

Advent 3 - We Are Expecting

December 11th, 2022

9:15am - Hybrid Worship



Lutheran Church of the Living Christ

2725 Concord Dr, Florissant, MO 63033

Find us online: www.lc-livingchrist.org

Every year we enter Advent as a season of expectation and promise. We spend four weeks waiting and watching, with wonder building as we hear of God's expected transformation of the world.

Through this Advent and Christmas season, we are invited into a time of great expectation. We are invited to wrestle with our own expectations of God and God's expectations for us. Where is God calling us to be willingly watchful? Where is God delighting us with unexpected peace? Where is God filling us with unexpected abundance? Where is God meeting us with the divine in our midst?

Welcome to Lutheran Church of the Living Christ

Welcome! If you came as a guest today, we hope you leave as a friend. May this worship service surround you with the love of God through Christ and fill you with the Holy Spirit.

Invitation to Communion: We welcome all to commune at LCLC. It is not our table, nor this congregation's table, nor our denomination's table. It is the table of Jesus Christ. By his invitation there is a place for everyone. We believe that Jesus is present in the bread and wine that forgives sin, nourishes faith, and calls us to be witnesses to the gospel.

Notes about our worship service: Guidance is printed in *italics* throughout. "P" indicates the speaking part of the presiding minister; "L" indicates a speaking part of a lay leader; "C" and parts in **boldface** indicate speaking parts of the whole congregation. You may also follow along with the service by looking at the screen in the front of the sanctuary. Liturgical pieces are set to familiar Christmas tunes. This liturgy is provided by the Eastern Missouri Conference of the Central States Synod.

Please be mindful of others' comfort with touch. Ask before giving a handshake or hug.

PRELUDE "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence" arr. Mark Hayes

WELCOME

The assembly is invited to stand as worship begins.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

P: Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

C: Blessed be God's name forever. Amen.

P: Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep. Let us confront our sins, and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P: God of great expectations,

C: We confess that we have been closed off to your reign of justice.

We have strayed from your paths.

We expect war instead of peace.

**We lower our expectations for life,
dishonoring one another and your creation.**

**Purify us with your refining fire
and set us again on your expectant way of love,
that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance,
and welcome your coming among us. Amen.**

P: People of God, expect the unexpected.

God gives us living signs:

New things are growing in our midst and tender branches spring forth.

This is our life expectancy.

By water and the Spirit we are joined to this wonder.

We have put on ☩ Christ,

and our sins have been washed away.

Rejoice in the way of our God, where and when we least expect it.

C: Amen.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

L: We are an impatient people,
grumbling when we don't get our way

**C: However, God always reminds us
that a new way is being made.**

L: We look for signs of power and prestige,

C: However, Jesus brings good news to the poor.

L: We are comfortable with the world we have always known

C: However, Mary envisions a world turned upside down.

L: And so we light this candle to shine forth with joy,
for we know a new day is dawning
even if the timing is unexpected.

GATHERING HYMN Prepare the Royal Highway, ELW #264



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

GREETING

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.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Stir up your power, Lord Christ (*holy pause*).

Make dry places fertile ground (*holy pause*).

Lift up those who are pressed down (*holy pause*).

Turn our grumbling into praise (*holy pause*).

We ask this in the name of the One who brings salvation near.

C: Amen

The assembly is seated.

FIRST READING - Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ²it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.

The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God.

³Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you."

⁵Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;

⁶then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;

⁷the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

L: The Word of God still speaks.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM - Luke 1:46b-55

L: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

C: for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

L: you, the Almighty, have done great things for me
and holy is your name.

C: You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.

L: You have shown strength with your arm

and scattered the proud in their conceit,

**C: casting down the mighty from their thrones
and lifting up the lowly.**

L: You have filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

**C: You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,
to remember the promise of mercy,**

L: the promise made to our forebears,
to Abraham and his children forever.

SECOND READING - James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience.

Be patient, therefore, beloved, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹Beloved, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰As an example of suffering and patience, beloved, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

L: The Word of God still speaks.

C: Thanks be to God.

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (to the chorus of *The First Noel*)

Voice

A - le - lu - ia! A -

4

le - lu - ia! Pre - pare - us for Your -

8

com - ing, O Lord.

GOSPEL READING - Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth. From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?"⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see:⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them.⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'¹¹ Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Following the reading the assembly is seated.

SERMON

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

C: We believe in God,

who in greatness created with a Word
all that is and continues to be.

We believe in God,

who is Word made flesh,
Emmanuel, born of Mary,
come to fulfill the expected promise:
justice, mercy, peace, love;
who was executed because
our expectations were worldly, not divine;
who rose to break the expectation
that death has the final word.

We believe in God

who fills us with expectations;
who pushes us to change;
who moves us with her joy and gladness
that we might be united
to proclaim the Word full of grace and truth
for an expectant people.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The prayers reflect the wideness of God's mercy: for the church; for the well-being of creation; for peace & justice; for the poor, oppressed, suffering, & sick; for the congregation & other concerns.

Anticipating the coming of God's redeeming love, let us pray for a world in longing expectation. *A brief silence.*

Gracious God, we rejoice in the gifts of your Spirit. Equip the global church to magnify your love and peace in every land. We pray for the work of the Lutheran World Federation and ELCA Global Mission. With joyful expectation, **hear our prayer.**

Abundant God, we rejoice in your creation. Revive lands we have squandered and depleted. Make gardens flourish in cities and neighborhoods. Cleanse polluted air and water so living things may breathe, drink, and praise you. With joyful expectation, **hear our prayer.**

Righteous God, we rejoice in your justice. End racism and oppression. Deliver all who are unjustly imprisoned or persecuted. Reconcile nations and peoples in conflict (*regions in turmoil may be named*). Help us pray for our enemies. With joyful expectation, **hear our prayer.**

Healing God, we rejoice in your compassion. Comfort any in distress because of worry, illness, or loss (*especially*). Strengthen and protect health care workers, rescue teams, crisis counselors, and all who risk themselves to keep others safe. With joyful expectation, **hear our prayer.**

Abiding God, we rejoice in your company. Give us calm and patient hearts as we gather with family and friends. Keep us mindful of those for whom this season is not happy. Console the grieving and surround them with loving support. With joyful expectation, **hear our prayer.**
Here other intercessions may be offered.

Faithful God, we rejoice with Mary, Mother of our Lord, and with all the saints, that your mercy endures for all generations. Look with favor on those who have died and lead us to joyfully sing of your everlasting promises. With joyful expectation, **hear our prayer.**

Trusting that God hears us and knows our deepest longings, we offer our prayers with great expectation. **Amen.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Share a sign of peace by waving, flashing a peace sign, or another form of greeting.

OFFERING PRAYER

We continue to be the church together through prayer and financial support. Tithes and offerings can be dropped off in the narthex, mailed, sent through the bank or our online giving platform.

P: God of peace, as we have received your abundance, so we welcome one another to the feast you spread. Use what we have gathered here for the flourishing of life.

C: Amen.

COMMUNION LITURGY

(to the tune of *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

Largo

Voice

L: The - Lord - be with you. C: And al - so with you.

3 L: Lift up your hearts . C: We lift them to the Lord. L: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

5 to the Lord our God. C: It is right to give God praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth, the hosts of heaven and all creation, we praise your name and join their unending hymn: (to the tune of *In the Bleak Midwinter*)

Voice

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly, God of pow'r and might. Heav'n and earth are

6 full of Your glo - ry, O Lord. Bless - ed is the one who comes in the Lord's name. Ho -

14 san - na in the high - est

Illuminating God, source of creation, our salvation and our hope, we praise you for your creative labor, bearing expectations for life and love. When we strayed from your path and chose cruelty and despair, you spoke to us through unexpected prophets: Isaiah envisioned a blossoming desert; Mary proclaimed a world turned upside down; John the Baptist cried out for repentance. At this expectant hour, your Son Jesus came to bring us extraordinary love and to heal all the suffering world.

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.

Remembering, therefore, his life among us, his death as one of us, and his resurrection, the first of all of us, we anticipate his coming in righteousness and peace.

Send your Spirit on us and on this meal we share: that we may work for justice, build hope for your already but not yet reign, and share the anticipated love and joy of your Son. All glory and honor is yours, in your holy creation, both now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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

C: 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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: Unexpected and mysterious, Christ comes to us in this feast of grace.

Eat, drink, and be filled. The body and blood of Christ given and shed for you.

C: Amen.

The assembly is seated.

LAMB OF GOD *(to the tune of Cradle Song)*

Voice

O Christ thou Lamb of God you
take a - way the sin of the world. Have
mer - cy on us. O us. O Christ thou Lamb of
God you take a - way the sin of the
world. Grant us thy peace.

4
8
12
16

1. 2.

DISTRIBUTION

Time is given for the sharing of bread and wine. You may come forward to receive communion at the altar or partake with prepackaged elements at your seat. However communion is given and received, we trust Jesus is present in the bread and cup we share as a gathered community.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN My Soul Now Magnifies the Lord, ELW #573



1 My soul now mag - ni - fies the Lord; my spir - it
2 For you a - lone, O God of might, have done a -
3 Your arm is strong; your strength is great. You scat - ter
4 You feed the hun - gry as your own; the wealth - y
5 Sing glo - ry to the Ho - ly One, give hon - or



leaps, by joy pos - sessed. You keep me in your kind re -
maz - ing things for me. Your mer - cy flows; your name like
those of proud in - tent and cast them down from high es -
leave with emp - ty hands. You give your help to Is - ra -
to the in - car - nate Word, and praise the Pow'r of God most



gard; all gen - er - a - tions call me blessed.
light re - mains in time per - pet - ual - ly.
tate; then give the low your nour - ish - ment.
el; your gra - cious prom - ise al - ways stands.
high, from age to age by all a - dored.

BLESSING

P: May this sign of God's presence, this shared feast between us,
strengthen us and give us peace.

C: Amen.

PRAYER

P: In this meal we have experienced God with us, ordinary made extraordinary: familiar made holy. As we are called forth from the table, may we awaken to divine justice that these expectant days may be alive with joy. We pray this in the name of the one who has promised to come again,

C: Christ Jesus, our Savior. Amen

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The assembly stands.

LITANY OF BLESSING

P: The shadows are long...

C: but we await the light.

P: The ax threatens judgment...

C: but we work for justice.

P: The mighty seek power...

C: but we labor for mercy.

P: The powerful resist transformation...

C: but we see the world about to turn.

P: The wait drags on...

C: but the angels stir in anticipation.

P: The faithful labor in darkness...

C: and the expected child is born among us.

P: May the God + of Great Expectation be with you through Advent,
that you may find hope, peace, joy and love.

C: Amen.

SENDING HYMN He Comes to Us as One Unknown, ELW #737



1 He comes to us as one un-known, a breath un - seen, un -
2 He comes when souls in si - lence lie and thoughts of day de -
3 He comes to us in sound of seas, the o - cean's fume and
4 He comes in love as once he came by flesh and blood and
5 He comes in truth when faith is grown; be - lieved, o - beyed, a -



heard; as though with - in a heart of stone, or shriv - eled seed in
part; half - seen up - on the in - ward eye, a fall - ing star a -
foam; yet small and still up - on the breeze, a wind that stirs the
birth; to bear with - in our mor - tal frame a life, a death, a
dored; the Christ in all the scrip - tures shown, as yet un - seen, but



dark - ness sown, a pulse of be - ing stirred, a pulse of be - ing stirred.
cross the sky of night with - in the heart, of night with - in the heart.
tops of trees, a voice to call us home, a voice to call us home.
sav - ing name, for ev - 'ry child of earth, for ev - 'ry child of earth.
not un - known, our Sav - ior and our Lord, our Sav - ior and our Lord.

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace and in hope-filled expectation.

Watch; wait; pray; dream.

C: **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE **“Lo How a Rose” arr. David Paxton**

Announcements for the week of 12/11/22

1. We are collecting diapers, pullups and monetary donations for the Saint Louis Crisis Nursery. See Doris Stoehner, Kathy Endorf, or Laurie Brown.
2. We join St. Rose in midweek Advent services using Holden Evening Prayer. We gather at St. Rose on 12/14 for the final week.
3. Upcoming Pulpit Supply
 - a. 12/18 - Rev. Callista Isabelle, Washington University
 - b. 12/24 - Rev. Christopher Yanker
4. Holy Trinity Lutheran Church invites the EMC churches to our Bible study, Faithful - Christmas through the eyes of Joseph by Adam Hamilton. This is a four week study beginning Tuesday, November 22 at 6:30pm via Zoom.
 - a. Meeting ID: 703 164 9775; Passcode: r1HDde
5. Our Christmas Eve service will be held at 7pm on 12/24. We will gather for a simple lessons and carols service on Christmas Day at 9:15am. Christmas Day will not be offered on Zoom.
6. In order for your contributions to be counted in 2022, please have them to the church by December 29. Thanks Jeanne Calderwood, Financial Secretary
7. 50+ Christmas luncheon is Wednesday, December 21 @11:30am. There is no charge for members. The cost of non members is \$15. Please see the sign up sheet on the bulletin board by December 18.
8. Please support Lydia's House by purchasing Lydia'a House chicken pot pies. They are sold at Schnucks. Please see Gloria Broderick for more details.

Worship Leadership

December 11, 2022 *Advent 3*

Preaching/Presiding: Pr. Tina Reyes
Assisting Minister: Angela Bennett
Lector: Terry Calderwood
Zoom and Slides: Rod Wallace
Musician: Greg Ott
Ushers: Dave Endorf & Randy Henning
Greeter: Kathy Endorf

December 18, 2022 *Advent 4*

Preaching/Presiding: Pr. Callista
Isabelle
Assisting Minister: Randy Henning
Lector: Gary Brown
Zoom and Slides: Erle Craig
Musician: David Eggers
Ushers: Cathie Lehr & Marilyn Wiley
Greeter: Jeanne Calderwood

This Week at Living Christ

Monday 12/12: 5pm Noble Guard Martial Arts Class (LL); 7pm Council (Zoom)

Tuesday 12/13: 11am Exercise (LL); 6:30pm Wedgwood HOA

Wednesday 12/14: 7pm Holden Evening Prayer @ St. Rose

Thursday 12/15: 11am Exercise (LL);

Friday 12/16:

Saturday 12/17: 10am Girl Scouts (LL); 5:30pm Noble Guard Martial Arts (LL)

Sunday 12/18: 8am Vocal Choir (UL); 9:15am Worship; 11am True Vine Church of God

Lutheran Church of the Living Christ

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