

**Introduction to the day**

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**INVOCATION**

We gather in the name of God, the Creator of Light; + Jesus, the Light of the World; and the Holy Spirit, the Light who illumines our path. **Amen.**

**"Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah"**

**ELW #240**



3 Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban-ish dark - ness.



Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954

Music: TIF IN VELDELE, Yiddish folk tune

Text © 1984 Fortress Press. admin. Augsburg Fortress

## CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In this season of light, let us go before God and confess how our words and actions contribute to the darkness instead of adding to the light. *Silence.*

God of Love and Light,

**We confess that we are not always the light-bearers you desire us to be.**

**We shine a spotlight on the transgressions of others**

**while trying to keep our own sins hidden in the dark.**

**We burn bridges by being impatient, opinionated and judgmental.**

**We inflame others by lashing out in anger.**

**We go through our days enveloped in the gloom of fear and doubt.**

**We let our witness become a smoldering ember until it dies out completely.**

**Forgive us Jesus, the Everlasting Light.**

**Come to us, abide with us, our Lord, Emmanuel.**

**Teach us to walk as children of light, surrounded by your love, forgiveness and healing.**

**We ask this in the name of Christ. Amen.**

God is light, and in God there is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. Amen.

## GATHERING SONG

### *We Are Waiting for Jesus*

(ACS 905)



1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.



Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.  
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.



We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.  
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

Text: John Helgen, b. 1957

Music: JESUS BRINGS PEACE, John Helgen

Text and music © 2013 Augsburg Fortress

**BAPTISM (11:00)**

**GREETING**

Christ has called us to this place,  
gathered one and all by his Holy Spirit

**We are followers of Christ  
who seek to hear the Word,  
live the Word, and share the Word.**

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

**And also with you.**

**HYMN OF PRAISE**

(words by David Eck, tune "Angels We Have Heard on High")



Glo - ry be to God on high. Peace, good-will to all the earth. Let us sing a  
Love has come to dwell with us. Light now shines on ev - 'ry - one. Hope has lift - ed



joy - ful song to the Christ, the Liv - ing Word. Glo - - -  
up our hearts. Joy has made, in us, a home.



- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o; Glor -



- - - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

**SALUTATION**

The Lord be with you **And also with you.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

## SPECIAL MUSIC

5:30 Laury Detro

8:30 Praise Team

11:00 Chancel Choir

## CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

*The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.*

<sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus <sup>2</sup> it shall blossom abundantly  
and rejoice with joy and shouting.

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

They shall see the glory of the LORD,  
the majesty of our God.]]

<sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands  
and make firm the feeble knees.

<sup>4</sup> Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!

Here is your God.

He will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense.

He will come and save you."

<sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;

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

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

<sup>7</sup> the burning sand shall become a pool  
and the thirsty ground springs of water;

the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

<sup>8</sup> A highway shall be there,  
and it shall be called the Holy Way;

the unclean shall not travel on it,

but it shall be for God's people;

no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

<sup>9</sup> No lion shall be there,

nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;

they shall not be found there,

but the redeemed shall walk there.

<sup>10</sup> And the ransomed of the LORD shall return  
and come to Zion with singing;

everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;

they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10**

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down. (*Ps. 146:8*)

<sup>5</sup> Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God;

<sup>6</sup> **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;  
who keeps promises forever;**

<sup>7</sup> who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.  
The LORD sets the captive free.

<sup>8</sup> **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;  
the LORD loves the righteous.**

<sup>9</sup> The LORD cares for the stranger;  
the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

<sup>10</sup> **The LORD shall reign forever,  
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!**

**SECOND READING: James 5:7-10**

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

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains.

<sup>8</sup> You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God**

The holy gospel according to St. Matthew the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**Speak, Lord, your servants are listening!**

**GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11**

*John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.*

<sup>2</sup> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

<sup>7</sup> As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?" <sup>8</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,  
who will prepare your way before you.'

<sup>11</sup> "Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON** Pr. Sharon

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

*Prepare the Royal Highway*

(ELW 264)



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



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



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

*Refrain*



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 VÅG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.  
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

## **NICENE CREED**

**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.**

## **PEACE**

**The peace of Christ be with you always. And also with you.**

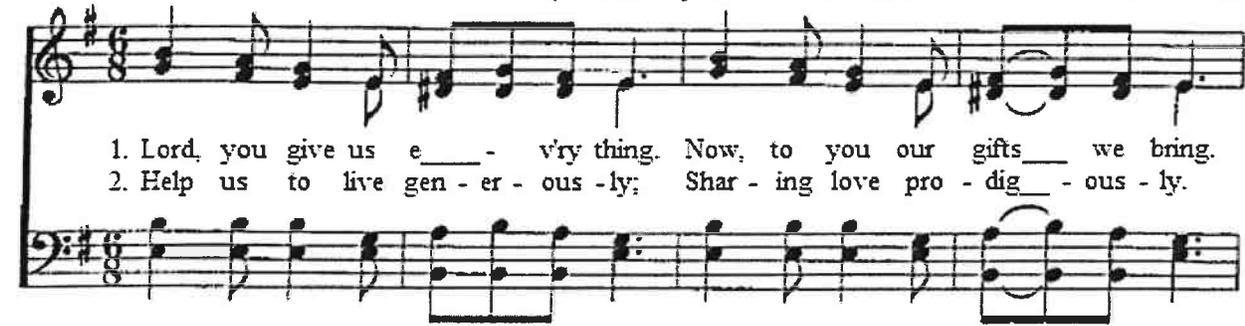
**Please greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.**

## **OFFERING**



## OFFERTORY SONG

(words by Luke Kuenzli, tune of "We Three Kings")



1. Lord, you give us e - v'ry thing. Now, to you our gifts we bring.  
2. Help us to live gen - er - ous - ly; Shar - ing love pro - dig - ous - ly.



Time and trea - sure, joy and plea - sure, songs of thanks-giv - ing sing.  
Al - ways serv - ing, faith un - swerv - ing, wor - ship - ing rev - 'rent - ly.



O \_\_\_\_\_, God of glo - ry, Lord of love, born of Ma - ry, from a - bove;



grant us grace to seek your face \_\_\_\_\_, lead us by your Heav'n-ly dove.

## OFFERING PRAYER

God of Light, our world can be a very dark place. Therefore, we offer the gifts of ourselves, our time and our resources, trusting that you will use them to set the world aglow with your loving presence. May our offerings continue to shine brightly before others so they may see our good works and give glory to you. We ask this in the name of Christ. **Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you.

God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. (*We pray especially for . . .*

Mel Satnan, Stephany Sanborn, Summer, Lyn Smith, Dana Hansen, Angie Robbins, John Robbins, Doug Knutson, Lucy Bergan, Lacey Mescher, Ann Huffman, Dawn Jensen, Dave Blasingame

Baptism: Maverick Vincent

In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant (*especially we pray for Global Refuge and Lutheran Social Services*). God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith (*especially Mary, mother of Jesus, John of the Cross and . . .*). May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

**Amen.**

## 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.**

## BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**



To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor  
 1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!  
 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:  
 3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;  
 4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



y el sur - co a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el  
 Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the  
 "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -  
 new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most  
 This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -  
 la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how  
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -  
 here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All  
 world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.  
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.  
 stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.  
 clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!  
 Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

Music: TODA LA TIERRA, Alberto Taulé

Spanish text and tune © 1993 and English text © 1995 Centro de Pastoral Litúrgica, admin. OCP Publications, 5536 NE Hassalo, Portland, OR 97213.

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace, serve the Lord.

**Thanks be to God!**

Used with permission. Rev. David Eck, Abiding Savior Lutheran Church, Fairview, NC. 2011.

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Used by permission of Augsburg Fortress under license # SB179905 Reprinted under OneLicense.net # A-703413 Used with permission. CCLI License # 1033398.