



St. John's Lutheran Church

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.



The 4th Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2017

10:30 Service of the Word

Today's Christmas program is titled "In Search of Faith" and it was created by our own Beth Schroeder! Enjoy this story of a mother and her little girl and how, through the Christmas story, they learn how blessed they are.

Welcome to worship today!

If you are visiting with us we invite you to sign the Guest Book in the back of the sanctuary.

Nursery care is available during the service. Please see one of the ushers if you need more information.

† GATHERING †

Prelude and Announcements

Gathering Hymn Prepare the Royal Highway
(For music turn to Hymn 264 in the Red Hymnal)

1. Prepare the royal highway;

**The King of kings is near!
Let ev'ry hill and valley
A level road appear!
Then greet the King of glory,
Foretold in sacred story:**

Refrain **Hosanna to the Lord,
For he fulfills God's Word!**

2. God's people, see him coming:

**Your own eternal king!
Palm branches strew before him!
Spread garments! Shout and sing!
God's promise will not fail you!
No more shall doubt assail you! *Refrain***

3. Then fling the gates wide open

**To greet your promised king!
Your king, yet ev'ry nation
Its tribute too may bring.
All lands will bow before him;
Their voices join your singing: *Refrain***

4. His is no earthly kingdom;

**It comes from heav'n above.
His rule is peace and freedom
And justice, truth and love.
So let your praise be sounding
For kind-ness so abounding: *Refrain***

Text: Frans Mikael Franzen, 1772-1847; Music: Swedish folk tune, 14th century

Greeting (2 Corinthians 13:13)

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Gathering Dialog (John 1)

A: In the beginning was the Word,

C: and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

A: In the Word was life,

C: and the life was the light of all people.

A: The Word became flesh and lived among us,

C: and we have seen his glory, full of grace and truth.

Prayer of the Day

A: 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.

C: Amen

† WORD †

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

(Read immediately after the congregation is seated from the Prayer of the Day)

A: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe. In your Son, Emmanuel, you have shown us your light and saved us from the power of sin. Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath. Increase our longing for your presence, that at the celebration of your Son's birth his Spirit might dwell anew in our midst, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God forever.

C: Amen

As the fourth candle on the wreath is lit we sing:

Oh Come, Oh Come, Emmanuel

(For music turn to Hymn 257 in the Red Hymnal)

**1. Oh come, Oh come Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain: **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to you, O Israel.**

3. **O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain***
4. **O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain***
5. **O come of Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. *Refrain***

Text: *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*, Koln, 1710, tr. composite. Music: French processional, 15th century.

Christmas Program *In Search of Faith* by Beth Schroeder

You invited to sing these hymns at the appropriate time:

O Little Town of Bethlehem

(For music see Hymn 279 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in the dark street shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.**
2. **For Christ is born of Mary,
and, gathered all above
while mortals sleep, the angels keep
their watch of wond'ring love.
O morning stars, together
proclaim the holy birth,
and praises sing to God the king,
and peace to all the earth!**

3. **How silently, how silently
the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming;
but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.**
4. **O holy child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin, and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
oh, come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel!**

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893, Music: Lewis H. Redner, 1831-1908

Away in a Manger

(For music see Hymn 277 or 278 in the Red Hymnal)

Angel Chorus

1. **Away in a manger, no crib for his bed,
the little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head;
the stars in the bright sky looked down where he lay,
the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.**

Congregation

2. **The cattle are lowing; the baby awakes,
but little Lord Jesus, no crying he makes.
I love you, Lord Jesus; look down from the sky
and stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.**
3. **Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask you to stay
close by me forever and love me, I pray.
Bless all the dear children in your tender care
and fit us for heaven, to live with you there.**

Text: North American, 19th century. Music: James R. Murray, 1841-1905

Silent Night, Holy Night

(For music see Hymn 281 in the Red Hymnal)

1. **Silent night, holy night!**
All is calm, all is bright
round yon virgin mother and child.
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.

2. **Silent night, holy night!**
Shepherds quake at the sight;
glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, allelulia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

3. **Silent night, holy night!**
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from your holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth,
Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

Text: Joseph Mohr, 1792-1849, tr. John F. Young, 1820-1885. Music: Franz Gruber, 1787-1863

† SENDING †

Blessing

P: May Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path. Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

C: Amen.

Sending Hymn Joy to the World

For music turn to Hymn 267 in the Red Hymnal

1. Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

**Let earth receive her king;
let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n and heav'n and nature sing.**

2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!

**Let all their songs employ,
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy
repeat the sounding joy
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.**

3. No more let sin and sorrow grow

**nor thorns infest the ground;
he comes to make his blessings flow
far as the curse is found,
far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.**

4. He rules the world with truth and grace

**and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love
and wonders of his love
and wonders, wonders of his love.**

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748. Music: English melody, 18th century; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C: God's Work. Our Hands.

Worship assistants TODAY:

Greeters and Ushers	Tim and Liz Brown
Acolyte	Ben Deibler
Nursery Care	Katy Stimmel
Counters	Beth Perdan and Bettina Kalish
Coffee Hour	

Worship assistants for next Sunday, December 31, 2017

Greeters and Ushers	Kim and Gary Boisseau
Acolyte	Scott Wilmot
Altar Care	Linda Thompson
Communion Assistants	Gary Boisseau and Rob Stroup
Nursery Care	Laura Stroup
Counters	Tom Kurilovitch and Helen Crown
Coffee Hour	

Variable worship texts from *Sundays and Seasons 2018* copyright 2017 Augsburg Fortress.

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Heidi Griffith, Music Director