

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod



Vespers Service

December 3, 2025
10:00am

3000 West Main Street
Kalamazoo, MI 49006

MIDWEEK OF ADVENT 1

VESPERS

EVERGREENS

“Prepare!” is often the watchword of the season as the world gets ready for another celebration of Christmas. An integral part of any preparation is decoration. We see decorations everywhere this time of year. The world may not comprehend the real meaning of Christmas, but even secular preparations use many of the same decorations beloved by Christians—an appropriation we shouldn’t mind at all, because these decorations point us to Christ. This year, as we look forward again to the coming of the Messiah, we take a fresh look at how the adornments of the season draw our eyes to Jesus, that we may more richly behold the love, peace, joy, and hope He comes to bring as this beauty is set before us.



Tonight, we focus on evergreens. Perhaps the most innocuous decorations in the eyes of the world, their prickles remind us of the crown of thorns, and the berries of the holly evoke the blood-stained brow of our crucified Lord. Above all, the steadfastness of their green in the midst of death symbolizes life amid death—and the life eternal Jesus won for us on the cross.

OPENING SENTENCES

Pastor: O Lord, open my lips,

Cong: and my mouth will declare Your praise.

Pastor: Make haste, O God, to deliver me;

Cong: make haste to help me, O Lord.

Cong: 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.

Praise to You, O Christ, King who comes to save us.

+ PSALMODY +

PSALM

PSALM 92

Lector: It is good to give thanks to the Lord,

Cong: to sing praises to your name, O Most High;

Lector: to declare your steadfast love in the morning,

Cong: and your faithfulness by night,

Lector: to the music of the lute and the harp,

Cong: to the melody of the lyre.

Lector: For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work;

Cong: at the works of your hands I sing for joy.

Lector: How great are your works, O Lord!

Cong: Your thoughts are very deep!

Lector: The stupid man cannot know;

Cong: the fool cannot understand this:

Lector: that though the wicked sprout like grass

Cong: and all evildoers flourish,

Lector: they are doomed to destruction forever;
Cong: but you, O Lord, are on high forever.

Lector: For behold, your enemies, O Lord,
Cong: for behold, your enemies shall perish;

Lector: all evildoers shall be scattered.
Cong: But you have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox;

Lector: you have poured over me fresh oil.
Cong: My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies;

Lector: my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants.
Cong: The righteous flourish like the palm tree

Lector: and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
Cong: They are planted in the house of the Lord;

Lector: they flourish in the courts of our God.
Cong: They still bear fruit in old age;

Lector: they are ever full of sap and green,
Cong: to declare that the Lord is upright;

Lector: he is my rock,
Cong: and there is no unrighteousness in him.

HYMN

“PEOPLE, LOOK EAST”

WOV 626

+ READINGS +

FIRST READING

HOSEA 14:4–8

Lector: A reading from Hosea, the fourteenth chapter.

I will heal their apostasy;
I will love them freely,
for My anger has turned from them.
I will be like the dew to Israel;
he shall blossom like the lily;
he shall take root like the trees of Lebanon;
his shoots shall spread out;
his beauty shall be like the olive,
and his fragrance like Lebanon.
They shall return and dwell beneath my shadow;
they shall flourish like the grain;
they shall blossom like the vine;
their fame shall be like the wine of Lebanon.
O Ephraim, what have I to do with idols?
It is I who answer and look after you.
I am like an evergreen cypress;
from Me comes your fruit.

Lector: O Lord, have mercy on us.

Cong: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

REVELATION 22:1–5

Lector: A reading from Revelation, the twenty-second chapter.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His servants will worship Him.

They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

Lector: O Lord, have mercy on us.

Cong: **Thanks be to God.**

THIRD READING

JOHN 11:17–27

Pastor: A reading from John, the eleventh chapter.

Now when Jesus came, He found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met Him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask from God, God will give You.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴Martha said to Him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.”

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?” She said to Him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

Pastor: O Lord, have mercy on us.

Cong: **Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSORY FOR ADVENT

Pastor: Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch.

Cong: **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

Pastor: In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely.

Cong: **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

Pastor: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

Cong: **This is the name by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.**

HYMN

THE ADVENT OF OUR KING

LSB331

(v. 1-4 ONLY)



1 The ad - vent of our King Our prayers must now em - ploy,
2 The ev - er - last - ing Son In - car - nate deigns to be,
3 O Zi - on's daugh - ter, rise To meet your low - ly King,
4 As judge, on clouds of light, He soon will come a - gain



And we must hymns of wel - come sing In strains of ho - ly joy.
Him - self a ser - vant's form puts on To set His ser - vants free.
Nor let your faith - less heart de - spise The peace He comes to bring.
And His true mem - bers all u - nite With Him in heav'n to reign.

Text and tune: Public domain

SERMON

REV. JOSHUA GROTELUESCHEN

+ CANTICLE +

ANTIPHON

Pastor: Let my prayer rise before You as incense,

Cong: and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

MAGNIFICAT

Pastor: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior;

Cong: for He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.

Pastor: For behold, from this day all generations will call me blessed.

Cong: For the Mighty One has done great things to me, and holy is His name;

Pastor: and His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

Cong: He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Pastor: He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has exalted the lowly.

Cong: He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent empty away.

Pastor: He has helped His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed forever.

Cong: 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.

+ PRAYER +

KYRIE

Cong: **Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Cong: **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.**

COLLECTS

Pastor: O Lord, hear my prayer.

Cong: **And let my cry come to You.**

Pastor: For eyes to behold the Father's hand in all creation, let us pray to the
Lord:

Cong: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For awareness of beauty and the living traditions of the church that
bring Christ to our eyes through arts and crafts, let us pray to the Lord:

Cong: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: That we may see the signs of Christ's return even as we celebrate His birth, and encourage one another all the more as we see the Day drawing near, let us pray to the Lord:

Cong: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That we may be living testimonies of new life in Christ through our loving service to our neighbor—both in word and in deed, let us pray to the Lord:

Cong: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That we may be thankful for the bountiful harvest we enjoy amid the many festivities of this season, and be generous to the poor, let us pray to the Lord:

Cong: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That we may love one another as God so loved us, forgive one another, and work together in the unity we have in Christ Jesus, let us pray to the Lord:

Cong: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: That we may not be lured into temptation or despair or be distracted by the false Christmases around us, but always hold the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord:

Cong: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, that by Your protection we may be rescued from the threatening perils of our sins and saved by Your mighty deliverance; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Cong: Amen.

Pastor: Lord of all beauty, You made the heavens and the earth; the world and all its fullness are Yours. Thank You for giving us life and filling creation with signs that declare Your glory. As we behold beautiful evergreens this season, fix our eyes on their thorny leaves and red berries that we may give thanks for the crown Your Son wore and the cross He bore for us. Abide in us always, as we abide in Your Word and take heart in the promise of eternal life with Jesus, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

Cong: Amen.

Pastor: Lord of life, You sent Your Son to bring back to life all the children of Adam. Grant that we may view the evergreens of this season through the eyes of faith so that in a world still filled with death, we may be of good courage, knowing that, just as the evergreen prevails over death in winter, we prevail over the winter of our sin and will rise to life eternal on the Last Day; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Cong: Amen.

COLLECT FOR PEACE

Pastor: O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Cong: Amen.

BENEDICAMUS

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

Cong: Thanks be to God.

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.

Cong: Amen.

HYMN

LSB 357:1, 4

“O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL”

1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som
4 O come, Thou Branch of Jes - se's tree, Free them from
cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly
Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny That trust Thy might - y
ex - ile here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
pow'r to save, And give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.
Refrain
Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el
Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

Text and tune: Public domain



ILLNESS/SPECIAL NEED:

GRIEF:

THANKSGIVING:

HOMEBOUND: Marian Brugh, Ellen Plano, John Curtiss, and Jerome Dirst.

IMMANUEL PRAYER LIST

LONG TERM CONCERNS

Rose Maxum , requested by Chuck and Amber Townsend	Susan & Gregory Fritz , Stephanie Beck's parents
Amy Stillwell , sister of Dave Reynolds and daughter of Mary Reynolds	Mary Ann Massey , friend of Dotty Smith
Bob Perri , brother of Phil Perri	Craig Rennhack , requested by Bob & Maryalice Reck
John Blasko , requested by Elizabeth Blasko	Mindy Mitchell , sister of Shelly Reynolds
Kyle Reinbold Family , requested by Kyle's sister, Sonya DeVary	James Leo Brown , requested by Shelly and Dave Reynolds
Karen McDougall , requested by Sue Steuer	Jim Sabo , friend of Susan Steuer
Katie VerKow , former member of Immanuel, requested by Phil Roekle	Lucille and Lawrence Fritz, requested by Jonathan Fritz
Vicki Dilley , requested by Christa & Phil Perri	Bill Brink , Christie Sidwell's brother
Joanne Cleason , Esther Cleason's daughter	Melissa , friend of Dotty Smith and daughter Laura
Marie Winberg , godmother of Bill Bennett	Hannah Bayer , requested by her father
Lisa and David Wentzel , Sue Steuer's cousins	Jerry and Sandi McKenzie , friends of Dotty Smith
Ware Washam , requested by Brian Long	Sandy Hale , requested by Stephen Presdorf
Caroline Barkow	Jeri Noneman
Gene Jennings	Kay Hecht , John Hecht's mother
Loren Gerber , Sue Anderson's father	Beth Mitchell
Sharon S. , requested by Dotty Smith	Charlie Miller , Marian Brugh's brother
Ruth Krueger	Jason , son-in-law of Sue & Craig Anderson
Deb , friend of Sue Steuer	Karen Petersen , daughter of Cathy & Tom Mollet
Sophie Rose Verile , Brindley's grandniece	Justin Nickels , requested by Justin Beck
Linda & Scott Spurlock , req. by Esther C.	Marilyn Borgeson , Annie Hecht's grandmother
Merry Linn , Sally Crawford's sister	Lynne Partridge , friend of Christa Perri
Mae Westphal , Vivian's & Wayne's granddaughter	Gus Reck , 3 y.o. grandson of Bob & Maryalice Reck
Thomas Nault , Sue Wagner's cousin	Otto , Pastor Quardokus' grandson
Candace Graham , former ILC member	Theo Yoakam , Cheryl Schreiber's great grandson
Kim N., Kim M., Emilie H., & Sydney B. , all friends of Kim Sharp; and River Lint	
All Crossroads Prison Ministry students from all congregations around the country	
Immanuel members: Gail Stewart, Dolly Bryan, Shelly Reynolds, Tina Lauer, Jerome Dirst & John Miller	

CHURCH CALENDAR

December's MISSION: LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

SUNDAY	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
30 8:30AM CHOIR PRACTICE 9:15AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10 AM COMMUNION SERVICE 11:30AM BIBLE STUDY W/ PASTOR	DEC 1	2 10AM WILLS' BIBLE STUDY @ILC 5:00-6:00PM CONFIRMATION CLASS 5:30PM MARY/MARTHA 7:00PM BAUMGART BIBLE STUDY @ ILC	3 7:00PM MID-WEEK ADVENT SERVICE	4	5	6
7 8:30AM CHOIR PRACTICE 9:15AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10 AM COMMUNION SERVICE 11:30AM BIBLE STUDY W/ PASTOR	8	9 6:30AM MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST 9AM-12PM CIRCUIT WINKEL 10AM WILLS' BIBLE STUDY @ILC 5:00-6:00PM CONFIRMATION CLASS 7:00PM BAUMGART BIBLE STUDY @ ILC	10 7:00PM MID-WEEK ADVENT SERVICE	11	12	13 10AM-12PM "EASE INTO CHRISTMAS" w/ MARY & MARTHA GUILD
14 8:30AM CHOIR PRACTICE 9:15AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10 AM COMMUNION SERVICE 11:30AM BIBLE STUDY W/ PASTOR	15	16 10AM WILLS' BIBLE STUDY @ILC 5:00-6:00PM CONFIRMATION CLASS 7:00PM BAUMGART BIBLE STUDY @ ILC	17 7:00PM MID-WEEK ADVENT SERVICE	18	19	20
21 8:30AM CHOIR PRACTICE 9:15AM SUNDAY SCHOOL 10 AM COMMUNION SERVICE 11:30AM BIBLE STUDY W/ PASTOR	22	23	24 3PM CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION SERVICE 7PM CHRISTMAS EVE COMMUNION SERVICE	25 9AM CHRISTMAS MORNING COMMUNION SERVICE	26	27



THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Our Belief and Practice

Our congregation believes that Holy Communion is a gift of Christ to His Church. Out of loving concern for the communicants and our understanding of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, we request that those who commune here:

1. Be Baptized Christians.
2. Are mature enough to examine themselves, recognizing their sin and their need for God's grace. (*1 Corinthians 11:28*)
3. Believe that in Holy Communion they receive Christ's body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine for the gracious remission of their sins. (*Matthew 26:26-28*)
3. Do so without giving offense to others. (i.e., Willing to forgive and be reconciled) (*Matthew 18:15-17*)

Guests of the congregation, who are instructed in Luther's Small Catechism, are welcome to receive Holy Communion. All others are asked to speak with the pastor regarding the sacrament. Non-communing children may join their parents. Communicants may choose from the Common Cup or individual cups.

Serving Today at Immanuel Lutheran Church

Rev. Joshua Grotelueschen, Pastor

Cell Ph. (608) 290-9837

Email: Pastorg.ilckalamazoo@gmail.com

Ailene Buchtrup, Secretary

Sara McGarvey, Music Director

Nick Kogon, Violinist

AnnMarie Miller, Sound Technician

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Sunday worship services are available on Facebook Live and YouTube!