



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN † CHURCH

501 Chestnut Street
Emmaus, PA 18049
Phone: 610-965-9885
www.stjohnsemmaus.org

St. John's is a congregation of the Lehigh Mission District, Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 18, 2022

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.

- MINISTERS The Baptized People of St. John's
- PASTOR The Rev. Jeffrey S. Carstens
- MUSIC MINISTRY DIRECTOR Timothy M. Ginder
- PRESCHOOL DIRECTOR Denise Mill
- PRESCHOOL TEACHER ASSISTANT Mary Racek
- OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR Barbara E. Walck
- BOOKKEEPER Anna Galante
- CUSTODIAN Brian P. Dunton
- PASTOR EMERITUS The Rev. Fred S. Foerster

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! We pray that as God speaks to us in worship we will be nurtured in Christian faith and equipped for our life of serving love and justice in the world.

St. John's Prayer Chain members pray for your concerns confidentially each day for a week. Request prayers by contacting the Church Office (info@stjohnsemmaus.org or 610-965-9885) or coordinator Faith Drescher (fdresch@ptd.net or 610- 966-5321).

Let us pray . . .

for our ELCA and our Presiding Bishop, The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton
for our Northeastern PA Synod and our Bishop, The Rev. Christopher deForest
for our Lehigh Mission District and our Dean, The Rev. Nelson Quinones.

*“Be rooted in Christ that Christ may dwell in your hearts
through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love.”*

Ephesians 3:17

C=Congregation

A=Assisting Minister

P=Presiding Minister

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE

*“The Friendly Beasts”
Bell Choir (10:30 am)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND PASSING OF THE FRIENDSHIP REGISTER

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 holy Trinity, † one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

Amen.

P Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

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

The assembly kneels or stands. Silence is kept for reflection.

P Gracious God,

have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

P God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

BLESSING AND LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The assembly stands to sing the Advent Song.

ADVENT SONG

**Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah
(Verse 4)**

Hymn 240

Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



1 Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
2 Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.
4 Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954
Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune
Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

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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.

The assembly stands to sing.

GATHERING SONG

“Fling Wide the Door”

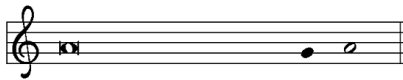
Hymn 259

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.**

KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



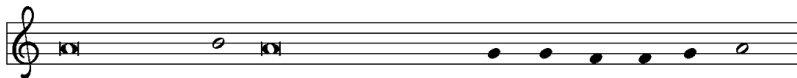
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. **Lord have mer - cy.**



Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord. **A - men.**

Refrain
Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless-ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain



has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.

The assembly is seated.

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, 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!

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. ¹³Then Isaiah said: “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore 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. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For 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.”

After the reading:

A The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

RESPONSIVE READING:

Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7)

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

²**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
⁴**O LORD God of hosts,**
how long will your anger fume when your people pray?
⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
⁶**You have made us the derision of our neighbors,**
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.
⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
¹⁷**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,**
the one you have made so strong for yourself.
¹⁸And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.
¹⁹**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. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's 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.

¹Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷To 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.

After the reading:

- A The word of the Lord.
- C **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

The assembly stands to welcome the gospel.

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew.

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

HOLY GOSPEL

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."

¹⁸Now 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. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But 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. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

After the reading:

P The Gospel of the Lord.

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

The assembly is seated.

SERMON

Silence for reflection

Pastor Jeff Carstens

The assembly stands to proclaim the word of God in song.

HYMN OF THE DAY

“Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming”

Hymn 272

NICENE CREED

P With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

C **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

P As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

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. God, in your mercy,
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. God, in your mercy,
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, especially Amnesty International. God, in your mercy,
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. God, in your mercy,
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. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

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. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray.

C Amen.

PEACE

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace saying "Peace be with you" or similar words.

An Offering of Song may be presented by the choir at this time.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

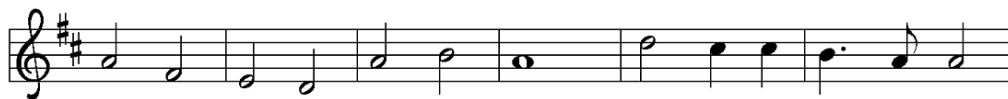
The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P 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.
You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might,



heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san-na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes



in the name of the Lord. Ho - san-na in the high - est.

P On 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.

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

C **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.**

COMMUNION

P God's love is poured out in Christ for you. Open yourselves to receive it.

C **Thanks be to God!**

The assembly is seated.



Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on



us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the



sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

All baptized Christians are welcome to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. We believe and teach that in the Holy Communion the crucified and risen Christ is present, giving his true body and blood as food and drink. This real presence is a mystery.

Those who for reasons of health do not drink wine, commune fully when receiving only the bread. In partaking of either element (bread or wine), the whole Christ is received. Children who have not yet received first communion instruction are welcome at the altar to receive a blessing.

To receive the Sacrament, please follow the directions of an usher to the front of the church via the center aisle. Receive the host from the pastor. Step to the side and take an empty cup from the tray, then receive the wine from the Communion Assistant. Return to your pew via the side aisle, placing your used cup in the waste basket.

Persons who are not able to come to the altar are invited to sit in the first pew on the pulpit side where the Pastor will commune you. Please notify an usher.

During this period of online worship, we invite you to participate in communion in your own home as the Pastor shares communion with you.

COMMUNION HYMN “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence” Hymn 490

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.
C **Amen.**

PRAYER

A Faithful God,
in this meal you have remembered your mercy,
bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ.
As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled,
sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery.
Guide us toward your promised future,
coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord.

C **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

P God the eternal Word,
who dwells with us in Jesus,
and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever.

Amen.

THREE-FOLD AMEN



SENDING SONG “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” (verse 7-8)

Hymn 257

DISMISSAL

A Go in peace. Christ is near.
C **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

Liturgical Texts and Music

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