

THE ORDER OF WORSHIP
Fourth in Advent
Christmas Eve Service
December 24, 2023

AS WE GATHER

Advent is the season of waiting! Soon and very soon our waiting and planning for Christmas celebrations will come to their close, and we will rejoice in Christ's coming to save us. Such waiting and planning for Christmas can also guide us as we prepare for Christ's final advent, His ultimate coming, when He returns on the Last Day. Until that glorious Day, when all portions of God's plan for our salvation will be accomplished, we are blessed with the peace "which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Such peace is an amazing gift that the Lord gave to the virgin Mary, the mother of our Lord, when she received God's Word from the angel Gabriel and then carried our salvation in her womb, delivering Jesus into the world. "Let it be to me according to your word," she said (Luke 1:38). May we say the same as we gather this day and, like Mary, receive the peace that God alone can give.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE – "Light One Candle"

(All God's People Sing – 163 Verses 1-4)

Light one candle for hope
He brings hope to every heart

one bright candle for hope
He comes! He comes!

Light one candle for peace
He brings peace to every heart

one bright candle for peace
He comes! He comes!

Light one candle for joy
Ev'ry nation will find salvation

one bright candle for joy
in Bethle'em's baby boy

Light one candle for love
He brings love to every heart

one bright candle for love
He comes! He comes!

CALL TO WORSHIP Psalm 118:24

Pastor: This is the day the Lord has made.

People: **Let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

✠ PREPARATION ✠

HYMN “Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord” (LSB 352 - 6 verses)

Let the earth now praise the Lord, And at last to us did send	Who has truly kept His word Christ, the sinner’s help and friend.
What the fathers most desired, What they longed for many a year,	What the prophets’ heart inspired, Stands fulfilled in glory here.
Abram’s promised great reward, Him of twofold race behold	Zion’s helper, Jacob’s Lord Truly came, as long foretold.
As Your coming was in peace, Let the same mind dwell in me	Quiet, full of gentleness, Which is Yours eternally.
Bruise for me the serpent’s head I may cling to You in faith,	That, set free from doubt and dread, Safely kept through life and death.
Then when You will come again I with joy will see Your face,	As the glorious king to reign, Freely ransomed by Your grace.

INVOCATION

(please stand)

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen.

Pastor: Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for Him.

People: Wait for the LORD and keep His way.

Pastor: The LORD waits to be gracious to you.

People: He exalts Himself to show mercy to you.

Pastor: For the LORD is a God of justice;

People: blessed are all those who wait for Him.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: So that we may experience the peace of sins forgiven, let us come before our Lord with humble hearts as we confess together:

People: **Gracious Father, we all have sinned and fallen short of Your glory. By what we have done and by what we have failed to do, we have broken Your commands and have not accomplished Your plans for our lives.**

Pastor: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, You alone give us the redemption and the restoration, the absolution and the ability to follow Your Word. Through the work of Jesus, the Word made flesh, do for us what is impossible apart from You.

People: **Forgive us, renew us, and lead us so that we may follow Your plan for our lives and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.**

Pastor: In the mercy of our gracious Father, Jesus came into this world, journeying from the crib to the cross, from the tomb and to His throne of glory in order to secure our forgiveness according to God's plan of salvation. Receive His assurance of pardon this day as we celebrate Jesus' coming to save us. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

✠ WORD ✠

INTROIT Psalm 19:1, 4c, 5-6; antiphon: Isaia 45:8a, b

Pastor: Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;

People: **let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit.**

Pastor: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims His handiwork.

People: **In them He has set a tent for the sun,**

Pastor: which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,

People: **and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.**

Pastor: Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,

People: **and there is nothing hidden from its heat.**

ALL: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

Pastor: Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness;

People: **let the earth open, that salvation and righteousness may bear fruit.**

KYRIE

Pastor: Lord, have mercy,

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: Christ, have mercy,

People: Christ, have mercy.

Pastor: Lord, have mercy,

People: Lord, have mercy.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might,

People: that we may experience the peace of knowing all things are possible with You;

Pastor: for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen. *(please be seated)*

OLD TESTAMENT READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

(“Your throne shall be established forever.”)

1 After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2 he said to Nathan the prophet, “Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.” 3 Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.” 4 But that night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying: 5 “Go and tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? 6 I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. 7 Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?”’ 8 “Now then, tell my servant David, ‘This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. 10 And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning 11 and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. “The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: 16 Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”’”

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

EPISTLE READING: Romans 16:25-27

("To the only wise God be glory forevermore.")

25 Now to him who is able to establish you in accordance with my gospel, the message I proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes from faith - 27 to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

Reader: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

(please stand)

(God reveals His eternal plan of salvation to the virgin Mary.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." 34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail." 38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen. *(please be seated)*

HYMN: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" (LSB 357 - 7 verses)

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
That mourns in lonely exile here

And ransom captive Israel,
Until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
To us the path of knowledge show,

Who ord'rest all things mightily;
And teach us in her ways to go. *Refrain*

O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
In ancient times didst give the Law

Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain*

O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,

Free them from Satan's tyranny
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain*

O come, Thou Key of David, come,
Make safe the way that leads on high,

And open wide our heav'nly home;
And close the path to misery. *Refrain*

O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,

And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
And death's dark shadows put to flight. *Refrain*

O come, Desire of nations, bind
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,

In one the hearts of all mankind;
And be Thyself our King of Peace. *Refrain.*

MESSAGE: "Hope for the Hopeful"

Luke 1:26-38

OFFERING

If you are a **visitor** this morning, you are our guest. Please do not feel obligated to give as the offering plate is passed. The offering is an opportunity for **members** to practice faithful stewardship and to support the ministries of Christ's church. Also, a red booklet, the Friendship Register, will be passed down each row. Please record your presence with us today.

OFFERING SONG: "We Give Thee But Thine Own" (LSB 781 - vv. 1-2)

(Please sing as the offering is presented at the Altar)

We give Thee but Thine own, Whate'er the gift may be;
All that we have is Thine alone, A trust, O Lord, from Thee.
May we Thy bounties thus As stewards true receive
And gladly, as Thou blessest us, To Thee our firstfruits give!

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

(please stand)

Pastor: Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs . . . Lord, in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer

Pastor: Into your hands, O Father, we commend all for who we pray, trusting in Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who has taught us to pray . . .

THE 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.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have accomplished Your plan of salvation in the coming of Jesus Christ, our Savior and King.

People: As you have filled us with the peace of sins forgiven, inspire us to share this blessing with others, that they, too, may know Your love and salvation;

Pastor: through Jesus Christ, Your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: Amen.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

BENEDICTION

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

People: **Amen.** *(please be seated)*

HYMN: “Hark the Glad Sound” (LSB 349 – 4 verses)

Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
Let ev’ry heart prepare a throne

The Savior promised long;
And ev’ry voice a song.

He comes the pris’ners to release,
The gates of brass before Him burst,

In Satan’s bondage held.
The iron fetters yield.

He comes the broken heart to bind,
And with the treasures of His grace

The bleeding soul to cure,
To enrich the humble poor.

Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
And heav’n’s eternal arches ring

Thy welcome shall proclaim,
With Thy beloved name.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Pastor: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

People: **Thanks be to God.**

MESSIAH PRAYER REQUESTS . . .

For continued healing – Judy Beauford - Steven Haberoth - Linda Fults

For Family and Friends

Anthony Sansone asks for prayers for his Sister, Diane Hendrix as she is in the hospital with sepsis as she stands at Heaven's Doorstep.

Prayers for healing for Ardyne Knappick as she recovers from a fall

Prayers for Carol Mencke's family – Ron & Emily Pitchford as they mourn the loss in their family

Prayers for healing for Gloria Bloecher who is recovering from a fall and heart attack

Leitko Family ask for prayers for Katie Finny recovering from complications in birthing a baby

Jim & Becky Behrens ask for prayers for Lane Behrens, old son of Logan and Ashley Behrens, grandson of Jim & Becky Behrens, as he is home recovering from RSV infection

Prayers for Gus Addington as he awaits reconstructive surgery of ACL injury on Dec. 26th

Prayers for our Mission Aviation Family - Will and Jennelle Wolf and their 3 children

Rutledge Family requests prayers for Sister-in-Law Heather Mulledy battling breast cancer

Mario & Eve Betancourt requests prayers for Reese Richeson, undergoing treatment for cancer

Donna Cifers requests prayers for her 89-year-old mother's health issues – Margaret Chamness

Sally Gutierrez Beltran asks for prayer for her husband Felix for salvation, deliverance from alcohol and restoration of their marriage

For Messiah's Call Committee and the Pastor God is preparing for us

Prayers for Justice & Peace in the Middle East

For family discord, reconciliation, and healing

Prayers for rescue for those in abusive relationships

Prayers for all those with physical, emotional, or other needs – your will be done

Prayers for all who are lost to hear and receive Jesus' Gospel message

We pray in Jesus's Holy Name, Amen.

DECEMBER ALTAR FLOWERS

Dec. 3rd - Steve & Janet Haberoth – in thanksgiving of God's Blessings

Dec. 10th – Bill & Linda Dicke – honoring Linda's Birthday

Dec. 10th – Kathleen Blakely – in memory of mom Polly Mohnke on her 100th Birthday {Dec. 9th}

Dec. 17th – Dennis & Sue Parker – in memory of Doug's Birthday

Dec. 24th – Kim & Maurine Maloy – in memory of those who have gone before us.

Dec. 24th – Terry Chhabra – in loving memory of her parents Randall & Carlotta Burns, Amanda Addington's Grandparents, Gus & Luke's Great Grandparents

Dec. 31st – Bill & Sharon Loren - in thanksgiving for another year of God's blessings.

ANNOUNCEMENTS!

WELCOME ... Whoever you are Wherever you have come from we are so glad you are here!
Your presence increases our joy as we praise our loving Savior together. If you are visiting with us today, we'd love to get to know you! Please don't forget to sign your name and fill in your contact information in the red booklets on the inside aisle!

The Nativity of Our Lord: The Diamond Found in the Manger - *Now in our celebration of Christmas, we find there is a diamond in the center of the Advent Star. That diamond rests in the manger of Bethlehem stable. The treasure of the Christmas star therefore is not in the distant heavens but in the stable. Peace is finding the diamond of God's gift in the straw of the manger. That peace becomes His gift to the world. This Christmas peace reminds us to focus on giving thanks for His gifts. By giving thanks, we can begin to step away from the useless treadmill of worry. Peace is placing our cares where they belong, with the One who cares about us. This Christmas, we have the peace that passes understanding, and this gift comes from the God who understands us perfectly. As Mary, Joseph and the shepherds pondered God's gift through the baby born, so we find peace. God's peace is found in the treasure of God's Son, laid in the straw of the manger.*

SHEPHERDS AND SHEEP

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." John 10:11
{Portals of Prayer – Sunday, December 24th}

The shepherd picture is so ingrained in our lives that we may not realize what a lowly occupation shepherding was at the time of Christ's birth. More than lowly, the occupation and those who practiced it were often downright despised by others. Shepherds had a dirty and smelly job. Thus, it was a real shock in that culture that the news of Christ's birth should first be announced to this group of people, let alone by a choir of angels. It is only when we realize how lowly shepherds were that we can begin to appreciate the great love of God.

For us sinful sheep, God's Good Shepherd became one of us, yet without sin. Christ took upon Himself our waywardness and weaknesses. He became the very Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world. Sheep eventually die, and Jesus did die on the cross. But He also rose to give us life, hope, and the never-ending love of His Father.

This Christmas, by faith, "with the shepherds let us go, To see what God for us has done, In sending us His own dear Son" ***{From Heaven Above to Earth I Come LSB 358:6}***

Wishing you and yours a most joyous season filled with all the wonder and awe of knowing that we are children of God's!

Know that you are loved!

Pastor Richard Lofgren - Maurine Maloy - David Rhoads - Gina Huskey

"HE WILL BE
GREAT
AND WILL
BE CALLED
THE SON OF THE
MOST HIGH."

LUKE 1:32



MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH

*9401 Dietz, Elkhorn
Boerne, Texas 78015
(830) 755-4300
www.messiahboerne.org*

Rev. Dr. Richard S. Lofgren, Pastor

Gina Husky, Director of Messiah's Kids Preschool

David Rhoads, Facilities Manager

Maurine Maloy, Administrative Assistant



Serving us today @ 10:30 am – December 24, 2023

Elders: Bill Eichman & Roger Winkelmann
Coffee: Verna Sorensen
Treats: Verna Sorensen
Tellers: Anthony Sansone
Chancel Care: Kim & Maurine Maloy
Message: Pastor Richard Lofgren
Kid's Message: Pastor Richard Lofgren
Musician: Bob Shoaf
AV: David & Lorrie Wendeborn
Reader: Maurice Doublett
Ushers: David Theis – Dennis Parker – Maurice Doublett – Tom Bibb
Greeters: Verna Sorensen & Lindy Eschenko

Serving us today @ 5:00 pm – December 24, 2023

Elders: Bill Eichman & Roger Winkelmann
Tellers: Anthony Sansone
Chancel Care: Kim & Maurine Maloy
Message: Pastor Richard Lofgren
Kid's Message: Pastor Richard Lofgren
Musician: Bob Shoaf
AV: David & Lorrie Wendeborn
Reader: Sharon Loren
Ushers: David Theis – Dennis Parker – Maurice Doublett – Tom Bibb
Greeters: Maurice Doublett

Our Response to God Last Week

November 2023 Contributions			
General Fund	\$45,920.91	Building Fund	\$115,008.61
Renovation Fund	\$55,150.00	Family Life Center	\$5,812.50