

HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT DECEMBER 21, 2025

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.

Weekly Update

1090 Sterling Road, Herndon, VA 20170
www.HolyCrossHerndon.org



HOLY CROSS
LUTHERAN CHURCH



Sunday, December 21, 2025

VISITORS: It is a joy to have you with us this morning. If you are looking for a church family, we hope you will consider Holy Cross. For more information, you can fill out a visitor form in the narthex, speak to an usher, or scan the QR code to the right.



FAMILIES: Children are always welcome at our worship services! There's also a small play area in the Narthex where you can hear the broadcasted service.

WEEKLY PRAYER LIST

For additions or updates, email admin@holycrossherndon.org
Names are removed after one month unless advised otherwise.

OUR CONGREGATION

Juliana Roe Beck | Bonnie Burton | Terry & Linda Butler
Joy Caveney | Joel Flegal | Roy Geiger | Otto Jacobson
Jared Lem | Reed Morgan | Mike Muller | Craig Reichow
Jeremy Shoop | Tuula Toney | Cherie Weatherhead

THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY

Riley Morgan | Thomas Newcomb | Collin Reichow

RELATIVES AND FRIENDS OF THE CONGREGATION

Erin Barden (sister of Andrew Barden)
Randy and Shirley Beamer (friends of Pam Darby)
Debbie Bowman (niece of Betty Skelton)
Joy Brown (friend of Kate Flegal)
Symphony Calvillo & her two boys (friend of Kate Flegal)
Jane Campbell (friend of Cheryl Smith)
Don and Liz Gober (friends of Craig Reichow)
Jason Greenwalt (friend of Cheryl Smith)
Madilyn Gross (cousin of Desirae Peral)
Matt Kim (friend of John & Tammy Breene)
Georgia Kirby and Cain Mason (friends of Cherie Weatherhead)
Phyllis Krapf (wife of Dick Krapf)
Don Kress (friend of Helen and Gary Wolfe)
Dale, John, and Jeff MacPherson (friends of Jared Lem)
Sharon Massen (friend of Craig Reichow)
Lisa Nolf (friend of Jared Lem)
Jim Pollock (godfather of Andrew Barden)
Anne Marie Berardi Rabinowitz (friend of Tonya Elliott)
Dylan Roe (nephew of Mark and Jo Roe)
John Smith (brother-in-law of Cheryl Smith)
Steven Swancutt (brother of Lynn Russo)
Diana Todd (friend of the Russos)
Michelle White (friend and coworker of Kate Flegal)
Bernadette Stevenson Williams (friend of the Roe family)
Laizu Zaman (friend of Jared Lem)

THOSE IN MOURNING

Family & friends of Glorene Mjones (founding member of Holy Cross)

SERVING IN WORSHIP

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Director of Music and Liturgy: | Jeremy Shoop |
| Sound Technician: | Bob Thompson |
| Video Technician: | Sylvia Moran |

Serving December 21st: Fourth Sunday of Advent

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Supply Pastor: | Rev. Amy R. Carter Feira |
| Assisting Minister: | Andy Krueger |
| Reader: | Catherine Taylor |
| Acolyte: | Kate Flegal |
| Greeter: | Jared Lem |

Serving December 24th: Christmas Eve, 4:00 pm

| | |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| Supply Pastor: | Rev. Tiffany Towberman |
| Assisting Minister: | TBD |
| Reader: | Nannette Lem |
| Acolyte: | TBD |
| Greeter: | Jared Lem |

Serving December 24th: Christmas Eve, 7:00 pm

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Supply Pastor: | Rev. Michelle Kuhlman |
| Assisting Minister: | Kathy Makowski |
| Reader: | Kristin Andersen |
| Torch Bearers: | Diana Virgo, Gary Wolfe |
| Crucifer: | Sarah Moran |
| Greeter: | Jared Lem |

Serving December 28th: First Sunday of Christmas

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------|
| Supply Pastor: | Rev. Katy Moran |
| Assisting Minister: | Anne Geiger |
| Reader: | Jo Roe |
| Acolyte: | Sarah Moran |
| Greeter: | Jared Lem |

FLOWERS: Today's flowers are given by Anne Geiger in honor of Nora Lockard's baptism.

THIS WEEK'S SCHEDULE: DEC 21 – DEC 28

| | | |
|-------|----------|--|
| SU 21 | 10:00 am | Worship – Fourth Sunday of Advent |
| | 11:00 am | Fellowship & Coffee ~ FH |
| | 11:00 am | Christmas Decorating |
| | 1:00 pm | Bldg. Use: Christian Missionary ~ FH |
| W 24 | 11:30 am | Lunch for the Soul ~ FH |
| | 4:00 pm | Family Friendly Service ~ Sanctuary |
| | 7:00 pm | Traditional Service ~ Sanctuary |
| TH 25 | | <i>Merry Christmas!</i> |
| SA 27 | 8:00 am | Bldg. Use: Herndon's Women AA ~ Rm 204 |
| | 11:00 am | Bldg. Use: Called2Be 7 th Day Adventist |
| SU 28 | 10:00 am | Worship – First Sunday of Christmas |
| | 11:00 am | Fellowship & Coffee |
| | 1:00 pm | Bldg. Use: Christian Missionary ~ FH |

*The Church office will be closed on Thursday, December 25 and Friday, December 26.
Have a wonderful Christmas!*

HERNDON WOMAN'S CLUB

Holy Cross is partnering with the Herndon Woman's Club for a Day of Service on MLK Jr's birthday, January 19, 2026.



The HWC is looking for donations of old crayons and old socks without holes as part of the service projects they will be organizing that day. If you have old crayons or those pesky

socks without a partner (no anklets please), please bring them to church any Sunday or contact:

Helen Wolfe (hkswolfe@gmail.com) or

Cheryl Smith (cismith1@verizon.net). Thanks!

MLK – DAY OF SERVICE MONDAY, JAN 19

As we prepare to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., everyone is invited to participate in an **MLK Day of Service** dedicated to compassion, community, and outreach. We are grateful to once again partner with the **Herndon Woman's Club**, whose commitment to service closely aligns with our own mission.

During the day, we will assemble **Personal Care Kits for Lutheran World Relief**, providing hygiene and comfort items to communities around the world recovering from disasters and hardship. An Amazon link will be created after Christmas, allowing you to easily purchase items for the kits.

Additional activities will include an Inova Blood Drive and the collection of eyeglasses, which will be refurbished and distributed to individuals who lack access to essential vision care.



Join us after worship **today, December 21** (lunch will be provided), as we decorate our sanctuary and church building for Christmas Eve services. We'll set up trees, arrange greens, hang wreaths, and add all the finishing touches that make Holy Cross glow with Christmas joy.

All ages and abilities are welcome—many hands make light (and festive!) work. Thank you for helping create a beautiful worship space for this holy season!

WELCOME PASTOR AMY!

Pastor Amy Carter Feira attended the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg and graduated in 2013. She has served congregations in the Metro DC Synod, most recently at Grace Lutheran Church in Washington, D.C. She is currently on leave from call to complete academic work and is a PhD candidate in Religion and Culture at the Catholic University of America. She lives in Arlington, VA with husband Scott, sons David and Justin, and Domino the dog.

Christmas Eve Worship

4:00 pm - Family Friendly Service
Rev. Tiffany Towberman

7:00 pm - Traditional Service
Rev. Michelle Kuhlman

Holy Communion at both Services
Candle Lighting at 7:00 pm Service.



Holy Cross Lutheran Church Welcomes ALL!

Holy Cross Lutheran Church joyfully affirms and celebrates that every person is a beloved child of God. We welcome all who are seeking God's boundless love and sustaining grace into full community with us at Holy Cross. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we commit ourselves to breaking down barriers and systems that divide God's children working to be a space committed to racial equality for God's people and to building a community where all are recognized as part of Christ's new creation.



We welcome you, and you are safe with us...
 Whatever your race, ethnicity, or heritage;
 Whatever your relationship status;
 We welcome you, and you are safe with us...

Whatever your sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, or gender expression;
 Whatever your socio-economic status;
 We welcome you, and you are safe with us...

Whatever your age and life circumstance;
 Whatever your physical and mental ability.
 You are a beloved child of God, you are valued, and you are welcome here.

What to Expect in Worship

Worship services can be intimidating for newcomers. While we try to make worship as accessible as possible for everyone, we know that some aspects can be confusing. Feel free to ask an usher or someone near you for help if you have any questions today. We are happy to help and want all voices to be included in praise to God.

Our worship style is traditional at Holy Cross. A full liturgy is used to focus our praise and prayers to God. Notes are included in the side gutter of the bulletin to explain why we use the various liturgical elements. Communion is celebrated every Sunday at Holy Cross. The table (altar) is not our table, but Christ's table. Just as Christ welcomes all, all are welcome to receive communion at Holy Cross. Pastor will give instructions on how we celebrate communion. Written instructions are also included at that point in the bulletin.

Throughout the year we emphasize each liturgical season differently to mark the passage of time. Liturgical texts change to reflect aspects of that season, some elements are removed or added to reflect the mood of that season, and colors used to decorate the chancel are changed to provide visual reminders of the current season.

Holy Cross Lutheran Church

Transforming the world & ourselves, together in community, fellowship, and faith.

Fourth Sunday of Advent December 21, 2025 ~ 10:00 AM

Throughout Advent we acclaim that God comes, in the past in the history of Israel and the incarnation of Jesus, in the present in the word and sacrament of each Sunday, and in the future at the end of all things. Only on this Fourth Sunday do the readings in Advent refer to the story of Jesus' birth as an arrival of God among us.



WE GATHER



As part of our continuous efforts to make worship more inclusive and sensory friendly, we ask that you refrain from applauding during worship.

GREETING AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

Watchmen Tell Us of This Night

arr. Lani Smith

Marcia Kratzke, piano; Jeremy Shoop, organ

Please stand as you are able.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

Assembly: **Amen.**

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Pastor: Long expected God,
Assembly: **we confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake.**

Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised. Amen.

Pastor:

God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. ✝ You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

Assembly:

Amen.



“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” is a hymn written by Charles Wesley in 1744 to express the Israelites’ long for their Savior. It is difficult for us to fully appreciate their sense of anticipation, but this hymn helps us to reflect on our own longing for the second coming of Christ.

Our kyrie for Advent was written by our Director of Music and Liturgy, Jeremy Shoop. The petitions from the Assisting Minister prays for those gathered here and now, and all people around the world and in all times, as we prepare for Christ’s birth. The refrain is the traditional kyrie, a plea for God’s mercy, set to the tune VENI EMMANUEL.

GATHERING HYMN

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #255)

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Music: JEFFERSON, W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835

GREETING

Pastor:

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, the love of Christ that guards our hearts and minds, and the joy and consolation of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Assembly:

And also with you.

KYRIE

Assisting Minister: A voice cries out, “Prepare the way of the Lord!”
For all who gather in this place and prepare their hearts for His birth, let us pray to the Lord.

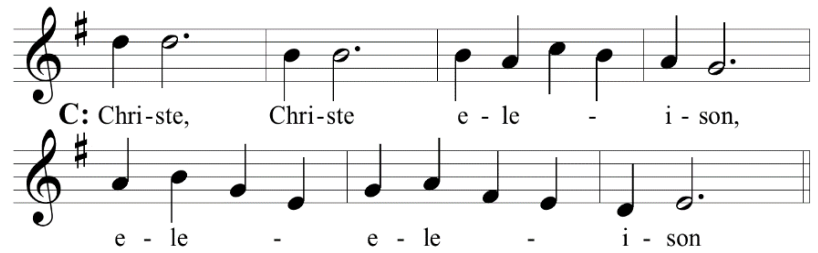
Assembly:



C: Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e e - le -
i - son, e - le - e - le - i - son

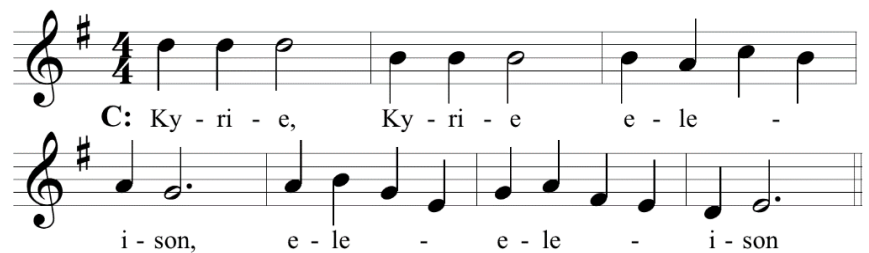
Assisting Minister: Lord Jesus, you came to gather all nations into the peace of God's kingdom. For peace on earth and that all people may know of His coming, let us pray to the Lord.

Assembly:



Assisting Minister: Let anyone who has ears listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches. For prophets of old who proclaimed your birth and for your people today who go out and share your Good News, let us pray to the Lord.

Assembly:



PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor:

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.

Assembly:

Amen.

Please sit.

The prayer of the day, based on collect #1121 in the seventh-century Gelasian Sacramentary, is one of the rare ancient liturgical prayers addressed to Christ. This week it is Christ's power that must be stirred up so that, freed from our sin, we can eagerly say yes to God's promises.



LISTENING WITH CHILDREN'S EARS

Matthew sees in Christ a fulfillment of the promises in the Hebrew Scriptures. One example is his applying the Isaiah oracle about a newborn infant to the birth of Jesus, since the Greek rendering of "young woman" suggested "virgin woman." We read Isaiah 7 on this Sunday in order to understand what Matthew wrote in chapter 1. In this reading, we stand with believers of past centuries who place their trust for salvation in God, and we recall the tradition of interpretation upon which we stand, even when our methods of interpretation are different.

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!

Reader: A reading from the prophet Isaiah.

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

Reader: Word of God, word of life.

Assembly: **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Luke 1:46b-55

Reader: We will read Mary's Magnificat responsively.
The assembly is invited to read the bold verses.

^{46b} And Mary said,
 "My soul magnifies the Lord,
⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸ **for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.**
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
 and holy is his name;
⁵⁰ **indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him**
from generation to generation.
⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
 he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

**⁵² He has brought down the powerful from their thrones
and lifted up the lowly;**

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things
and sent the rich away empty.

**⁵⁴ He has come to the aid of his child Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,**

⁵⁵ according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

Reader: Word of God, word of life.

Assembly: **Thanks be to God.**

*All of Advent, all of the
entire Christian year, is
summed up in Paul's
opening sentence. On
every Sunday
throughout the year, we
celebrate the
resurrection of Jesus
Christ and call one
another into the
obedience of faith.*

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.

Reader: A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans.

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ 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, ⁵ 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, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷ 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.

Reader: Word of God, word of life.

Assembly: **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand as you are able.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

(Stanza 2)

Comfort, Comfort Now My People



1 "Com - fort, com-fort now my peo - ple; tell of peace!" So says our God.
 2 For the her-ald's voice is cry - ing in the des - ert far and near,
 3 Straight shall be what long was crook - ed, and the rough - er plac - es plain.



Com-fort those who sit in dark - ness mourn-ing un - der sor - row's load.
 call - ing us to true re - pen - tance, since the reign of God is here.
 Let your hearts be true and hum - ble, as be-fits God's ho - ly reign.



To God's peo - ple now pro-claim that God's par - don waits for them!
 Oh, that warn - ing cry o - bey! Now pre - pare for God a way.
 For the glo - ry of the Lord now on earth is shed a - broad,



Tell them that their war is o - ver; God will reign in peace for-ev - er.
 Val - leys, rise to greet the Sav - ior; hills, bow down in hum-ble fa - vor.
 and all flesh shall see the to - ken that God's word is nev - er bro - ken.

Year A relies on the gospel of Matthew for many of its narratives. According to Matthew, especially the men in the Jewish tradition are called into God's plan for salvation, but in this Sunday's gospel, God's promises are present through a woman. The child born is named "Emmanuel": God is with us, in word and sacrament, today and always.

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."

Pastor: The Gospel according to Matthew the 1st chapter.
Assembly: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, “God is with us.” ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

Pastor: The Gospel of our Lord.
 Assembly: Praise to you, O Christ.

Please sit.

SERMON

Please remain seated for the Hymn of the Day.

HYMN OF THE DAY

Canticle of the Turning

Cantor: My soul cries out with a joyful shout
 that the God of my heart is great,
 and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
 that you bring to the ones who wait.
 You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
 and my weakness you did not spurn,
 so from east to west shall my name be blest.
 Could the world be about to turn?

Assembly:

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.

Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.


Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat
 Music: STAR OF COUNTY DOWN, Irish traditional
 Text © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358.
 All rights reserved. Used by permission.

Cantor: Though I am small, my God, my all,
 you work great things in me,
 and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
 to the end of the age to be.
 Your very name puts the proud to shame,
 and to those who would for you yearn,
 you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
 for the world is about to turn.


After hearing Mary sing about justice, we sing about justice with “Canticle of the Turning.” Rory Cooney’s message in this hymn is one of God’s might striking down the powerful and wicked, and raising the lowly and poor. Cooney reminds us that God has God’s eye on the servant’s plight. We are called by God and empowered to be the force for what is right as the world is “about to turn.” The driving melody found in this hymn comes straight out of Irish folk music. It is a song of the people and fits this text for God’s people perfectly.

Assembly:

Refrain



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.




Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a-bout to turn.


Cantor: From the halls of pow'r to the fortress tow'r,
not a stone will be left on stone.
Let the king beware for your justice tears
ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
The hungry poor shall weep no more,
for the food they can never earn;
there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
for the world is about to turn.

Assembly:

Refrain



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.

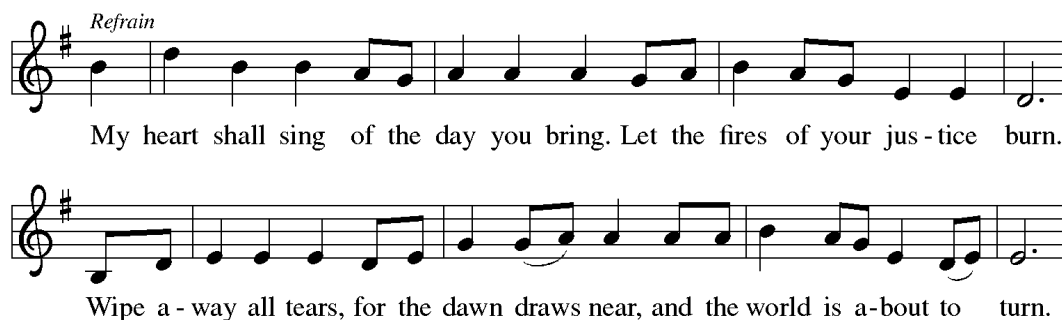


Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a-bout to turn.

Cantor: Though the nations rage from age to age,
we remember who holds us fast:
God's mercy must deliver us
from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
This saving word that our forebears heard
is the promise which holds us bound,
till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
who is turning the world around.

Assembly:

Refrain



My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.

Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM

Emma Roya Eszlinger

Parents: Yasi Akbari and Justin Eszlinger

Sponsors: Abtin Buergari and Alyssa Mitchell

Nora Davenport Lockard

Parents: Susan Davenport Geiger and Matthew Ryan Lockard

Sponsors: Roy and Anne Geiger

Pastor: In baptism the Lord frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; by water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn children of God and made members of the church, the body of Christ. Living with Christ and in the communion of saints, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.

Who presents Emma Roya for baptism?

Sponsors/Parents: We present Emma Roya for baptism.

Pastor: Who presents Nora Davenport for baptism?

Sponsors/Parents: We present Emma Davenport for baptism.

Pastor: Called by the Holy Spirit, trusting in the grace and love of God, do you desire to have Emma and Nora baptized into Christ?

Sponsors/Parents: We do.

Pastor: As you bring Emma and Nora to receive the gift of baptism, you are entrusted with responsibilities:

To live with them among God's faithful people, bring them to the word of God and the holy supper, teach them the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the

Ten Commandments, place in their hands the holy scriptures, and nurture them in faith and prayer, so that they may learn to trust God, proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace.

Do you promise to help Emma and Nora grow in the Christian faith and life?

Parents/Sponsors: We do.

Pastor: People of God, do you promise to support Emma and Nora and pray for them in their new life in Christ?

Assembly: We do.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

The presiding minister addresses the parents and sponsors.

Pastor: Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God?

Parents/Sponsors: We renounce them.

Pastor: Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God?

Parents/Sponsors: We renounce them.

Pastor: Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God?

Parents/Sponsors: We renounce them.

The presiding minister addresses the assembly.

Pastor: People of God, do you believe in God the Father?

Assembly: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Pastor: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

Assembly: I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead.

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the
dead.**

Pastor: Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

**Assembly: I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.**

THANKSGIVING AT THE FONT

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

Assembly: And also with you.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Assembly: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: Blessed are you, O God, maker and ruler of all things. Your voice thundered over the waters at creation. You water the mountains and send springs into the valleys to refresh and satisfy all living things.

Assisting Minister pours water into the font.

Through the waters of the flood you carried those in the ark to safety. Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery to freedom. In the wilderness you nourished them with water from the rock, and you brought them across the river Jordan to the promised land.

Assisting Minister pours water into the font.

By the baptism of his death and resurrection, your Son Jesus has carried us to safety and freedom. The floods shall not overwhelm us, and the deep shall not swallow us up, for Christ has brought us over to the land of promise. He sends us to make disciples, baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Assisting Minister pours water into the font.

Pour out your Holy Spirit; wash away sin in this cleansing water; clothe the baptized with Christ; and claim your daughters and sons, no longer slave and free, no longer male and female, but one with all the baptized in Christ Jesus, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Assembly: **Amen.**

BAPTISM

Pastor: Emma Roya Eszlinger, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Assembly: **Amen.**

Pastor: Nora Davenport Lockard, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Assembly: **Amen.**

Pastor: Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give your children new birth, cleanse them from sin, and raise them to eternal life.

Laying hands on the head of the newly baptized, the minister prays:

Pastor: Sustain Emma Roya with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

Assembly: **Amen.**

Pastor: Sustain Nora Davenport with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever.

Assembly: **Amen.**

The presiding minister marks the sign of the cross on the forehead of the baptized.

Pastor: Emma Roya, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

Assembly: Amen.

Pastor: Nora Davenport, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever.

Assembly: Amen.

WELCOME

A lighted candle may be given to the newly baptized.

Assisting Minister: Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Assisting Minister: Let us welcome the newly baptized.
Assembly: We welcome you into the body of Christ and into the mission we share. Join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's creative and redeeming word to all the world.

THE PEACE

Leader: The peace of the Lord be with you always.
Assembly: And also with you.

Please sit.

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING

I Hear the Prophet Callin'
 Sanctuary Choir

arr. Pepper Choplin

Please stand as you are able.

The sharing of THE PEACE is an ancient ritual that puts us right with our neighbors before we offer our gifts to God.

OFFERTORY

(Stanza 3)

Prepare the Royal Highway



- 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!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
 Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. Lord Jesus, our portion and our cup,
 you offered yourself in love for the world,
 and in this meal you nourish us with your life.
 Fill us with your abundance, that we may feed
 the hungry and welcome the stranger, trusting in
 your name.

Assembly: Amen.



WE COME TO GOD'S TABLE



GREAT THANKSGIVING

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

Assembly: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts,

Assembly: We lift them up to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,

Assembly: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

PREFACE

Pastor: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy...
... and join their unending hymn.

SANCTUS

(Setting 3)

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. 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.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Pastor: Jesus was always the guest.

In the homes of Peter and Jairus, Martha and Mary, Joanna and Susanna, he was always the guest.

At the meal tables of the wealthy where he pled the case of the poor, he was always the guest. Upsetting polite company, befriending isolated people, welcoming the stranger, he was always the guest.

But here, at this table, he is the host. Those who wish to serve him must first be served by him. Those who want to follow him must first be fed by him. For this is the table where God intends us to be nourished.

This is the table where we who are broken are made whole. So, come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, for a better life, for a fairer world. Jesus Christ, who has sat at our tables, now invites us to be guests at his.

On the night in which he was betrayed, and as they were sitting at a meal, Jesus gave thanks, took a piece of bread and broke it. He gave it to the disciples saying, "This is my body. It is broken for you. Do this to remember me.

Later, after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine, gave thanks and said, "This cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you, to remember me."

So now we do as Jesus did. We take this bread and wine, the produce of the earth and fruit of human labor. In these, Jesus has promised to be present; through these, Christ can make us whole.

We ask, merciful God, that you send, in kindness, your Holy Spirit to settle on this bread and wine and fill them with the fullness of Jesus.

Let that same Spirit rest on us, call us from the folly of this world, until in wisdom, we conform to the shape of him whose food we now share.

All this we ask through your son, Jesus Christ. By him, with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty God, now and forever.

Assembly:

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Pastor: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

Assembly: **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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Pastor: Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

Assembly: **Thanks be to God.**

DISTRIBUTION

*This is Christ's table of welcome. Jesus invites **all** who are hungry and thirsty for unconditional love and acceptance to come to God's banquet. The ushers will direct you forward at the appropriate time. Communion will be by station. Red wine and white grape juice are available in individual cups. Bread served is Gluten Free. If you wish to receive a blessing rather than communion, cross your arms over your chest. Return to your seat by the side aisle.*

AGNUS DEI

(Setting 3)

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.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

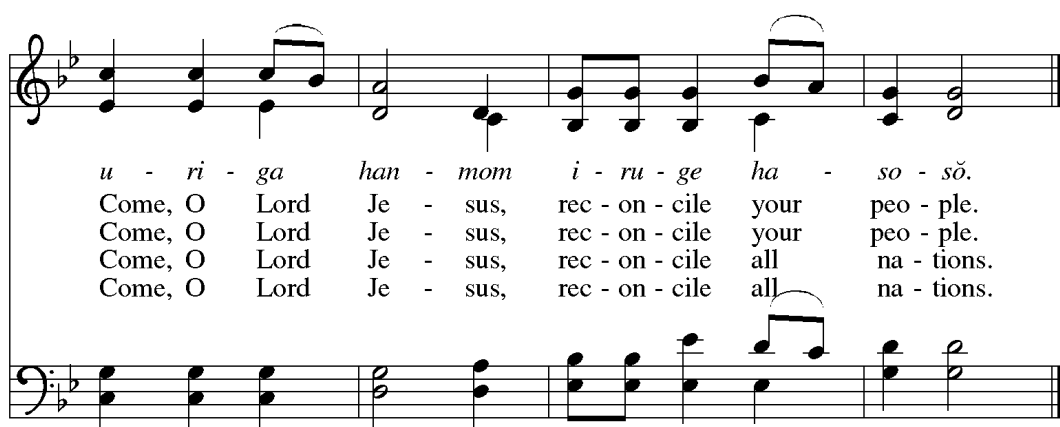
(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #247)

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

Ososŏ, ososŏ


O - so - sŏ o - so - sŏ, pyong - hwa - ũi - im - gŭm

1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
 2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
 3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
 4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.



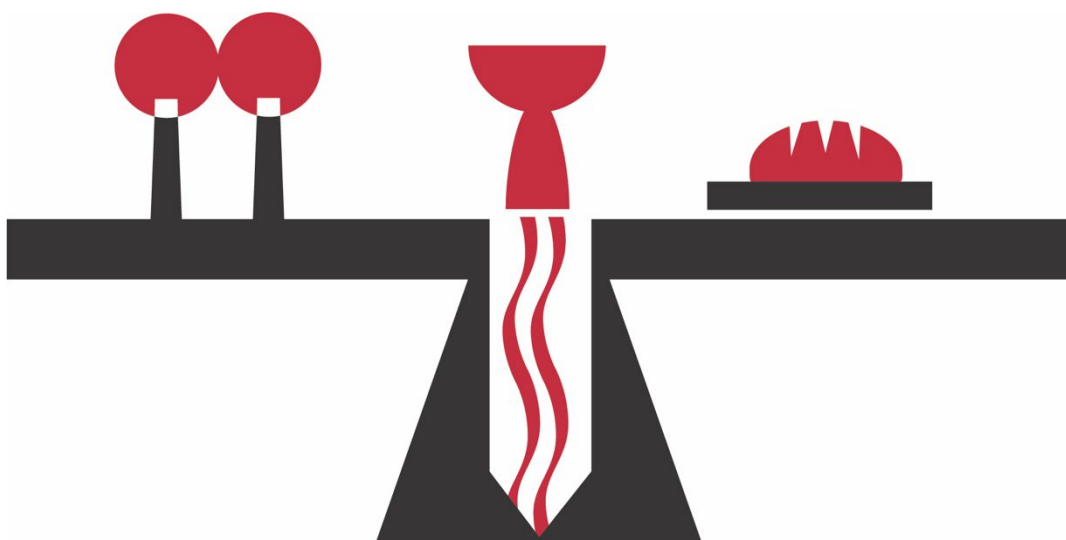
u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sŏ.

Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope

Music: OSOSŎ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947

Text and music © Geonyong Lee.



DISTRIBUTION HYMN

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #490)

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence



- 1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and trem - bling stand;
 2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on earth he stood,
 3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van-guard on the way;
 4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim with sleep - less eye,



pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand
 Lord of lords in hu - man ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,
 as the Light of light, de - scend - ing from the realms of end - less day,
 veil their fac - es to the pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry:



Christ our God to earth de - scend - ing comes full hom - age to de - mand.
 he will give to all the faith - ful his own self for heav'n - ly food.
 comes, the pow'rs of hell to van - quish, as the dark - ness clears a - way.
 "Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

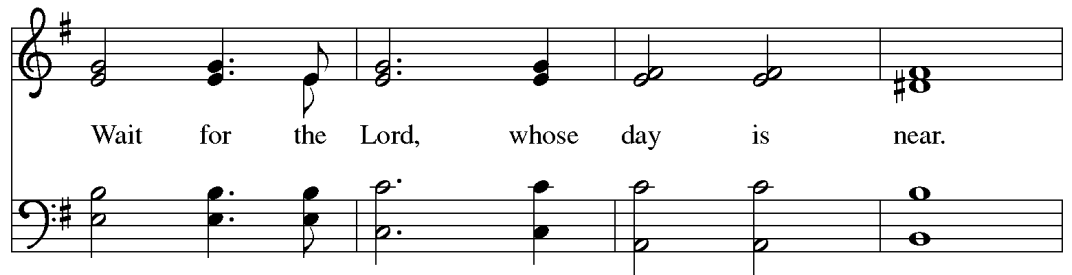
Text: Liturgy of St. James; tr. Gerard Moultrie, 1829–1885, alt.

Music: PICARDY, French folk tune, 17th cent.

DISTRIBUTION HYMN

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #262)

Wait for the Lord



Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.



Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Text: Taizé Community

Music: WAIT FOR THE LORD, Jacques Berthier, 1923-1994

Text and music © 1984 Les Presses de Taizé, GIA Publications, Inc., agent, 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638.

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Please stand as you are able.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

Pastor: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Assembly: Amen.

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Assisting Minister: Let us pray. God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus.

Assembly: Amen.



WE ARE SENT FORTH TO SERVE



We have spent the past four Sundays preparing for Christ's birth on Christmas Day, but that is not all we should prepare for. Over the past four weeks, the Advent lectionary has reminded us that we also need to be ready for the second coming of Christ.

We heard the prophet Isaiah proclaim that God will fulfill God's promise made to the house of Israel and Judah.

We heard Paul tell us to always be ready for we

SENDING HYMN

(Evangelical Lutheran Worship #264)

Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

1 Lo! he comes with clouds de - scend - ing,
 2 Now re - demp - tion, long - ex - pect - ed,
 3 Yea, a - men, let all a - dore thee,

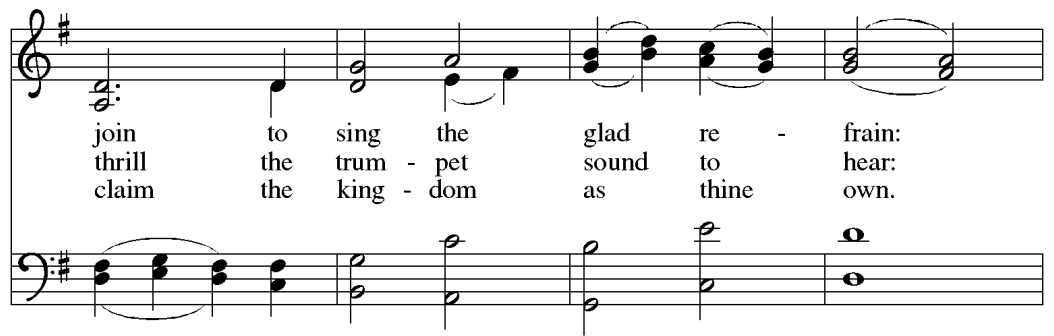
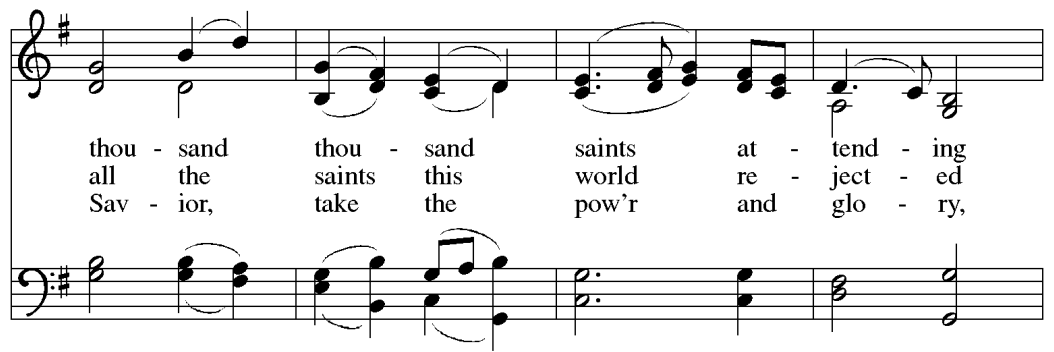
once for our sal - va - tion slain;
 comes in sol - emn splen - dor near;
 high on thine e - ter - nal throne;

do not know when
Christ is coming.

We heard John the
Baptist proclaiming that
someone greater than
him will come.

Our sending hymn
comes from these
passages.

“Lo! He Comes With
Clouds Descending” is
an Advent hymn whose
text explores John’s
description of the
second coming in
Revelation. The final
stanza of this hymn asks
God to come down and
claim God’s kingdom
just as we have been
asking during our
Advent preparation.



Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–1788, alt.
Music: HELMSLEY, Thomas Olivers, 1725–1799

BENEDICTION

Leader:

The Ancient One, enthroned, the Crucified One,
now risen, the Indwelling One, poured out, ☩
bless you now and forever.

Assembly:

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Assisting Minister: Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.

Assembly: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

As part of our continuous efforts to make worship more inclusive and sensory friendly, we ask that you refrain from applauding during worship and after the postlude.

THIS WEEK'S COMMEMORATIONS

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Friday, December 26, 2025

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

John, Apostle and Evangelist

Saturday, December 27, 2025

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

FROM THE CLOUD OF WITNESSES

[Raymond E. Brown, SS, "The Annunciation to Joseph," Worship 61 (1987), 488-89.]

The sequence in chapter 2 of Matthew will show how this New Testament Joseph, who receives revelation in dreams and goes to Egypt to save the infant, is reliving the great epic of the Old Testament figure named Joseph. The name Jesus fits into this parallelism between the Matthew story of Joseph and the Old Testament story of Joseph and Moses, for Moses' successor who completed his work by bringing Israel back to the Promised Land was also named Jesus (Joshua). Matthew has now told us that Mary has conceived this child through the Holy Spirit. The New Testament indicates clearly that the awesome, creative, life-giving power of the Spirit was associated with the resurrection of Jesus, but in the infancy narratives it is related to the very beginning of Jesus' life.

—Raymond E. Brown, SS

There are several images from art of this Sunday's gospel reading. One fine depiction was painted in the seventeenth century by Philippe de Champaigne.



There is a hearing-assistance system (induction loop) in the Sanctuary for those with hearing impairments. Please ask an usher for instructions.

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