

**Welcome to Christ Lutheran Church & Preschool
December 22, 2024**

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Rev. Paul Pfeffer

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Member of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
(*ELCA* – www.elca.org)



All Are Welcome – All the Time!

You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to participate in any part of worship.

If you wish to take communion, we ask that you desire a relationship with Jesus.

His body and blood were given and shed for you.



Christ Lutheran Church & PreSchool is a community committed to the work of equity and inclusion, bringing justice and support for all of God's beloveds. We welcome those who are seeking God's love and grace for the first time or as a life-long believer. We welcome because Jesus shows us how to welcome, regardless of race, culture, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, economic resources, relationship status, health challenges or anything else that too often divides us. It is in our welcome which we commit ourselves to being an anti-racist space, a space where we seek daily to deepen our work of inclusion in the life of our church. Our unity is in Christ. All are welcome here.

ANNOUNCEMENTS & SHARING OF PRAYER CONCERNS

By Kathy Davis, who will provide updated Prayers of Intercession

INVOCATION

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who comes to wake us from sleep, who leads us into the light of grace. **Amen.**

Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

– Silence for reflection and self-examination –

God of all time,

**we confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us.
We ignore our neighbors in need and fail in the labor of justice and peace.
In your mercy forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your light
and to seek the things that will endure until Christ comes again in glory.
Amen.**

Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.

In + Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven

and all things are made new. Rejoice in this good news!

Amen.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you. **And also with you!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

SONG: Light One Candle, ELW #240 (vs 4)

Light four candles to watch for Messiah; Let the light banish darkness.
He is coming, tell the glad tidings. Let your lights be shining!

– *Silence for reflection as we light 4 Advent candles* –

LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

From Prepare: An Advent Devotional, Bethany Fellows/Chalice Press, (c)2019

Matthew 1:20 – *But after he had considered 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 home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”*

God calls Joseph into the deep vulnerability of love. To love Mary in this moment will require trust, risk and the sacrifice of pride. To love the baby in her belly, the catalyst for uninvited upheaval in his life, will require humility, gentleness and habitual generosity. This is the kind of love we prepare to practice during Advent: to embrace this coming child, who will bring both upheaval and meaning to our existence; and to re-orient ourselves toward *trust*, *risk* and the *sacrifice of pride*. Let us pray that as we approach Bethlehem, the love of God will grow in us, that we may share that love with a hurting world.

We read together:

**We light this candle, the fourth candle of Advent,
thankful for the light of love in our lives.
May that light grow in us
as we prepare to welcome the Christ child.**

Let us pray: Loving God, help us to love you and your children with the vulnerability and passion with which you have loved us. **Amen.**

READING – Micah 5:2-5a

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his kindred shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth, and he shall be the one of peace.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

RESPONSIVE READING – Luke 1:46-55

“My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,

for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;

indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;

he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

READING – Hebrews 10:5-10

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure.

Then I said, ‘See, I have come to do your will, O God’ (in the scroll of the book it is written of me).” When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

– *Please stand as you are able* –

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (SUNG) – ELW 172

Halle, halle, halle – Iujah. Halle, halle, halle – Iujah.
Halle, halle, halle – Iujah. Hallelujah. Hallelujah!

THE GOSPEL – Luke 1:39-45

The Holy Gospel according to Luke. **Glory to You, O Lord.**

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.”

The Gospel of our Lord. Praise to You, O Christ.

SERMON – Rev. Paul Pfeffer

SONG: All Earth is Hopeful, ELW #266

Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal

All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!
Furrows lie open for God's creative task:
This, the labor of people who struggle to see
how God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free...

People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:
"A Virgin mother will bear Emmanuel";
She conceived him, "God with us," – our brother, whose birth
restores hope and courage to children of the earth...

Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;
New highways opened, new protocols declared.
Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!
All clear every gateway, in haste, come out in haste!

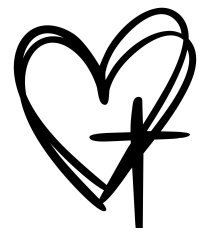
We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live
in our world, he is present, in neighbors we see
our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION *(on separate sheet)*

Lord in your mercy... Receive our prayer.



PASSING OF THE PEACE

The peace of the Lord be with you always. And also with you.

– Please share a greeting or sign of peace –

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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 & praise.**



WORDS OF INSTITUTION *(not printed/Presider's book on altar)*

LORD'S PRAYER

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.

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION AT THE FRONT

All are welcome to receive the Real Presence of Christ in the bread and wine of Holy Communion. You do not need to be a member of this church or Lutheran to receive the sacrament. We ask that you desire a relationship with Jesus Christ. Those who are interested will be invited by an usher to come up the center aisle to the front to select a single-serving Communion kit from the tray, or to receive a blessing. Then return to your seat via the side aisle to open the kit and partake in Communion. An usher will offer a basket to collect the container. *For those worshipping at home, please consider joining in Holy Communion by taking a bit of bread or cracker and a sip of wine or juice. All are welcome.*

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

BENEDICTION

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord's face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace.

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

SONG – My Soul Does Magnify the Lord, ELW #882 (1,2,6,7)

Printed on bulletin insert or in hymnal

My soul does magnify the Lord;
My spirit sings of God my Savior,
for he has looked with love and fa-vor, on his lowly servant.

From this day all will call me blest,
from now through all the coming ages.

The Lord has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

All glory be to God on high,
and to his Son, God the Savior,
and to the Spir-it of life and truth, that burns within our hearts.

Just as it was it is today,
and it shall last through all tomorrows,
and so my soul magnifies the Lord; praise God for ever. A-men.

DISMISSAL

*We prepare with thanks and praise. **Come, Lord Jesus!***

*Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God!***

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Christmas Eve Worship** – Tuesday, Dec. 24 at 4 p.m. – Please take time to worship. In person or on Facebook.
- **Thank You for the Gift Bags** – Holly and Theresa worked with the PreSchool and our congregation to create gift bags for more than 60 children served by Sue's Pantry here in Vernon Hills. Thank you for your generosity.
- **Supporting the Homeless** – Thank you to all who sent items for the camp near Pastor Padraig's home in Chicago. There was so much we must send a second load. Thank you!
- **Caring Hands** – Saturday, January 18 from 9a to noon. Making prayer shawls, comfort blankets, hats/mittens. (CaringHandsVernonHills@gmail.com)
- **Donating to Storm/Fire Victims** – ELCA's Lutheran Disaster Response is one of the oldest, most effective and most respected organizations for getting money where it can be put to good use. Donate at ELCA.org.
- **Scouting!** – Boys and girls ages Kindergarten through high school have an opportunity to build skills and have fun through Scouting. Thanks for supporting our Pack and Troop!
- **PreSchool Prayers** – Keep the children, families and staff of our PreSchool in prayer.
- **Support for Anelly** – Our ministry partner Anelly, a young mother of two who has supported refugees in Chicago, has a recurrence of cancer and other challenges. Please lift her in prayer and consider supporting the Meal Train (HollySJ@earthlink.net).
- **Sue's Pantry** – Call for toilet paper! And anything needed to keep a home and family clean – dish soap, laundry detergent, body wash, shampoo.
- **Love INC** – Housewares, nonperishables and volunteers. Want to learn more? Have a family in need of a bundle of clothes or housewares? Give the details to Natalie she will get us covered! (Thanks, Natalie.) (<https://loveinclakecounty.org/>)
- **COOL Ministries** – We support the COOL pantry in Waukegan with non-perishables. Collection bins in hallway or give online. (CoolMinistries.org)
- **Prayer concerns?** Consider reaching out so that our network of Prayer Warriors can pray. You may remain anonymous. Email ChristLutheranVH@aol.com with your request.
- **THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.** Your presence in worship is very important. Thank you for being part of this community of faith. If you would like to support our service, we welcome donations, which can be provided by credit card or Paypal through the link at the bottom of our webpage, ChristLutheranVH.org. Thank you!