

**First English Lutheran Church  
Butler, Pennsylvania**

**Service of Holy Communion  
Third Sunday of Advent  
December 17, 2023  
10:00 a.m.**

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

“The Advent of Our King”

- Camil Van Hulse

“The Trumpets Sound, the Angels Sing”

- Aaron David Miller

“Joseph est bien marié”

- André Raison

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**MOMENT FOR REFLECTION**

**LIGHTING OF ADVENT WREATH**

**CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*The congregation may kneel. A moment of silence is kept.*

Most merciful God,

**We confess to you our sin in thought, word, and deed, the things we have done, and the things we have failed to do. We have hurt our neighbors and ourselves. We have wounded your creation. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, forgive us. Heal what we have broken and reconcile us to you, to one another, and to the earth and its creatures. Amen.**

In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*The congregation may stand.*

## **GATHERING HYMN**

“Rejoice, Rejoice Believers”

Red Book #244

## **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**

*page 193 in the front of the red book*

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

*The congregation may sit.*

## **THE WORD**

### **CHILDREN’S SERMON**

**FIRST READING**      **Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11**

*Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus 25, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.*

<sup>1</sup>The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,  
because the LORD has anointed me;

he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed,  
to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim liberty to the captives,  
and release to the prisoners;  
<sup>2</sup>to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor,  
and the day of vengeance of our God;  
to comfort all who mourn;  
<sup>3</sup>to provide for those who mourn in Zion—  
to give them a garland instead of ashes,  
the oil of gladness instead of mourning,  
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.  
<sup>4</sup>They shall build up the ancient ruins,  
they shall raise up the former devastations;  
they shall repair the ruined cities,  
the devastations of many generations.

<sup>8</sup>For I the LORD love justice,  
I hate robbery and wrongdoing;  
I will faithfully give them their recompense,  
and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.  
<sup>9</sup>Their descendants shall be known among the nations,  
and their offspring among the peoples;  
all who see them shall acknowledge  
that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.  
<sup>10</sup>I will greatly rejoice in the LORD,  
my whole being shall exult in my God;  
for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he has covered me with the robe of righteousness,  
as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland,  
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.  
<sup>11</sup>For as the earth brings forth its shoots,  
and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up,  
so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise  
to spring up before all the nations.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM 126**      *read responsively*

<sup>1</sup>When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,  
then were we like those who dream.

<sup>2</sup>**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue  
with shouts of joy.**

**Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done  
great things for them."**

<sup>3</sup>The LORD has done great things for us,  
and we are glad indeed.

<sup>4</sup>**Restore our fortunes, O LORD,  
like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

<sup>5</sup>Those who sowed with tears  
will reap with songs of joy.

<sup>6</sup>**Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,  
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

**SECOND READING**    **1 Thessalonians 5:16-24**

*Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ's coming.*

<sup>16</sup>Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup>pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup>give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup>Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup>Do not despise the words of prophets, <sup>21</sup>but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup>abstain from every form of evil.

<sup>23</sup>May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>24</sup>The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

Word of God, Word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The congregation may stand.*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

"Hallelujah"

Red Book #171

## GOSPEL

John 1:6-8, 19-28

The holy gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John, the first chapter.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*John's gospel describes Jesus as the "light of the world." John the Baptist is presented as a witness to Jesus, one who directs attention away from himself to Christ, the true light.*

<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>19</sup>This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup>He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." <sup>22</sup>Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup>He said,

"I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness,  
'Make straight the way of the Lord,'"

as the prophet Isaiah said.

<sup>24</sup>Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. <sup>25</sup>They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" <sup>26</sup>John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, <sup>27</sup>the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." <sup>28</sup>This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

The Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The congregation may sit.*

## SERMON

*The congregation may stand.*

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**

**"As the Dark Awaits the Dawn"**

Red Book #261

### **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 with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic 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.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*The congregation remains standing or takes another posture that is comfortable for prayer.*

*The cantor will lead through the refrain one time, then the congregation is invited to repeat. After each portion of the prayers, the assisting minister will bid, "We pray to you, O God." The congregation responds with the sung refrain.*

### In Silence We Wait

The image shows two staves of musical notation in G-clef and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of the hymn, with lyrics: "In si - lence we wait, in dark - ness you". The second staff contains the melody for the second line, with lyrics: "come to us; bring us your light." The music is simple and melodic, suitable for congregational singing.

Text: Susan Masters, b. 1957  
Music: IN SILENCE WE WAIT, Susan Masters  
Text and music © 2009 Augsburg Fortress

In the name of Jesus Christ, who at his first advent told us to watch for his second, and who dwells with all the saints even now in a greater light, we commend these our prayers to you, O God.

**Amen.**

*The congregation may stand.*

### THE MEAL

#### PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

*The congregation may sit.*

#### OFFERING

#### ORGAN OFFERTORY

"How Far Is It To Bethlehem"

- Paul Manz

*The ushers present the offerings and gifts of bread and wine for communion.*

### CHOIR ANTHEM

“Advent Supplication”

“Creator of the Stars of Night”

- Hal H. Hopson

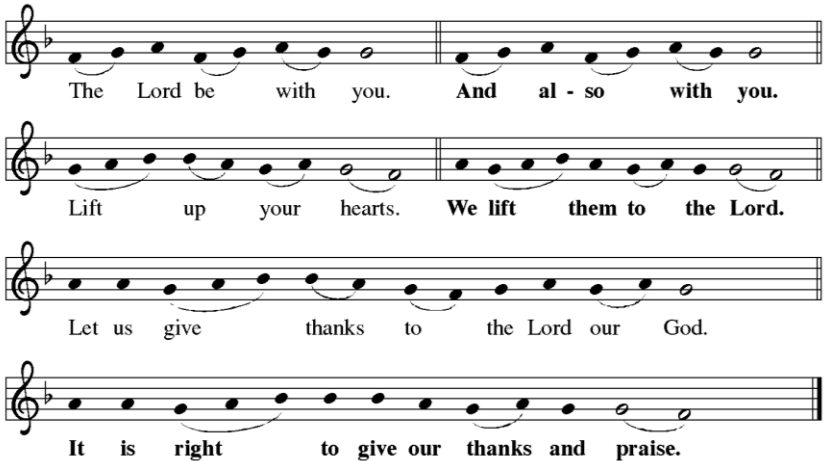
based on CONDITOR ALME

Sarum plainsong, 9<sup>th</sup> cent.

*The congregation may stand.*

**OFFERING PRAYER** *led by the assisting minister*

### GREAT THANKSGIVING



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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....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, 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

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life....Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup

we remember your Word dwelling among us,  
 full of grace and truth.

We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.

We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit.

Come among us.

Bless this meal.

May your Word take flesh in us.

Awaken your people.

Fill us with your light.

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours,  
Holy One of Israel,  
Word of God incarnate,  
Power of the Most High,  
one God, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

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

**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;**

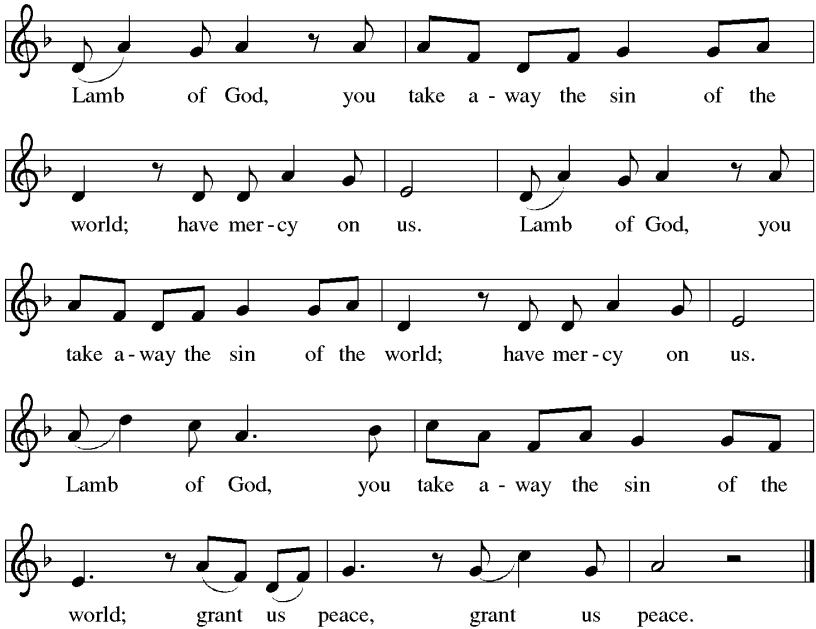
**and lead us not into temptation,**  
    **but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,**  
    **and the power, and the glory,**  
    **forever and ever. Amen.**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Jesus said: I am the bread of life. I am the vine, you are the branches.  
Come to me and never be hungry; believe in me and never thirst.

## LAMB OF GOD



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 congregation may sit.*

## SHARING OF THE SACRAMENT

*All are welcome to Holy Communion today. Lutherans believe that Christ is truly present in the bread and wine. The ushers will invite you forward to receive. Gluten free wafers are available; please let the pastor know if you wish to receive them. If you are able to receive either bread or wine (but not both), please know that you still receive the full communion.*

*After all have received, the congregation may stand.*

## HYMN DURING COMMUNION

“Prepare the Royal Highway”

Red Book #264

## BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

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

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*led by the assisting minister*

## THE SENDING

### **BLESSING**

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, and the blessing of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you now and forever.

**Amen.**

### **SENDING HYMN**

"I Want to Walk as a Child of the Light"

Red Book #815

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. The Lord is with you!

**Thanks be to God.**

### **POSTLUDE**

"Psalm 42"

- Henry Woodward, *arr.*

### **SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

The Rev. Kimberly van Driel	<b>Presiding Minister</b>
Sandy Lefebvre	<b>Assisting Minister</b>
Jim Cunningham	<b>Communion Assistant</b>
Marlin Boltz	<b>Reader</b>
Evan Stein	<b>Crucifer</b>
Emily Stein	<b>Acolyte</b>
Signe Mitchell	<b>Organist</b>
Harry Cunningham	<b>Sr. Choir Director</b>
Josh Kamerer	<b>AV Assisting Minister</b>
Melody Kamerer	<b>PowerPoint Minister</b>
Larry Christy and Jack Rudzki	<b>Ushers</b>
Amy and Jack Beiler	<b>Counters</b>
Roxanne Glagola	<b>Altar Guild</b>

*Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by Dorothy Croupe, in loving memory of her husband, Clyde Croupe.*

*All are welcome to join us for a special social hour following the worship service to trim the trees.*

## THIS WEEK AT FIRST ENGLISH

Mon., 12/18	5:00 PM	Community Dinner
	8:00 PM	NA Meeting (Social Hall)
Wed., 12/20	7:00 PM	Longest Night Service
Thurs., 12/21	10:30 AM	Bible Study
	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal
	7:30 PM	NA Meeting (Downstairs)
Sat., 12/23	12:00 PM	NA Meeting (Downstairs)
Sun., 12/24	10:00 AM	Worship (4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent)
	4:30 PM	Family Christmas Eve Service
	9:00 PM	Christmas Eve Service
	5:30 PM	AA Meeting (Downstairs)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**After worship today**, we will be staying to decorate the trees. We will be having coffee, hot chocolate, and donuts. Please join us!



### **Out of Time: A Service for the Longest Night – Dec. 20 at 7 pm**

In this quiet service of prayer and song, we hold space for the grief, loneliness, and longing that many of us feel even more deeply during the festive days of December. Deliberately scheduled close to the winter

solstice, when the darkness is long and day short, we remember that Christ comes to us even in the heaviest and hardest days of our lives.

**The Sunday PowerPoint Ministry** is looking for additional people to serve our zoom congregation by helping stream the PowerPoint orders of service every week. Because of changes in the current team's schedules and availability, we may have to discontinue the use of PowerPoint on a regular basis if we are unable to find additional volunteers. We believe, however, that this ministry does help people at home to worship and would like to maintain it if possible. Do you have some basic understanding of zoom and Microsoft office? Then we can

train you! Please contact Pr. Kimberly at [pkfelc@zoominternet.net](mailto:pkfelc@zoominternet.net) if you are interested.

**Submissions for the January Newsletter** are due in the church office by Wednesday, Dec. 20.

**Support First English's ministry:** In thanksgiving to God, financial contributions to the congregation can be placed in the offering plate or made online at [www.firstenglishbutler.org/giving](http://www.firstenglishbutler.org/giving).

### **PRAYERS**

Tonnie van Driel; family of Frank Franzen; Vicki Shields Cannon; Jayden; Mairead Magee; Jan Nieto; Myrna Hamil; Linda; Kathy Schweikart Spingola and Charles Spingola; Marj Rogner; Pam Reeder; Greg Reeder; Carol Cunningham; family of Zema Schaney; Frank Miller; family of Tony Sequite; Mackenzie Perkins; Linda Mathias; Gus Keiser; Cory; Will; Carol Chamberlain; Carol Johnson; Mason Martin; family of Janet Warner; Eileen Herbeck; family of Linda Hibbeler; Thelma Hassler; continued healing for Graham Cannon; Aryl Bashline; Holly Schubert; Tad Sellers; Pam Patterson; Tom Olson

### **NEXT WEEK'S READINGS**

#### **2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**

*The LORD's promise to David*

#### **Luke 1:46b-55**

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (*Lk. 1:52*)

#### **Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26** (alternate)

Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing. (*Ps. 89:1*)

#### **Romans 16:25-27**

*The mystery of God revealed in Jesus Christ*

#### **Luke 1:26-38**

*The angel appears to Mary*

*Liturgical portions of today's service are reprinted with permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS028762.*



**FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES**

**4:30 PM - FAMILY WORSHIP  
WITH HOLY COMMUNION**

**9:00 PM - WORSHIP WITH  
HOLY COMMUNION**

Join us in person or online:  
241 North Main St. Butler, PA 16001  
[firstenglishbutler.org](http://firstenglishbutler.org)