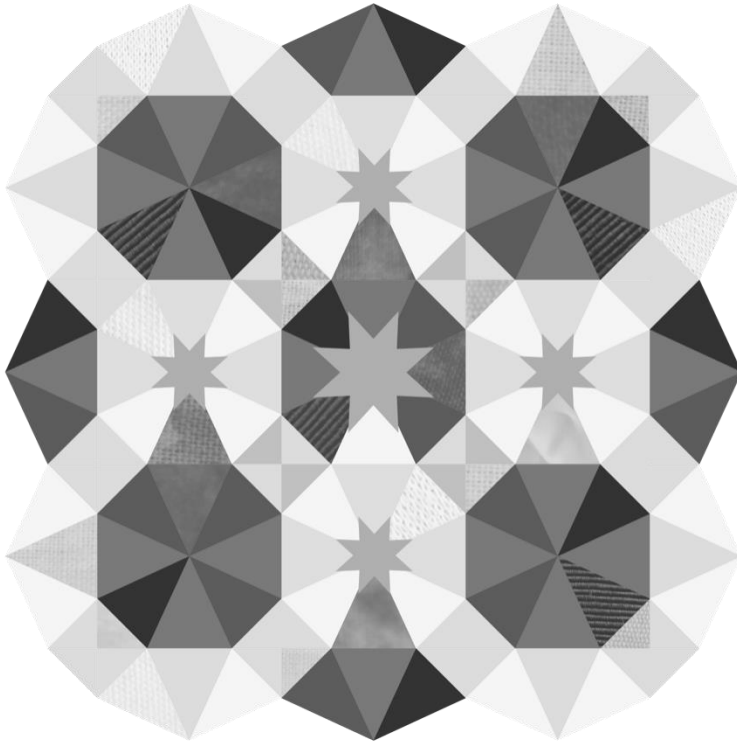


# Fourth Sunday of Advent

St. Andrew Lutheran Church

December 22, 2024



FOR THE **BEGINNING**

— HOPE IS WORTH THE RISK —

# Welcome to St. Andrew!

At St. Andrew Lutheran Church, we strive to be a loving and welcoming community of faith. We are centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ, who calls us to reconciliation and wholeness in a world of alienation and brokenness.

All are welcome, without exception, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental ability, education, income, or family status.

All are welcome here to worship God, receive the sacraments, and share in fellowship, leadership, and service. We commit to treasuring one another's similarities and differences as one body in Christ.

We are called to provide a safe space in the community as we break down the barriers of isolation. We will continue to discover what it means to be "Reconciling in Christ."

"Welcome one another therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."  
- Romans 15:7

## Orientation to the Service

**This bulletin** will guide you through the entire service. Started on page 3, words printed in **bold** are for everyone to say aloud together. Instructions and information are printed in *italics*.

**Hymns (songs)** are found in the hymnals in the pew racks in front of your seat.

ELW = Evangelical Lutheran Worship (red hymnal)

ACS = All Creation Sings (blue hymnal)

**Green-topped Welcome Cards** are found in the pew racks in front of your seat. We would love for guests, visitors, and anyone in need of prayer or more information about the church to fill one out. Please place it in the offering plate or hand it to an usher after the service.

**Children are welcome in worship!** God put the wiggle in children, so please do not feel you have to shush or suppress those wiggles in God's house. All are welcome here! Consider sitting toward the front where it is easier for children to see and hear what is happening in the service. There are worship activity bags available for children just outside the sanctuary, and a staffed nursery is available for very young ones. Ask an usher if you need help locating it.

**Restrooms** can be found by exiting the back of the sanctuary and turning right. Walk straight until you pass the coffee bar, and you will find the women's and men's restrooms to your right. A gender-neutral, ADA-compliant restroom will be found to your left, near the entrance to the kitchen.

**Online access** to the bulletin and hymns: [standrewlutheran.com/worship/worship-bulletins/](http://standrewlutheran.com/worship/worship-bulletins/)



## INTRODUCTION

*Hope is vulnerable and can feel like a tremendous risk, especially if you've experienced loss or trauma. But Mary shows us a resilient hope that takes risks – she risks her body to bear a son who will become the hope of her people. Similarly, Joseph makes a risky choice to stay with Mary; dismissing her quietly would have kept him safe. But instead, he chooses hope. He chooses to trust the angel, and it makes all the difference. It can feel safer and easier to be a cynic, but the world doesn't need more cynics. It needs people who say, "It can be better" and make it so.*

## PRELUDE

"Meditation on 'Kingsfold'"  
Susan Werner Reiser, piano

arr. Mark Albrecht

## **GATHERING**

*THE HOLY SPIRIT CALLS US TOGETHER AS THE PEOPLE OF GOD.*

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## WELCOME

*The congregation may stand.*

## CALL TO WORSHIP

In this weary world,

**we sing of joy.**

In this fragile world,

**we lift each other up.**

In this beautiful world,

**we look for God.**

In this tender world,

**we hold onto hope.**

This is the invitation of faith. So in this time of worship,  
may we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto our with-us God.

**With hope in our hearts, amen!**

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings love. We are  
5 wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings love. Sun of  
9 love now shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your pro - mise. We are  
13 wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings love.

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

**Let us begin with tenderness.**

**Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve.**

**Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope.**

**Let us begin with love.**

Yes, let us start with love.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

**May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone.**

**May the truth in these lights help us begin again.**

May it be so!

**Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness (ELW 251)

GREETING

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.**

## PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Let us pray.

Holy God, the stories of Advent are stories many of us have heard before. We've arranged the nativity scenes. We've read the children's books. We've seen the movies. We've sung the songs. But as we come to your scripture this morning, we pray: Help us begin again. Clear the distractions from our minds. Center us in this space. Move through the protective barriers we surround ourselves with and speak to us here and now. We are listening. We are hopeful.

**Amen.**

*The congregation is seated.*

## WORD

*GOD SPEAKS TO US IN SCRIPTURE READING, PREACHING, AND SONG.*

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Pastor Allison Bengfort

READING

Matthew 1:18-25

A reading from Matthew.

<sup>18</sup>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 with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. <sup>20</sup>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. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup>When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, <sup>25</sup>but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

*The congregation may stand.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

People, Look East (ELW 248, verse 4)

**Angels announce with shouts of mirth him who brings new life to earth.  
Set ev'ry peak and valley humming with the word, the Lord is coming.  
People, look east, and sing today – Love, the Lord, is on the way.**

GOSPEL

Luke 1:46-55

The holy gospel according to Luke.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>46</sup>Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup>for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; <sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. <sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. <sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. <sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; <sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. <sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, <sup>55</sup>according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*The congregation is seated.*

SERMON

Sister India Jensen Kerr

## CONTEMPLATION

*During this time of quiet reflection, you are invited to focus on the divine presence among us. May it wrap you up in love, like your favorite quilt or blanket. You are invited to move about the space or remain in your seat. You may choose to engage in one or more of the following contemplative practices:*

- *Contemplative walking (aisles between and around the pews)*
- *Candle lighting (back of the sanctuary)*
- *Visio Divina, a.k.a. contemplation through visual art (back of the sanctuary)*
- *Prayer around the altar (kneelers and kneeling cushions at the front)*
- *Finger Labyrinth Meditation (handouts in basket by Chrismon tree)*
- *Poetry, Visio Divina, or Reflection (p. 27-34 in the Devotional Booklet in the pew rack in front of your seat)*

*At the end of the contemplation time, the cantor will lead us in singing the mantra below. Please return to your pew during the singing.*

The image shows a musical score for a contemplative mantra. It consists of two systems of music, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 2/4. The lyrics are: "Hope is worth the risk, hold on - to God." and "Hope is worth the risk God holds on <sup>3</sup>- to us." The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords in the right hand. The vocal line is simple and melodic, with a fermata over the word "God" in the first system and a triplet over "on" in the second system.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Lord, in your mercy,  
**show us how to hope.**

## SHARING OF THE PEACE

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

*All are invited to share a sign of peace with one another (handshake, hug, peace sign, etc.).  
Placing your hands together in a praying position will signal to those around you that you  
prefer not to physically touch others.*

*The congregation is seated.*

## OUR MINISTRY AND MISSION

### ***MEAL***

*GOD FEEDS US WITH THE PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.*

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## INVITATION TO OFFERING

In worship, we offer our full selves to God, the Source of all that is. We give thanks for the financial resources we have been granted through God's grace to steward in this life. As an act of gratitude and faith, we share these financial resources with our church community.

*Contributions to St. Andrew Lutheran Church may be placed in the offering plate or made online ([standrewlutheran.com/give](http://standrewlutheran.com/give)). Thank you for your generosity!*

## OFFERING

"Puer Natus Est"  
Sanctuary Choir

arr. Andrea Ramsey

Puer natus est nobis, alleluia, unde gaudet Jerusalem, Alleluia.  
A child is born in Bethlehem, alleluia, therefore rejoice, Jerusalem, alleluia.  
Puer natus est nobis, alleluia, Deo dicamus gratias, alleluia.  
A Son is given on this day, alleluia, rejoice before the Lord and pray, alleluia.

*The congregation may stand.*



## OFFERTORY PRAYER

Creator God, you made the whole world, even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us. We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine. Strengthen us with this food that we may live in expectation for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

### LORD'S PRAYER

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

*The congregation is seated.*

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

God feeds us with tender mercy. Come to the table.

*All are invited to commune without exception! At the direction of an usher, those wishing to commune may proceed down the center aisle. A piece of gluten-free bread will be placed in your hands. You may dip the bread in the cup of wine (red chalice) or the cup of grape juice (light-colored chalice), or you may choose to partake of the bread only. If you prefer not to receive communion but would like to receive a blessing, please cross your arms across your chest to indicate this preference. If you would like to receive communion in your seat, please alert an usher, and the elements will be brought to you.*

COMMUNION SONG      O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW 257, verses 7 & 8)

**O come, O King of nations, come, O Cornerstone that binds in one:  
refresh the hearts that long for you; restore the broken, make us new.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.**

DISTRIBUTION HYMN      Filled with Hope and Gratitude (ACS 907)

*The congregation may stand.*

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Nourishing God, you have welcomed us at your table where all are welcomed, all are seen, all are fed. Thank you for giving us this glimpse of your kingdom. Thank you for planting hope deep in our bones. Thank you for meeting us in ordinary bread and wine to remind us that it's never too late to build your kingdom here. We are grateful. We are so grateful.

**Amen.**

## BLESSING

As you leave this place, may you have the wisdom to lean on one another. May you have the courage to hold onto hope, the compassion to do the good that is yours to do, and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing. For in a world full of dead ends, Advent invites us to begin again. So start here. Start now. Start with love and begin again. In the name of the Creator, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

## SENDING HYMN

Soon and Very Soon (ELW 439)

## DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Dare to hope.  
**Thanks be to God!**

## POSTLUDE

“Soon and Very Soon”  
Susan Werner Reiser, piano

arr. Phillip Keveren

## Serving in Worship

Presider: Pastor Allison Bengfort  
Preacher: Sister India Jensen Kerr  
Assisting Minister: LuAnn Staul  
Acolyte:  
Altar Flowers:  
Altar Guild: Susan Werner Reiser  
Cantor: Kristie Gladhill  
Communion Assistant:  
Sister India Jensen Kerr  
Greeter:  
Lector: Kristie Gladhill  
Musicians: Susan Werner Reiser;  
Allison Katsufakis, marimba

Nursery Assistant: Sonja Ackman  
Sanctuary Choir: Gretchen Bancroft,  
Pat Christiansen, Kristie Gladhill,  
Liz Hardy, Julie Larson,  
John Reiser, Lynn Santelmann,  
Janet Vorvick, Carol Werner  
Tech Team: Paul Navarre,  
Chase Isaacson  
Ushers: Noelle & Tom Mehlhorn  
Worship Coordinator:  
Zoom Host: Marlan Bell



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