

Third Sunday of Advent
December 17, 2023
8:30am Worship



Central Lutheran Church
1857 Potter Street
Eugene, Oregon
541-345-0395
www.welcometocentral.org

Welcome to Worship!

Central Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Oregon Synod, is a Reconciling in Christ community: We affirm that Christ has made us one body with many members, all sharing in God's wondrous grace and unconditional love. We celebrate both the human variation and inclusive unity of God's family. Following Jesus' example, we embrace all of God's people regardless of ethnicity, physical and mental abilities, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or economic circumstance. With welcoming hearts, we invite you to join us in worship, fellowship, and ministry.

Our mission is to be the hands and feet of Jesus by *loving* God and one another, *nurturing* faithful living, *servicing* those in need, and *sharing* the Gospel.

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CALL TO WORSHIP

The Carillon

PRELUDE

WELCOME

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS (*please stand as you are able*)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who comes to wake us from sleep, who leads us into the light of grace. **Amen.**

Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

God of grace and mercy, **we confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us. We ignore our neighbors in need and fail in the labor of justice and peace. In your mercy forgive us. Grant us wisdom to welcome your light and to seek the things that will endure until Christ comes again in glory. Amen.**

“Comfort, O comfort my people,” says our God. In † Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven and all things are made new. Rejoice in this good news! **Amen.**



PROCESSIONAL CAROL #435 Lo! He Comes with Clouds Descending

1 Lo! he comes with clouds de - scend - ing, once for our sal -
 2 Now re - demp - tion long - ex - pect - ed, comes in sol - emn
 √3 Yea, a - men, let all a - dore thee, high on thine e -

va - tion slain; thou - sand thou - sand saints at -
 splen - dor near; all the saints this world re -
 ter - nal throne; Sav - ior, take the pow'r and

tend - ing join to sing the glad re - frain:
 ject - ed thrill the trum - pet sound to hear:
 glo - ry claim the king - dom as thine own.

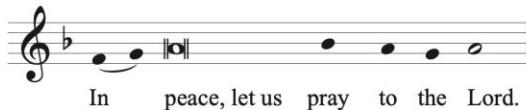
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -
 Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, al - le -

lu - ia, Christ the Lord re - turns to reign.
 lu - ia, See the day of and God ap - pear!
 lu - ia, Thou shalt reign, and thou al - lone!

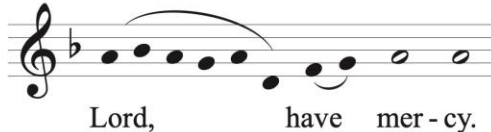
GREETING

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.**

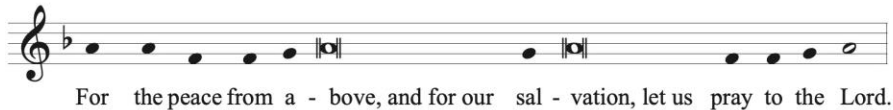
KYRIE



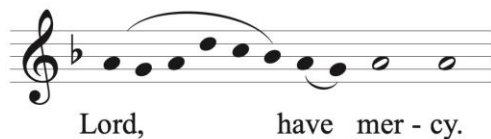
In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



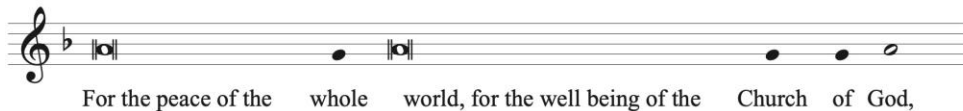
Lord, have mer-cy.



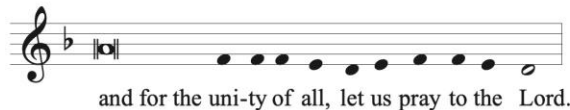
For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



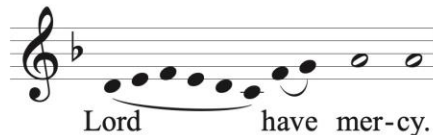
Lord, have mer - cy.



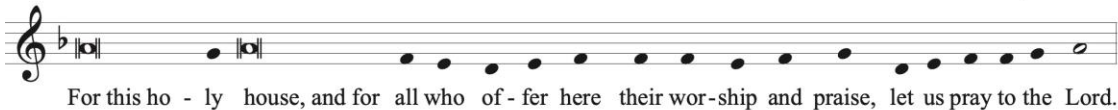
For the peace of the whole world, for the well being of the Church of God,



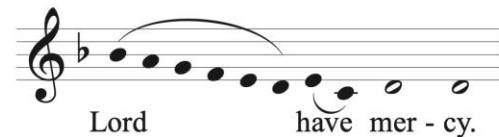
and for the uni-ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



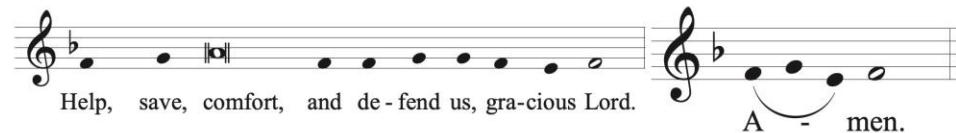
Lord have mer-cy.



For this ho - ly house, and for all who of - fer here their wor-ship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord. A - men.

The Canticle of Praise is omitted during Advent until we join the angels singing "Glory to God in the highest" on Christmas.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. **Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.** (*please be seated*)

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH CANDLES

Three candles are lit as we sing...

HYMN Light One Candle



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



He ___ shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el God ful-fills the prom - ise.
He ___ shall feed the flock like a shep - herd, gent - ly lead them home - ward.
Lift ___ your heads and lift high the gate - way for the King of glo - ry.

PRAYER

Let us pray. We praise you, O God for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As these candles glow among us, strengthen our hearts while we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near. **Amen.**

FIRST READING Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Though the people had returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon, they continued to face hardship and oppression. In the language of the jubilee year described in Leviticus, the prophet, moved by the spirit of God, announces deliverance for those who are oppressed and comfort for those who mourn.

¹The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; ²to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; ³to provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, to display his glory. ⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations. ⁸For I the Lord love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. ⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the Lord has blessed. ¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels. ¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 126

¹When the Lord restored the for- | tunes of
Zion, then were we like | those who dream.



²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with | shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, “The Lord has done great | things for them.”**

³The Lord has done great | things for us, and we are | glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our for- | tunes, O Lord, like the watercourses | of the Negeb.**

⁵Those who | sowed with tears will reap with | songs of joy.

⁶**Those who go out weeping, carry- | ing the seed, will come again with joy, shoulder- | ing their sheaves.**

Glory be to the Father, and | to the Son, and to the | Holy Spirit.

As it was in the begin- | ning, is now, and will be fore- | ver. Amen.

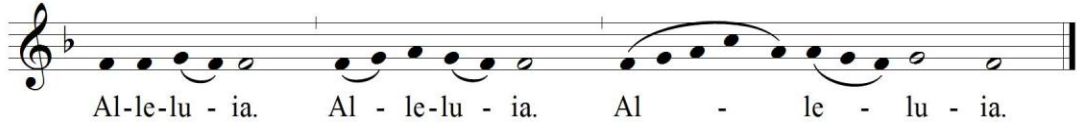
ANTHEM *Even so, Come Quickly Lord* Paul Manz Chorale

SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Paul concludes his letter to the Thessalonians by encouraging them to live lives of continual joy, prayer, and thanksgiving. The closing blessing is grounded in the hope of Christ’s coming.

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit. ²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil. ²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

ALLELUIA



Cantors: I am sending my messen- | ger before you,* who will prepare your | way before you. *Repeat antiphon.*

GOSPEL John 1:6-8, 19-28

The Gospel according to John, the first chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, “I am not the Messiah.” ²¹And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the prophet?” He answered, “No.” ²²Then they said to him, “Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” ²³He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ ” as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, “Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?”

²⁶John answered them, “I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal.” ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Pastor Ben Nickodemus

CAROL #239 Hark, the Glad Sound! *(please stand)*

1 Hark, the glad sound! The Sav - ior comes, the Sav - ior
 2 He comes the pris - 'ners to re - lease, in Sa - tan's
 3 He comes the bro - ken heart to bind, the bleed - ing
 4 Our glad ho - san - nas, Prince of peace, your wel - come

prom - ised long; let ev - 'ry heart pre -
 bond - age held. The gates of brass be -
 soul to cure, and with the trea - sures
 shall pro - claim, and heav'n's e - ter - nal

pare a throne and ev - 'ry voice a song.
 fore him burst, the i - ron fet - ters yield.
 of his grace to en - rich the hum - ble poor.
 arch - es ring with your be - lov - ed name.

NICENE CREED

With the church through the ages, let us confess our Christian faith using the words of the 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. *(please be seated)*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

PEACE

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

OUR LIFE TOGETHER

OFFERING

You are invited to place your offering in the plate as you come forward for communion.

OFFERTORY HYMN (*please stand*)

1 Come, Thou long - ex - pect - ed Je - sus, born to set Thy peo - ple free;
2 Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth Thou art;
3 Born Thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king,
4 By thine own e - ter - nal Spi - rit rule in all our hearts a - lone;

from our fears and sins re - lease us, let us find our rest in Thee.
dear de - sire of ev - ery na - tion, joy of ev - ery long - ing heart.
born to reign in us for ev - er, now Thy gra - cious king - dom bring.
by Thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to Thy glo - rious throne.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. By your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING

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.

PROPER PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and ever-living God. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes again to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with the Church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

Ho-ly, ho-ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow-er and might, heav'n_ and
earth__ are full__ of your glo ry. Ho - san - na in the high-est, ho -
san-na in the high-est, Blest is he who comes in the name of the
Lord. Ho - san - na in the high-est, ho - san-na in the high-est.

Richard Proulx

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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. (*be seated*)

COMMUNION INSTRUCTIONS & DISTRIBUTION

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, You take a-way the sin of the world;
have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, You take a-way
the of sin the world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God,
You take a-way the of sin the world; grant us peace. A - men

ANTHEM *The Magnificat* Hurd Naomi Castro & Alyse Jamieson

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

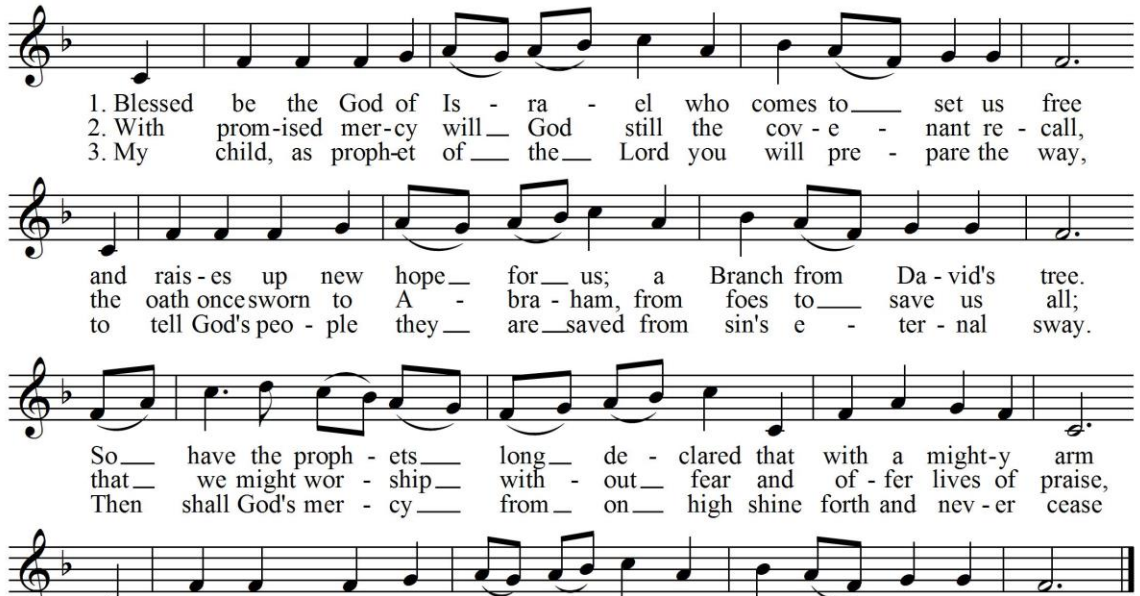
POST-COMMUNION PRAYER *(please stand)*

Let us pray. God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

The God of peace bless you, the love of † Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit, remain upon you, now and forever. **Amen.**

CAROL #250 Blessed Be the God of Israel



1. Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to — set us free
2. With prom-ised mer-cy will — God still the cov - e - nant re - call,
3. My child, as proph-et of — the — Lord you will pre - pare the way,

and rais - es up new hope — for — us; a Branch from Da - vid's tree.
the oath once sworn to A - bra - ham, from foes to — save us all;
to tell God's peo - ple they — are — saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.

So — have the proph - ets — long — de - clared that with a might-y arm
that — we might wor - ship — with - out — fear and of - fer lives of praise,
Then shall God's mer - cy — from — on — high shine forth and nev - er cease

God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.
in ho - li - ness and righ - teous-ness to serve God all our days.
to drive a - way the gloom of — death and lead us — in - to peace.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

ORGAN VOLUNTARY *Dieu parmi nous (God is with us)* Messiaen

A devout Christian, Olivier Messiaen (1908-92), was a French organist who created his own musical language using various tones of the scale. The majority of his works are for the church and have descriptive story lines. This work is the final mediation in the **Nativity Suite** (with 9 Meditations lasting about an hour). So many of the melodies move downward describing God (Jesus) coming to earth. There are passages of fluttering angels as they excitedly pass the message on. After a long trill, a passage of two gossips scurrying around tell everyone in sight, is followed by a chaotic section of general rejoicing as people celebrate with friends. The movement culminates in a grand toccata with the downward melody in the pedals. Messiaen marks the ending as “FFFF” One “f,” forte is strong (loud); 4 f’s is as loud as possible. Known as “pulling out all the stops,” it is something that we rarely do at Central. It’s a fantastic piece of music—I hope you find it meaningful in your worship of the most High. ~AESC

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A special welcome to those visiting with us today. If you are looking for a church home or would like to be added to our church's mailing list (via email or USPS), please fill out the visitor's card located in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate, or hand it to Pastor Laurie or Pastor Ben.

A caroling we will go... You are invited to join us today for a light lunch following our 11am service (noonish) and then we'll be caroling to a few places/homes nearby.

Just say "cheese" please... if you haven't had a chance to submit a portrait for our Church Directory, you can have your photo taken in the chapel before or after the 4:30pm Christmas Eve worship service. Or, email a favorite photo directly to info@welcometocentral.org.

Advent & Christmas Schedule

Blue Christmas (Tuesday, December 19th at 7pm)

***Sunday Morning Advent Worship Service** (December 24th at 9am)

Christmas Eve Manger Service (December 24th at 4:30pm)

Christmas Eve Festival Worship with Communion (Dec. 24th at 9:30pm)

***Christmas Day Worship** (December 25th at 9am)

***7th day of Christmas Sunday Worship** (*December 31st at 9am)

All services are available via livestream or for later viewing on our website (welcometocentral.org).

*Note the time change and only one service at 9am, the mornings of 2/24; 12/25; & 12/31.