

**St. Olaf Lutheran Church
Sunday, December 21, 2025
Fourth Sunday of Advent**

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.

Welcome & Announcements

***Confession and Forgiveness**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, \dagger one God,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God,
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.

God judges us not as we deserve,
but according to God's own righteousness.

\dagger You are freed and forgiven,
saved by grace,
and ready to welcome the Savior.

Amen.

***Hymn** *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* **ELW 254**

Please be seated.

Advent Candle Lighting – Revelation and Peace

Scripture: Isaiah 9:6-7

Candle lighting: Today we relight the candles of expectation of expectation and hope, recalling God's promise; the candle of Preparation, remembering the voice crying in the wilderness, urging the people to prepare the way of the coming Lord; and the candle of Proclamation, reminding us of the joy found in HIM. Now we light the candle of Revelation and Peace. We celebrate the announcement of the coming King and the greatness of God's love reveled through Christ the child.

Light all four candles – *The candles are for Hope, Faith, Joy, and Peace*

***Song** *Light the Advent Candle*

Candle 1

Light the Advent candle one
Now the waiting has begun
We have started on our way
Time to think of Christmas day.

Chorus

Candle, candle burning bright
Shining in the cold winter night
Candle, candle burning bright
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

Candle 2

Light the Advent candle two
Think of humble shepherds who
Filled with wonder at the sight
Of the child on Christmas night.

Chorus

Candle, candle burning bright
Shining in the cold winter night
Candle, candle burning bright
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

Candle 3

Light the Advent candle three
Think of heavenly harmony
Angels singing "Peace on Earth"

At the Blessed Saviour's birth.

Chorus:

Candle, candle burning bright
Shining in the cold winter night
Candle, candle burning bright
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

Candle 4

Light the Advent candle four
Think of Joy forever more
Christ child in a stable born
Gift of love that Christmas morn.

Chorus:

Candle, candle burning bright
Shining in the cold winter night
Candle, candle burning bright
Fill our hearts with Christmas light.

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

C: And also with you.

***Prayer of the Day**

P: Gracious Father... we thank you for revealing yourself through Jesus, and we praise you for the greatness of your love. Help us to share your peace with others and live our lives more like Christ every day. In His name we pray. Amen.

Please be seated.

Gift Blessing

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

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.”

L: Word of God. Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God

Psalm: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

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

² **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, ¹ and Manasseh,**
 stir up your strength and ¹ come to help us.

³ Restore ¹ us, O God;
 let your face shine upon us, and we ¹ shall be saved.

⁴ **O Lord ¹ God of hosts,**
 how long will your anger fume when your ¹ people pray?

⁵ You have fed them with the ¹ bread of tears;
 you have given them bowls of ¹ tears to drink.

⁶ **You have made us the derision ¹ of our neighbors,**
 and our enemies laugh ¹ us to scorn.

⁷ Restore us, O ¹ God of hosts;
 let your face shine upon us, and we ¹ shall be saved.

¹⁷ **Let your hand be upon the one at ¹ your right hand,**
 the one you have made so strong ¹ for yourself.

¹⁸ And so will we never turn a- ¹ way from you;
 give us life, that we may call up- ¹ on your name.

¹⁹ **Restore us, O Lord ¹ God of hosts;**
 let your face shine upon us, and we ¹ shall be saved.

Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7

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.

L: Word of God. Word of Life

C: Thanks be to God

***Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)**

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***Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 1st chapter

C: 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.

P: The gospel of our Lord

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

Children's Sermon

Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez

Sermon

Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez

Hymn *Lord of All Hopefulness*

ELW 765

***Apostles Creed**

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*** Prayers of Intercession**

God of grace,

Hear our prayer.

***Peace** (*Feel free to share a handshake or hug*)

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

P: Please share with one another a sign of Christ's peace.

Offering: *Please consider giving an offering for the mission and ministry of St. Olaf. We can continue to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ with your support and generosity. God bless you. Also, please pass the attendance sheets down your row and fill out your info.*

***Offering prayer**

Nourishing God,

you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,

that we may rejoice and be for the world

signs of your kingdom come.

Amen.

*** Great Thanksgiving & Holy, Holy, Holy**

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***Words of Institution**

***Lord's Prayer**

Holy Communion Here is life. God is with us. Come, receive what God has promised.

Communion Hymns

O Come, O Come Emmanuel

ELW 257

***Prayer After Communion**

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.

Amen.

***Blessing**

May God who comes among us,
Father, [†] Son, and Holy Spirit,
grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,
and good news to share today and always.

Amen.

***Hymn** *Joy to the World*

ELW 267

***Dismissal**

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

Assisting in Worship

Presider: Pastor Jim McColley

Assisting: Pastor Emily Sauer-Alvarez

Organist: Jason Swedlund

Reader: Stacy Hendrickson

Ushers: Randy Puls, Vera Hartman, Doug Kinseth

Communion: Rick and Mary Kuhlman

Communion setup: Ashley Kuker and Marcia Kuker

Tech: Marc Matthes