

# *4th Sunday of Advent*

## *December 21, 2025*



### *Lord of Love Lutheran Church (ELCA)*

*10405 Fort St., Omaha, NE 68134*

*"Celebrating and sharing God's Love in a welcoming community of faith, while serving others"*

*Worship 9:00 a.m.*

***Bold type indicates Congregational responses.***

*\* Congregation please stand as you are comfortable*

### ***Introduction***

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 to Lord of Love! We are the body of Christ, and we are not whole without you.***

**Visitors:** We're so glad you're here, and we'd love the opportunity to connect with you! Text WELCOME to 402-493-2946 so we can follow up with you.

**Nursery:** The nursery (just off the Narthex) is open during worship. Please know that children are always welcome in the Sanctuary for worship. Quiet toy bags are available from the ushers.

**Offering:** An offering plate is at the back of the Sanctuary, and gifts may be placed there. Children may put their offering in the noise jar during the offering song.

**Communion:** Everyone is welcome at communion. Gluten-free wafers are available by asking a communion server. In the communion trays, the wine is red and grape juice is white.

**Prayer Requests:** If you have a prayer request, you can text PRAY to 402-493-2946.

**Fellowship:** Donuts and coffee are available in the Narthex after worship. Please join us!

**Prelude** “Chorale Prelude”.....J.S. Bach/Nagel  
Variations on ‘Turo’ (Lift Up Your Heads).....Joseph Turin

## **Announcements**

## **Ringling of the Bell**

**\*Gathering Song:** “Wake, Awake for Night is Flying” ..... ELW 436

## **\*Greeting**

P: 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.**

## **\*Confession and Forgiveness**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

**Amen.**

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

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Long-expected God,

**we confess that we look to ourselves**

**for the peace and security only you can provide.**

**We reach for swords and spears,**

**reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.**

**We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake.**

**Free us from self-reliance,**

**and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.**

**Increase our trust in God’s timing,**

**and awaken us to your advent among us,**

**that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God’s own righteousness. ☩ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

**Amen.**

## **\*Kyrie**



Lord, have mer - cy\_\_ on your peo - ple. Christ have mer - cy\_\_ on\_\_ us.  
Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.\_\_ Chri - ste e - le - i - son.



Shine your light in\_\_ to our dark - ness. Fill\_\_ us\_\_ with your ho - ly love.  
Heal all\_\_ con - flicts be - tween na - tions. Teach us\_\_ how to\_\_ live as one.



Be our strength in times of\_\_ trou - ble. Set us free from chains that\_\_ bind.  
Show us how to love our\_\_ neigh - bor. Run to those who\_\_ cry for\_\_ help.



Breathe new life in - to our\_\_ spir - its. Pu - ri - fy our\_\_ hearts and minds.  
Word made flesh who lives a - mong us; Christ our\_\_ Lord, Em - man - u - el.

## **\*Advent Wreath Litany**

*Sung to the tune of "Away in a Manger"*

L: This week's advent theme is Love. If you would please join me in singing today's theme verse to the tune of "Away in the Manger", while the four candles are lit.

**A fourth candle flame dances, a whisper of Love.**

**Not lofty or distant, but born in the least.**

**The manger, God's dwelling, so humble, so low,**

**Is where God's good grace begins its soft glow.**

## **\*Prayer of the Day**

L: Let us pray.

**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. Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

***First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16***

L: The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? 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. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. 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.”

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

***Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7***

L: Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

To all God’s beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

### **\*Gospel Acclamation**

Glo-ry be to God on high. Peace, good-will to all the earth. Let us sing a  
Love has come to dwell with us. Light now shines on ev - 'ry - one. Hope has lift - ed  
joy - ful song to the Christ, the Liv - ing Word. Glo - - -  
up our hearts. Joy has made, in us, a home. - - -  
- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o; Glor - - -  
- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

### **\*Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter.

#### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. 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. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord.

#### **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Children's Sermon** ..... Rev. Becky Sells

**Sermon** ..... Rev. Becky Sells

***\*The Nicene Creed***

L: God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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***

L: 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.*

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. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill. We especially pray for those on our prayer list and those whose names and needs we lift up now.... God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your in love. God of grace,  
**hear our prayer.**

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

### ***\*Peace***

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.  
**And also with you.**

*Please share signs of peace with one another.  
Please be seated.*

## Offering

*Gifts may be placed in the offering plate located in the back of the sanctuary or given electronically at [www.lord-of-love.org](http://www.lord-of-love.org). Children may come forward to put their offering in the noise jar during this song.*

*Communion servers, please come forward during the offertory song.*



What . . . can I give him, poor . . . as I am?

If I were a shep - herd I would bring a lamb;

if I were a wise . . . man I would do my part;

yet what I can I give him— give my heart.

## \*Offertory Prayer

P: Let us pray.

**God of Light, our world is a very dark place. Therefore, we offer the gifts of ourselves, our time and our resources, trusting you will use them to set the world aglow with your loving presence. May our offerings continue to shine brightly before others so they may see our good works and give glory to you. We ask this in the name of Christ. Amen.**

## \*The Great Thanksgiving

P: 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.

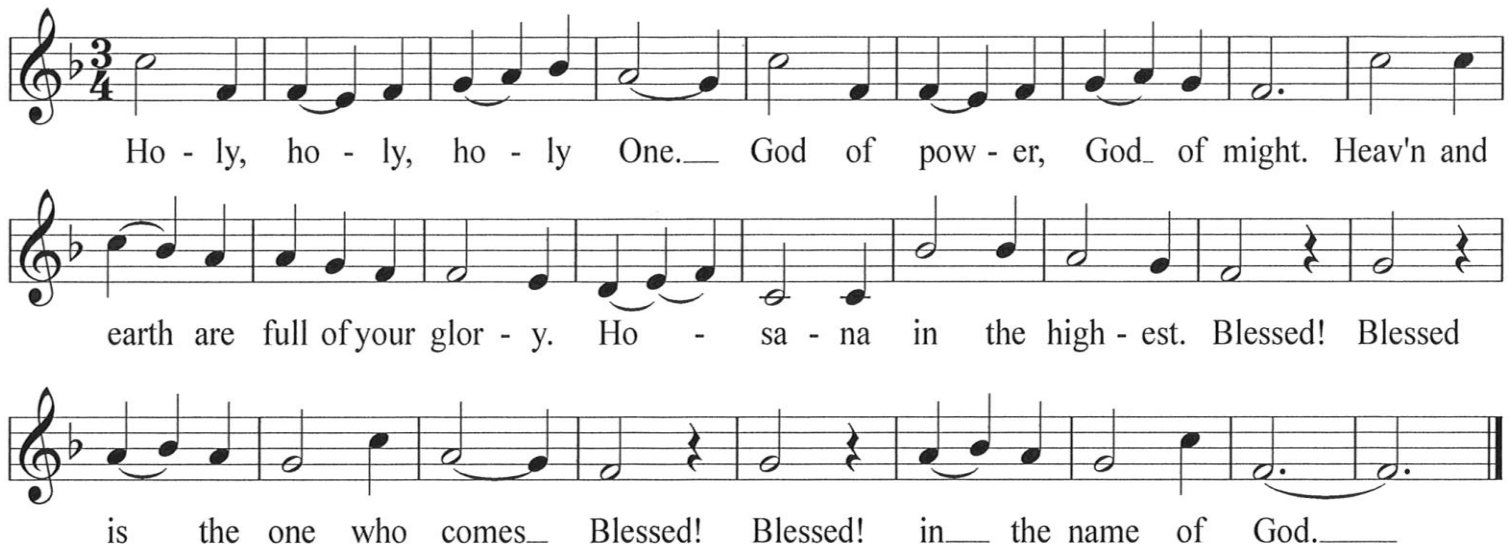
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**



At the beginning of creation God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. In ancient times God also led the Israelites through the desert with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. The priests of old also kept a perpetual fire burning in the Temple to remind us that God is a light who cannot be extinguished.

Finally Jesus, the Word, who was with God since the beginning of creation, became flesh and lived among us. We have seen his glory shining in our world, full of grace and truth. Christ's light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. This same light has commanded us not to hide our light under a bushel basket, but to put it on a lamp stand so that everyone can see it. With our lights burning brightly, we now join the saints and angels in a hymn of praise to God, the Everlasting Light:

***\*Holy, Holy, Holy***



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly One. God of pow - er, God of might. Heav'n and  
earth are full of your glor - y. Ho - sa - na in the high - est. Blessed! Blessed  
is the one who comes. Blessed! Blessed! in the name of God.

***\*Words of Institution***

P: In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

### ***\*The Lord's Prayer***

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

**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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

### ***Communion Invitation***

P: Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

### ***Lamb of God***



O Lamb of God you take a-way our sin; have mer-cy on us, give\_ us your  
peace. Pre -pare us to re - ceive\_\_ your grace and teach us how to fol - low your ways. Re-  
joice! Re - joice! E - man - u - el has come to you, O Is - ra-el.

***Communion Music “Es Ist ein Ros’ entsprungen” .....Brahms/King***

### ***\*Post-Communion Prayer***

P: Jesus, our bright Morning Star, we give you thanks that you have fed us well through the bread and wine of your Supper. May it enable us to shine brightly in all the dark places of our world with your love, justice and peace. We ask this in your holy name.

**Amen.**

**\*Benediction**

P: May God who comes among us,  
Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,  
and good news to share today and always.  
**Amen.**

**\*Sending Song:** *"People, Look East"* ..... ELW 248

***Send off for Pastor Becky***

**Commissioning for Sabbatical**

L: On the seventh day God rested and celebrated all of creation. God surveyed all that God had made and said, "It is good."

**C: Pastor Becky, we work together in ministry here at Lord of Love, and have much to celebrate. We celebrate your encouragement, direction, and leadership in our work together as God's people in this place. Of this ministry together we say with confidence, "It is good."**

L: We send you now on this Sabbatical journey confident that God will bless your every step, refresh your spirit, renew your mind, strengthen your body, and return you to us empowered for our continued task of ministry at Lord of Love, and in the world.

**C: We will miss you, even as we faithfully carry out with joy and hope the ministry to which we are called. As you attend to your Sabbatical, please know that our thoughts and prayers will be with you, that we support you in every way, and that we look forward with joy to your return.**

P: I, too, look forward to that day when I will return and share in our ministry together. I will miss you as well, and I will pray for you whenever you come to mind. Thank you for creating this opportunity for a time of Sabbath rest in my ministry.

**C: Go, now, with our blessing, and with the blessing of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### ***\*Dismissal***

L: Go in peace. Keep awake.

**Thanks be to God!**

### ***Ringing of the Bell***

***Postlude “Wassail Song”***..... Vaughan Williams/Haislip

#### **Everlasting Light Liturgy**

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## *Christmas Services*

### **December 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve Services: 4:30 pm and 11:00 pm**

-Both Christmas Eve services will include Holy Communion and the singing of Silent Night by candlelight at the end. Nursery will be staffed at 4:30, no nursery at 11 pm.

-10:30 pm is the start of the Special Christmas Prelude, followed by the 11 pm worship service, which will include the brass ensemble and the choir.

**Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> There will be NO Worship Service on this day.**

**Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> Lessons and Carols Service at 9 am (no Holy Communion at this service)**