

# Advent 4 - Expect the Unexpected

December 18th, 2022

9:15am - Hybrid Worship



## Lutheran Church of the Living Christ

2725 Concord Dr, Florissant, MO 63033

Find us online: [www.lc-livingchrist.org](http://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.

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**PRELUDE**    **A Little Suite for Christmas**    **by Roger Wilson**

**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: Often we think we are acting with righteousness,

**C: And God shows us another way...**

L: To choose the good and not the evil,

**C: to bring restoration and not vengeance**

L: To dream of a world free from guilt and shame

**C: for we know Emmanuel: God with us.**

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

**C: We live in great eagerness, awake to divine possibilities.**

**GATHERING HYMN Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn, ELW #242**



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for  
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -  
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when  
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, Sing out your joy, for  
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is  
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so  
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing,  
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;  
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.  
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -  
 mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -  
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in  
 Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and  
 kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to  
 won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and  
 sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.  
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.  
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.  
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

**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*).  
Give us life, that we may call upon your name (*holy pause*).  
Surprise us with your grace (*holy pause*).  
We ask this in the name of the One who brings salvation near.

**C: Amen.**

*The assembly is seated.*

### **FIRST READING - Isaiah 7:10-16**

*When threatened, King Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!*

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup>Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. <sup>12</sup>But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. <sup>13</sup>Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup>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."

L: The Word of God still speaks.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### **CHOIR ANTHEM**

#### **PSALM - Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19**

*The psalm is read responsively.*

L: Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

**C: In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

L: Restore us, O God;  
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

**C: O Lord God of hosts,  
how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

L: You have fed them with the bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

**C: You have made us the derision of our neighbors,  
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

L: Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

**C: Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,  
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

L: And so will we never turn away from you;  
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

**C: Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

**SECOND READING - Romans 1:1-7**

*Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul, so he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. Its content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.*

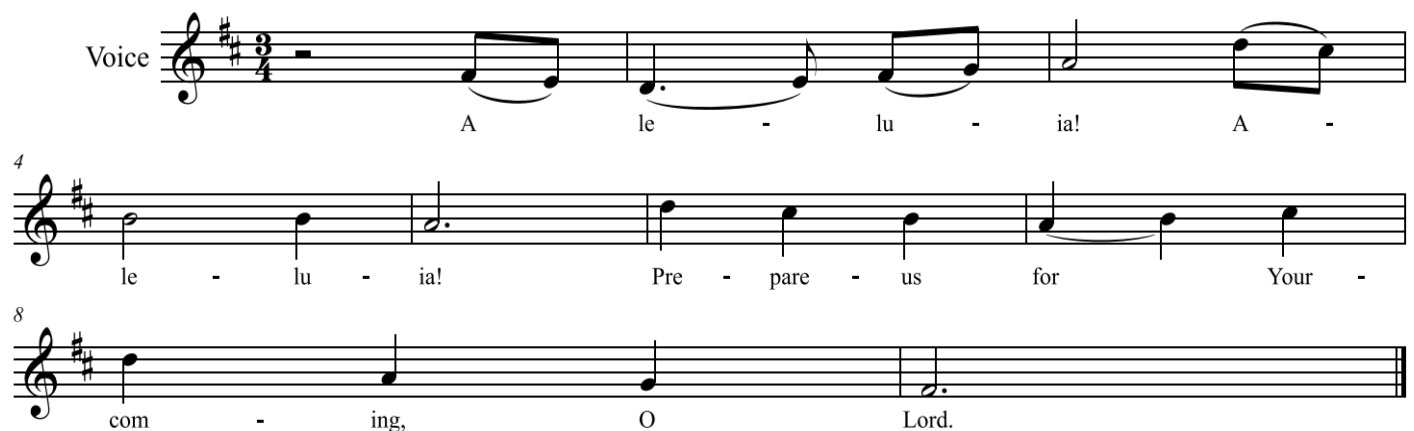
Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup>which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup>the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup>and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, <sup>5</sup>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, <sup>6</sup>including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, <sup>7</sup>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.

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 1:18-25**

*Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."*

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 with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:  
<sup>23</sup>"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."<sup>24</sup>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 borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

P: The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

*Following the reading the assembly is seated.*

**SERMON**

**Oh Come Oh Come Emmanuel**

**by Paul Manz**

The assembly is invited to stand.

HYMN OF THE DAY Unexpected and Mysterious, ELW #258



1 Un - ex - pect - ed and mys - te - rious is the gen - tle  
2 In a mo - men - tar - y meet - ing of e - ter - ni -  
3 We are called to pon - der mys - t'ry and a - wait the



word of grace. Ev - er - lov - ing and sus - tain -  
ty and time, Mar - y learned that she would car -  
com - ing Christ, to em - bod - y God's com - pas -



ing is the peace of God's em - brace. If we fal - ter  
ry both the mor - tal and di - vine. Then she learned of  
sion for each frag - ile hu - man life. God is with us



in our cour - age and we doubt what we have known, God is  
God's com - pas - sion, of E - liz - a - beth's great joy, and she  
in our long - ing to bring heal - ing to the earth, while we



faith - ful to con - sole us as a moth - er tends her own.  
ran to greet the wom - an who would rec - og - nize her boy.  
watch with joy and won - der for the prom - ised Sav - ior's birth.



## 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.*

God our shepherd, let your Spirit move with power throughout the church. Give discernment and wisdom to our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders. Take away our fear, so that we serve and love, confident that you are guiding us. In great anticipation, **hear our prayer.**

God our source, awaken us to the beauty of the earth and the marvelous variety of life. Unite humankind in repairing and caring for your creation. Protect creatures and habitats in peril due to rising seas and warming temperatures. In great anticipation, **hear our prayer.**

God our vision, raise up leaders in every nation who dream of freedom and justice for all people. We pray for the work of international organizations that promote peace and human rights (*organizations may be named*). In great anticipation, **hear our prayer.**

God our helper, come to the aid of all who cry out to you. Shelter migrants, refugees, and those fleeing war and famine. Bring relief to individuals and families experiencing hunger, homelessness, or impoverishment. Comfort any who are isolated or lonely. In great anticipation, **hear our prayer.**

God our Emmanuel, you are with us in our life together. We give you thanks for gathering us in worship and fellowship, and we remember those who cannot be present. Watch over those who travel. Heal the sick and speed their recovery (*especially*). In great anticipation, **hear our prayer.**

*Here other intercessions may be offered.*

God our hope, you bring life out of death, and you promise to be our God forever. Shine upon the faithful who now rest in the fulfillment of your promise and bring us also into your blessed reign of peace. In great anticipation, **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.

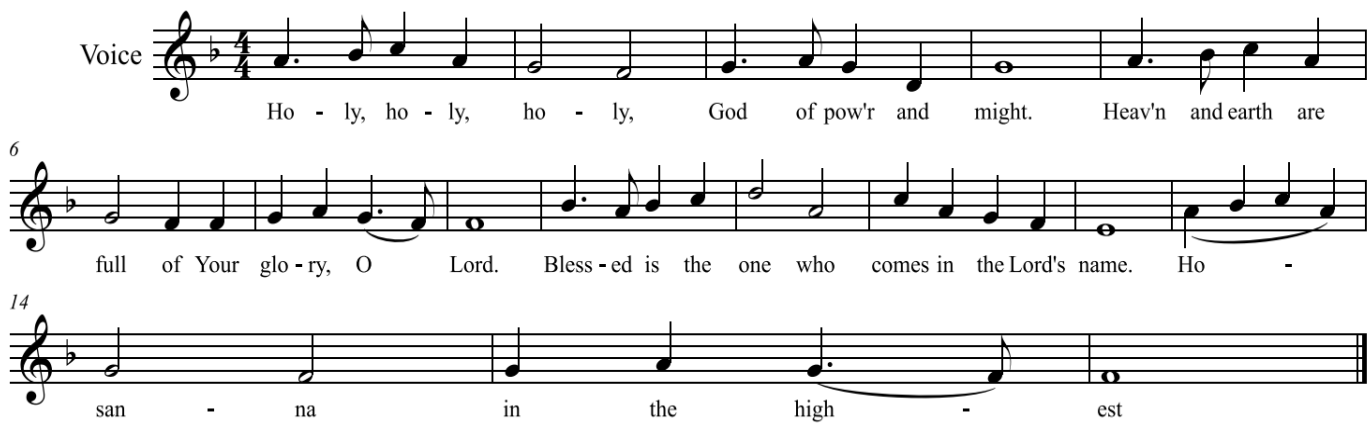
3 L: Lift up your hearts . C: We lift them to the Lord. L: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

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 O Come, O Come Emmanuel, ELW #257



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things  
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on  
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;  
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law  
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!  
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.  
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

- 5 O come, O 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*
- 6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;  
 O Sun of justice, now draw near.  
 Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
 and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*
- 7 O come, O King of nations, come,  
 O Cornerstone that binds in one:  
 refresh the hearts that long for you;  
 restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*
- 8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
 and ransom captive Israel,  
 that mourns in lonely exile here  
 until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

## **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 love. 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 People Look East, ELW #248**



1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing  
 2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is  
 3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the  
 4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new



of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,  
 plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,  
 bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,  
 life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming



trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look  
 that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look  
 bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look  
 with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look



east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.  
 east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.  
 east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.  
 east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

**DISMISSAL**

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

Watch; wait; pray; dream.

**C: Thanks be to God!**

**POSTLUDE** Oh come, Oh Come Emmanuel by Paul Manz

**Announcements for the week of 12/18/22**

1. We are collecting diapers, pullups and monetary donations for the Saint Louis Crisis Nursery. See Doris Stoechner, Kathy Endorf, or Laurie Brown. December 25 is the last day to donate.
2. Our Christmas Eve service will be held at 7pm. We will gather for a simple lessons and carols service on Christmas Day at 9:15am. Christmas Day will not be offered on Zoom.



3. "2023 Offering envelopes are ready to be picked up from the table in the hallway "
4. In order for your contributions to be counted in 2022. Please have them to the church by December 29.
5. Deadline to sign up for the 50- Plus Christmas Luncheon is today, Sunday, Dec. 18. Sign up sheet is on the bulletin board. The luncheon is this Wednesday, Dec. 21 at 11:30 in lower level social hall. There is no cost to members, \$15 for non-members.

## **Worship Leadership**

### **December 18, 2022** *Advent 4*

**Preaching/Presiding:** Pr. Callista Isabelle

**Assisting Minister:** Randy Henning

**Lector:** Gary Brown

**Zoom and Slides:** Rod Wallace

**Musician:** David Eggers

**Ushers:** Cathie Lehr & Marilyn Wiley

**Greeter:** Jeanne Calderwood

**Altar Guild:** Maureen Buchek & Marjorie Becker

### **December 24, 2022** *Christmas Eve*

**Preaching/Presiding:** Pr. Chris Yanker

**Assisting Minister:** Angela Bennett

**Lector:** Jeanne Calderwood

**Zoom and Slides:** Laurie/Gary Brown

**Musician:** David Eggers, Greg Ott

**Ushers:** Glen Albers & Ann Schultz

**Greeter:** Judy Holmes

**Altar Guild:** Cathie Lehr & Joyce Meyer

### **December 25, 2022** *Christmas Day*

**Worship Leader:** Bill Kaepfel

**Altar Guild:** Karen Haynes & Sheila Smart

### **January 1, 2023** *Christmas 1*

**Preaching/Presiding:** Pr. Stephanie Doeschot

**Assisting Minister:** Randy Henning

**Lector:** Laurie Brown

**Zoom and Slides:** Erle Craig

**Musician:**

**Ushers:** Glenn & Jann Mueller

**Greeter:** Kathy Endorf

**Altar Guild:** Joyce Wolf & Ann Wolf

## **Coming Up at Living Christ**

**Monday 12/19:** 5pm Noble Guard Martial Arts Class (LL);

**Tuesday 12/20:** 11am Exercise Class (LL)

**Wednesday 12/21:** 6:30pm Girl Scouts (LL)

**Thursday 12/22:** NO exercise

**Friday 12/23:**

**Saturday 12/24:** 7pm Christmas Eve Worship

**Sunday 12/25:** 9:15am Christmas Day Worship; 11am True Vine Church of God

**Monday 12/26:**

**Tuesday 12/27:**

**Wednesday 12/28:**

**Thursday 12/29:**

**Friday 12/30:**

**Saturday 12/31:**

**Sunday 1/1:** 9:15am Christmas Day Worship; 11am True Vine Church of God

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