

Fourth Sunday in Advent
Sunday, December 24, 2023 – 9:00 a.m.



Welcome!

To our guests and visitors:

We are glad that you are here with us today!

If you have no church home, why don't you consider joining us? Please speak to Pastor Parrish after the service and enjoy a special gift for visiting with us today!

1. At the name of Jesus
Ev'ry knee shall bow,
Ev'ry tongue confess Him
King of glory now.
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call Him Lord,
Who from the beginning
Was the mighty Word.

2. At His voice creation
Sprang at once to sight,
All the angel faces,
All the hosts of light,
Thrones and bright dominions,
Stars upon their way,
All the heav'nly orders
In their great array.

3. Humbled for a season,
To receive a name
From the lips of sinners
Unto whom He came,
Faithfully He bore it
Spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious
When from death He passed;

4. Bore it up triumphant
With its human light,
Through all ranks of creatures
To the central height,
To the throne of Godhead,
To the Father's breast,
Filled it with the glory
Of that perfect rest.

P: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

P: Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things;

C: **His right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.**

P: The LORD has made his salvation known

C: **And revealed his righteousness to the nations.**

P: He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to the house of Israel;

C: **All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,**

P: Burst into jubilant song with music;

C: **Make music to the LORD with the harp,**

P: With the harp and the sound of singing,

C: **With trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn;**

P: Shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

C: Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.

P: Let them sing before the LORD,

C: **For he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.**

P: Lo! He comes with clouds descending.

C: **Once for every sinner slain.**

P: Thousand, thousand saints attending;

C: **Swell the triumph of his train.**

P: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

C: **Christ the Lord returns to reign!**

5. In your hearts enthrone Him;
There let Him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true:
Crown Him as your Captain
In temptation's hour;
Let His will enfold you
In its light and pow'r.

6. Christians, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again
In His Father's glory,
With His angel train;
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon His brow,
And our hearts confess Him
King of glory now.

7. Glory then to Jesus,
Who, the Prince of light,
To a world in darkness
Brought the gift of sight:
Praise to God the Father;
In the Spirit's love
Praise we all together
Him who reigns above.

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

P: Let us pray:

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that we may know Your plan of salvation and trust that nothing is impossible with You; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading

Isaiah 35:1-10

The desert and the parched land will be glad; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom. Like the crocus, ² it will burst into bloom; it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; they will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God. ³ Strengthen the feeble hands, steady the knees that give way; ⁴ say to those with fearful hearts, “Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you.”

⁵ Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. ⁶ Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert. ⁷ The burning sand will become a pool, the thirsty ground bubbling springs. In the haunts where jackals once lay, grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

⁸ And a highway will be there; it will be called the Way of Holiness; it will be for those who walk on that Way. The unclean will not journey on it; wicked fools will not go about on it. ⁹ No lion will be there, nor any ravenous beast; they will not be found there. But only the redeemed will walk there, ¹⁰ and those the LORD has rescued will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

The Epistle Reading

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ² for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³ While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴ But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵ You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night.

⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

P This is the Word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

Holy Gospel

Mark 13:32-37

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 13th chapter.

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

³² “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ³³ Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. ³⁴ It’s like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch.

³⁵ “Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. ³⁶ If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. ³⁷ What I say to you, I say to everyone: ‘Watch!’”

P This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

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.

Sermon Hymn

Hark the Glad Sound

LSB 349

1. Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
And ev'ry voice a song.
2. He comes the pris'ners to release,
In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.
3. He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor.
4. Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav'n's eternal arches ring
With Thy belovèd name.

**Sermon
Offering**

Faithful Watching and Waiting

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Prayers

P: Watchful at all times, let us pray for strength to stand with confidence before our Maker and Redeemer. That God may bring with his kingdom grace and forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord:

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: That we may be self-controlled, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet, let us pray to the Lord:

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: That we may live in holy confidence because God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation, let us pray to the Lord:

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: That as all sons of the light and sons of the day we may not be like others, who are asleep, but alert and self-controlled; let us pray to the Lord:

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: That God would bind up the brokenhearted, restore the sick and raise up all who have fallen, let us pray to the Lord:

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: That we may shine forth as lights for the world, encouraging all with the certainty of Christ's return, let us pray to the Lord:

C: Lord, have mercy.

P: Yea, amen, let all adore Thee.

C: High on Thine eternal throne.

P: Savior take the power and glory,

C: Claim the kingdom as your own.

P: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

C: Thou shalt reign and Thou alone!

Confession and Absolution

P: “You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.” (1 Thessalonians 5:5) And yet, O Lord, we have much to confess:

C: **Forgive us, O Lord;**

P: For the sins of the night;

C: **For clinging to the darkness.**

P: For secret and hidden sins,

C: **For the sins we have done to please ourselves;**

P: And for the sins we have done to please others.

C: **Forgive those sins which we know**

P: And those sins which we do not know.

C: **Forgive our sins of apathy;**

P: Callous indifference,

C: **Shriveling submission,**

P: Failure to protest injustice,

C: **Forgive our sins of greed,**

P: Giving only what we can spare,

C: **Hoarding smiles and love and mercy. And in it all, forgetting you, O God.**

P: Believe and receive the Gospel! “God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thessalonians 5:9) Your sins are forgiven, forgotten and drowned in the sea of Christ’s cleansing blood.

C: **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

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

The Words of Our Lord

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My ✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Pax Domini

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P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

Agnus Dei

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C O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world away;
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,
Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.

O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God,
You take the sin of the world away;
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ,
And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

1. Lo, how a rose e'er blooming
 From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming
 As prophets long have sung,
It came, a flow'ret bright,
 Amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.

2. Isaiah 'twas foretold it,
 The rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it,
 The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright,
 She bore to us a Savior,
When half-spent was the night.

3. This flow'r, whose fragrance tender
 With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor
 The darkness ev'rywhere.
True man, yet very God,
 From sin and death He saves us
And lightens ev'ry load.

4. O Savior, child of Mary,
 Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of glory,
 Who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length we pray
 To the bright courts of heaven,
And to the endless day.

Post-Communion Collect

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

People: Amen.

Benediction (1 Thessalonians 5:23–24)

Pastor: “May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

People: **The one who calls us is faithful and he will do it.”**

Closing Hymn **Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love** **LSB 900**

- 1 Jesus! Name of wondrous love,
 Name all other names above,
 Unto which must ev’ry knee
 Bow in deep humility.
- 2 Jesus! Name decreed of old,
 To the maiden mother told,
 Kneeling in her lowly cell,
 By the angel Gabriel.
- 3 Jesus! Name of priceless worth
 To the fallen of the earth
 For the promise that it gave,
 “Jesus shall His people save.”

- 4 Jesus! Name of mercy mild,
Given to the holy Child
When the cup of human woe
First He tasted here below.
- 5 Jesus! Only name that's giv'n
Under all the mighty heav'n
Whereby those to sin enslaved
Burst their fetters and are saved.
- 6 Jesus! Name of wondrous love,
Human name of God above;
Pleading only this, we flee
Helpless, O our God, to Thee.