
Worship Assistant: Shelley Ross
Director of Music: Curtis L. King
Minister: Pastor Mark Schuring

Emergency Pastors

Pastor Mark Schuring

(740) 360-2306

Mike Porter

(585) 813-5009

Pastor Philip Scherr

(814) 756-9435

Our Mission Statement

“God is among us!”

**“We are called to go out, care for all, share the gospel,
forgive, reconcile and trust God for all that we need.”**

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December 21, 2025