

**First English Lutheran Church  
Butler, Pennsylvania**

**Service of Holy Communion  
Third Sunday of Advent  
December 15, 2024  
10:00 a.m.**

**GATHERING**

**PRELUDE**

“There’s a Voice in the Wilderness” - Henry Hugh Bancroft  
“Advent Carol” - Dale Wood  
“Two Advent Graduals” - Harold W. Gilbert

**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.**

Gracious God, in your light we see light, and in your mercy, we can see the truth of our human condition. We come to you asking for your help and strength, that we may confess our sins, accept our weakness, and receive your forgiveness, through your Son Jesus Christ, our Savior.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sins against God and 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, that together we may live to the praise of your glory.**

**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  $\text{†}$  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**

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

Chris - te e - lei - son. Christ, have mer - cy.

Ky - ri - e e - lei - son. Lord, have mer - cy.

# HYMN OF PRAISE

*Refrain*

My soul pro-claims your great-ness, O Lord; I  
sing my Sav-ior's praise! Great won-ders you have  
done for me, and ho-ly is your name.

1 My soul proclaims your great-ness, Lord; I sing my Sav-ior's praise!  
6 Sing glory to the Ho-ly One, give hon-or to the Word,

You looked upon my low-li-ness, and I am full of grace.  
and praise the Power of the Most High, one God, by all a-dored. *Refrain*

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the preaching of John, that, rejoicing in your salvation, we may bring forth the fruits of repentance; 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****Zephaniah 3:14-20**

*The prophet Zephaniah's message is mostly one of judgment for sin. This reading, however, which comes from the conclusion of the book, prophesies joy for Judah and Jerusalem. Judgment has led to repentance, and God's salvation is at hand.*

<sup>14</sup> Sing aloud, O daughter Zion;  
shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart,  
O daughter Jerusalem!

<sup>15</sup> The Lord has taken away the judgments against you,  
he has turned away your enemies.

The king of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst;  
you shall fear disaster no more.

<sup>16</sup> On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem:  
Do not fear, O Zion;  
do not let your hands grow weak.

<sup>17</sup> The Lord, your God, is in your midst,  
a warrior who gives victory;  
he will rejoice over you with gladness,  
he will renew you in his love;  
he will exult over you with loud singing  
<sup>18</sup> as on a day of festival.

I will remove disaster from you,  
so that you will not bear reproach for it.

<sup>19</sup> I will deal with all your oppressors  
at that time.

And I will save the lame  
and gather the outcast,  
and I will change their shame into praise  
and renown in all the earth.

<sup>20</sup> At that time I will bring you home,  
at the time when I gather you;  
for I will make you renowned and praised  
among all the peoples of the earth,  
when I restore your fortunes  
before your eyes, says the Lord.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM****Isaiah 12:2-6**

<sup>2</sup> Surely God is my salvation; I will trust, and will not be afraid,  
for the Lord God is my strength and my might, and has become my  
salvation.

<sup>3</sup> **With joy you will draw water  
from the wells of salvation.**

<sup>4</sup> And you will say in that day: Give thanks to the Lord, call on God's  
name;

make known the deeds of the Lord among the nations; proclaim that  
this name is exalted.

<sup>5</sup> **Sing praises to the Lord, for he has done gloriously;  
let this be known in all the earth.**

<sup>6</sup> Shout aloud and sing for joy, O royal Zion,  
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

**SECOND READING****Philippians 4:4-7**

*Despite being in prison, Paul is remarkably upbeat as he writes this letter. Here, he urges his friends in Philippi to trust God with all their worries and concerns with the hope that they will experience God's joy and peace.*

<sup>4</sup> Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup> Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup> Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The congregation may stand.*

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

“He Comes to Us as One Unknown”    *sts. 1, 2 and 5*    Red Book #737

**GOSPEL****Luke 3:7-18**

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

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*John the Baptist heralds the mighty one who is coming. John teaches that preparation for God's reign is not a matter of identity but of bearing fruits of merciful justice, radical generosity, and vocational integrity.*

<sup>7</sup> John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? <sup>8</sup> Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. <sup>9</sup> Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."

<sup>10</sup> And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" <sup>11</sup> In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." <sup>12</sup> Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" <sup>13</sup> He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." <sup>14</sup> Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages."

<sup>15</sup> As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, <sup>16</sup> John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. <sup>17</sup> His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

<sup>18</sup> So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

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

*The congregation may sit.*

## **SERMON**

*The congregation may stand.*

## **HYMN OF THE DAY**

"Prepare the Royal Highway"

Red Book #264

## 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 major, 4/4 time. The first staff contains the melody for the first line of lyrics: "In si - lence we wait, in dark - ness you". The second staff contains the melody for the second line of lyrics: "come to us; bring us your light." The music is simple and hymn-like, with a final double bar line at the end of the second staff.

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

*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**

“The Advent of Our God”

- Gerhard Krapf

#### **CHOIR ANTHEM**

“Rejoice and Celebrate!”

- Patti Drennan

*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'r and  
God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your  
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the  
Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

### 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

#### 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

“He Came Down”

Red Book #253

## BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

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

Amen.

## SONG AFTER COMMUNION



A - ho - ra, Se - ñor, se - gún tu pro - me - sa, pue - des de -  
At last, Lord, your word of prom - ise ful - fill - ing, you let your



jar a tu sier - vo ir - se en paz. Por - que mis  
ser - vant go forth in free - dom and peace. With my own



o - jos han vis - to a tu Sal - va - dor, a quien has  
eyes I have seen the sal - va - tion you have pre -



pre - sen - ta - do an - te to - dos los pue - blos: . . .  
pared . . . in the sight of all of the peo - ples: a



luz pa - ra a - lum - brar a las na - cio - nes, y  
light that will re - veal you to the na - tions, and the



glo - ria de tu pue - blo Is - ra - el.  
glo - ry of your peo - ple Is - ra - el.

**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**

“Hark, the Glad Sound!”

- Red Book #239

**DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. The Lord is with you!

**Thanks be to God.**

**POSTLUDE**

“Creator alme siderum”

- Nicolas-Jacques Lemmens

**SERVING IN WORSHIP TODAY**

The Rev. Kimberly van Driel	<b>Presiding Minister</b>
Jim Cunningham	<b>Assisting Minister</b>
Mollie Hibbs	<b>Communion Assistant</b>
Chuck McMichael	<b>Reader</b>
Amelia O’Rourke	<b>Crucifer</b>
Tucker Sequite	<b>Acolyte</b>
Kevin Mathias	<b>Organist</b>
Harry Cunningham	<b>Sr. Choir Director</b>
Marlin Boltz	<b>AV Assisting Minister</b>
Karen Boltz	<b>PowerPoint Minister</b>
Dan Morrow, Stan Graff, Andrew O’Rourke	<b>Ushers</b>
Jack and Amy Beiler	<b>Counters</b>
Roxanne Glagola	<b>Altar Guild</b>

*Altar flowers are given to the glory of God by Sandy Lefebvre in memory of loved ones.*

*All are welcome to join us for our Advent Luncheon and Intergenerational Event following the worship service.*

## **THIS WEEK AT FIRST ENGLISH**

Mon., 12/16	5:00 PM	Community Dinner
	8:00 PM	NA Meeting (Social Hall)
Thurs., 12/19	3:00 PM	Bible Study (Social Hall)
	7:00 PM	Choir Rehearsal
	7:30 PM	NA Meeting (Downstairs)
Sat., 12/21	10:30 AM	ACA Meeting (Downstairs)
	12:00 PM	NA Meeting (Downstairs)
	2 – 5:00 PM	Baby Shower in Social Hall
Sun., 12/22	9:00 AM	Bible Study (Pastor's Office)
	10:00 AM	Worship
	5:30 PM	AA Meeting (Downstairs)

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Today is our final Sunday to collect donations for our annual Christmas Tree Drive** for the Children and Youth of Butler County. Please indicate your donation on the *Specials* line of your offering envelope, payable to First English Lutheran Church, or stop by the Christmas Tree to offer your donation. Thank you!

**The Advent luncheon** and intergenerational event will take place today following the worship service.

**Submissions for the January newsletter** are due to Caitlyn in the church office by Friday, December 20.

## **PRAYERS**

Shirley Mould; Tom Lasky; Nelson Ng; Jack Goetz; Debbie & family; family of Alice Miller; Mackenzie Hunt; Tatum Scilia; Fred Miller; Kathy and Tom Frank; Karen Boltz's sister & her family; Jaime Rickert; family of Dorothy Croupe; family of Amy; Cindy Regis & all those who are affected by the hurricanes; Laura Warmbrod's mother; Rob; Jamie Maluk & family; David Fisher & family; Tommy, Jenny, & Aspen Zarnick; family of Richard Daller (brother of Betty Turner); Scott Tamaro; George Schaney; Stephen Wright; Steve; family of Beth Chambers; Don Eckels; Valerie Kurth; family of John Mileski; Cindy Halin; Mike Gibson; Dennis; Debra Williamson; Amy Waldron; Evelyn Shaulis; Bill Brown; Ben & the Keeler family; Tracy Tucci; Iman; Aryl Bashline; Julie, Greg & family; family of Kenneth Mathias; Pr. Jim Dollhopf & family; Bruce Solomon; family & friends of Walter Szcurek; Paul Eicholtz; Frank Miller; Tad Sellers



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)

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS**

**Micah 5:2-5a**

*From Bethlehem comes a ruler*

**Luke 1:46b-55**

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

**Psalm 80:1-7** (alternate)

Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (*Ps. 80:7*)

**Hebrews 10:5-10**

*I have come to do your will*

**Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]**

*Blessed are you among women / My soul magnifies the Lord*

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

*One License Licensing Permission: Reprinted/Podcast/Streamed with permission under  
One License #A-734698. All Rights Reserved.*