

**First English Lutheran Church  
Butler, Pennsylvania**

**Service of Holy Communion  
Fourth Sunday of Advent  
December 24, 2023  
10:00 a.m.**

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

- |                               |                            |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| "Creator alme siderum"        | - Nicholas-Jacques Lemmens |
| "Once He Came in Blessing"    | - Marcel Dupré             |
| "Savior of the Nations, Come" | - Jan Bender               |

**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**

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

Red Book #257

## **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 your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

*The congregation may sit.*

## **THE WORD**

### **CHILDREN’S SERMON**

**FIRST READING**      **2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**

*Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David’s house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God’s anointed.*

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>the king said to the prophet

Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." <sup>3</sup>Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup>Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>6</sup>I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. <sup>7</sup>Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" <sup>8</sup>Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; <sup>9</sup>and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup>And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup>from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. <sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Luke 1:46b-55**    *read responsively*

<sup>46b</sup>My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**

**From this day all generations will call me blessed:**

<sup>49</sup>you, the Almighty, have done great things for me  
and holy is your name.

<sup>50</sup>**You have mercy on those who fear you,  
from generation to generation.**

<sup>51</sup>You have shown strength with your arm  
and scattered the proud in their conceit,

<sup>52</sup>**casting down the mighty from their thrones**

**and lifting up the lowly.**

<sup>53</sup>You have filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup>**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,  
to remember the promise of mercy,**

<sup>55</sup>the promise made to our forebears,  
to Abraham and his children forever.

**SECOND READING    Romans 16:25-27**

*Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.*

<sup>25</sup>Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—<sup>27</sup>to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Word of God, Word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The congregation may stand.*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“Hallelujah”

Red Book #171

**GOSPEL            Luke 1:26-38**

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

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in*

*a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.*

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." <sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The congregation may sit.*

## **SERMON**

*The congregation may stand.*

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

Red Book #272

## **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 a musical score for the hymn 'In Silence We Wait'. It consists of two staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are written below the notes.

In si - lence we wait, in dark - ness you  
come to us; bring us your light.

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

As this advent season draws to a close, gracious God, we lift up our prayers, trusting that you fulfil your promises.

That the gift of Jesus, your Word Incarnate, may create genuine human community across the many things that separate us, we pray to you, O God:

*Refrain*

That those in deployed in our nation's armed forces and the families from whom they are separated may receive the promise of peace, we pray to you, O God:

*Refrain*

That the hearts of those who cry to you beneath the rubble of war or disaster may receive all that they truly need, and that that our sister churches in the Holy Land, Ukraine, and in all places suffering violence may honor your Son's birth in safety, we pray to you, O God:

*Refrain*

That those who experience pain and loss around conceiving and bearing children may experience your consolation, we pray to you, O God:

*Refrain*

That you hear our prayers for those who have requested them....we pray to you, O God:

*Refrain*

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**

“Gottes Sohn ist kommen”

- Gerhard Krapf

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

**CHOIR ANTHEM**

“Song of Mary”

Luke 1: 46-55

- William Crotch, 1775-1847

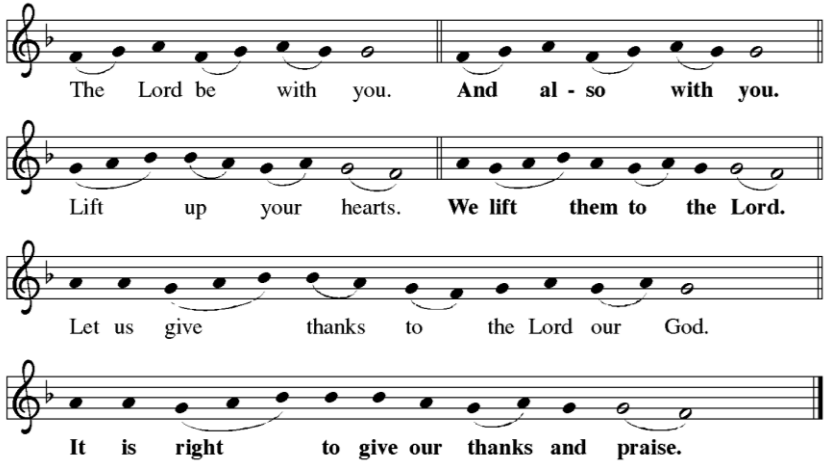
Robert Wetzler, *ed.*

*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

“Savior of the Nations, Come”

Red Book #263

## **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**

“People, Look East”

Red Book #248

### **DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. The Lord is with you!

**Thanks be to God.**

### **POSTLUDE**

“Magnificat”

- Samuel Scheidt

### **SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

The Rev. Kimberly van Driel	<b>Presiding Minister</b>
Lois Trimbur	<b>Assisting Minister</b>
Linda Mathias	<b>Communion Assistant</b>
Tracy Gullickson	<b>Reader</b>
Christiaan van Driel	<b>Crucifer</b>
Alex Kamerer	<b>Acolyte</b>
Kevin Mathias	<b>Organist</b>
Harry Cunningham	<b>Sr. Choir Director</b>
Sue Morrow	<b>AV Assisting Minister</b>
Joan Giese	<b>PowerPoint Minister</b>
Stan Graff, Dan Morrow, Andrew O'Rourke, Amelia O'Rourke	<b>Ushers</b>
Jeanette and Jim Cunningham	<b>Counters</b>
Roxanne Glagola	<b>Altar Guild</b>

*Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by the congregation of First English Lutheran Church.*

*All are welcome to join us for social hour following the worship service.*

### **THIS WEEK AT FIRST ENGLISH**

Mon., 12/25		No Community Dinner
	8:00 PM	NA Meeting (Social Hall)
Thurs., 12/28	7:30 PM	NA Meeting (Downstairs)
Sat., 12/30	12:00 PM	NA Meeting (Downstairs)
Sun., 12/31	10:00 AM	Worship
	5:30 PM	AA Meeting (Downstairs)

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**



**The church office** will be closed Monday, Dec. 25 - Thursday, Dec. 28.

**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.

**In this season of Advent, we have resumed passing the offering plate** as a part of our worship service. This practice allows us to remember that giving is an act of worship, even as we recognize now that many of us give online or through mail. All that we have is a gift from God and we give out of gratitude, however we give!

### **PRAYERS**

Chris and Jodie; Kathy Rhodes, her husband Ken, and family; 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**

**Isaiah 61:10 – 62:3**

*Clothed in garments of salvation*

**Psalms 148**

The splendor of the LORD is over earth and heaven. (*Ps. 148:13*)

**Galatians 4:4-7**

*Children and heirs of God*

**Luke 2:22-40**

*The presentation of the child*

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