

ADVENT *Adventures*

We direct *our hearts*
and *our worship* now toward
the coming of Jesus
at Christmas and
at the end of time.



FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH
Midweek Of Advent 3
Wednesday, December 17, 2025
6:30 P.M.

Joy

Advent Adventures of Joy
in Life's Jarring and Jolting Journey
Luke 2:8-20

CANDLE OF JOY

AS WE GATHER

Known as the Shepherd Candle, this candle reflects the joy that celebrates the joy of Christ's coming to earth, and through the salvation he has gifted us. During a time where depression is at an all-time high and people seem to be in the most despair, this candle offers a bright light during a dark time. It is also known as the Shepherd Candle to highlight the joy the shepherds experienced when they received the good news about Christ's birth ([Luke 2:8-20](#)). During the middle of the night, the darkest time, the shepherds encountered angels.

INVOCATION

- P** In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

HYMN

"O Little Town of Bethlehem"

LSB 361 vs. 1 & 2

- P** O Lord, have mercy on us.
- C** **Thanks be to God.**
- P** When Isaiah looked forward to our Lord's coming, he said it would be as if "the people who walked in darkness [had] seen a great light" (Isaiah 9:2). We give thanks that the Holy Spirit has shown the light of the Gospel into our hearts.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

- P** Our Mighty God came into the flesh as one of us, and He knows our needs and weaknesses. Let us therefore confess our sins to our heavenly Father.
- C** **I confess that I have sinned against You this day. Some of my sin I know—the thoughts and words and deeds of which I am ashamed—but some is known**

only to You. In the name of Jesus Christ, I ask forgiveness. Deliver and restore me that I may rest in peace.

P By the mercy of God we are redeemed by Jesus Christ, and in Him we are forgiven. We rest now in His peace and rise in the morning to serve Him.

C **Amen.**

HYMN

“O Little Town of Bethlehem”

LSB 361 vs. 3 & 4

PSALM 138 *Give Thanks to the Lord*

P I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart;
before the gods I sing your praise;

C **I bow down toward your holy temple
and give thanks to your name for your steadfast
love and your faithfulness,**

P for you have exalted above all things
your name and your word.

C **On the day I called, you answered me;
my strength of soul you increased.**

P All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O
Lord,

for they have heard the words of your mouth,
C **and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord,
for great is the glory of the Lord.**

P For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly,
but the haughty he knows from afar.

C **Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life;**

P you stretch out your hand against the wrath of my
enemies,
and your right hand delivers me.

C **The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands.**

C 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.

The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever.

EPISTLE *James 4:1-8*

P A reading from James, the fourth chapter.

Warning Against Worldliness

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions. You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, "He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL

Luke 2:8-20

P A reading from Luke, the second chapter.

The Shepherds and the Angels

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace among those with whom he is
pleased!"

When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

CATECHISM

The Second Article

P What does it mean that we believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord?

C I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from

all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

HYMN “Angels We Have Heard on High”

LSB #368

SERMON

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN

“Hark the Glad Sound”

LSB #349 vs 1 and 4

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

P Wonderful Counselor, we come to You, Lord Jesus, thankful that You have enlightened us with the counsel of Your wonderful gracious word of forgiveness for all our sins. Help us, we pray, as we interact with people who may be entrapped by their sin, not knowing Your full forgiveness, and unable to rejoice at the anniversary of Your birth. Wonderful Counselor, use us and all we have, to bring others to hear and believe the Good News. Lord, in Your mercy,

C **hear our prayer.**

P Mighty God, we come to You in faith, gracious Lord, trusting that You were and are God in the flesh, our Immanuel. Strengthen all who are in distress from the worldly forces that surround them. Assure them of Your presence, strengthen their faith, and lead them to Your

home above, where we may all rejoice together in Your love and grace. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Everlasting Father, we come to You, O Lord, who conquered sin and death as ruler of creation while also serving Your people as a caring Father. Grant us to know always Your eternal presence among us and help us to amend our lives and pass on the joy of Your eternal forgiveness to our neighbors, friends, and family. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Prince of Peace, we give thanks that You came to earth and paid the penalty that our sins deserved. Grant us steadfastness of faith to be at peace with one another, knowing that because of Your grace and love for us, we will be with You in eternity. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P These things we pray to You, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace, for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

PRAYER FOR TODAY

P Open our eyes, heavenly Father, that we may see all that You have done.

C By coming in the person of Your Son and by His sacrifice for us, You have assured us that the worldly forces around us shall be a thing of the past when Your Spirit ushers us into Your eternal presence;

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

C Amen.

LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have graciously kept me this day; and I pray that You would forgive me all my sins where I have done wrong, and graciously keep me this night. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

C 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.

BENEDICTION

P The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the ✠ Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless you and keep you.

C Amen.

HYMN

"Now The Light Has Gone Away"

LSB# 887

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT

***“Adventures of Love
in a World at War with Itself”***

Love

**St. John's Lutheran Church – Hamburg
Wednesday, December 24 at 4:30 p.m.**

**Faith Lutheran Church
Wednesday, December 24 at 7:00 p.m.**



Prayer Week 3 — Joy

Heavenly Father, This third week of Advent, let us remember that the good news of Jesus' birth has the power to bring us great joy this Christmas season. Our joy isn't dependent on what is going on in our life, in our world, or the people that we are with. It doesn't depend on the gifts we give or the gifts we find under the tree. No earthly thing can ever give us complete joy. Our joy comes from you. That joy that flooded the hearts of the shepherds, the angels, the wise men, the hosts of [heaven](#), and Mary and Joseph is the joy that still has the power to overwhelm our hearts with rejoicing.

Those who gathered around the new baby were blessed because they believed that you had fulfilled your promises. Mary and Joseph believed and were able to feel the joy of holding baby Jesus in their arms. The shepherds and wise men believed the angles and the signs and experienced the great gladness of worshipping their Messiah.

Those who knew him and recognized him were overjoyed at the coming of Jesus. They saw the prophecies fulfilled and their fear was replaced with happiness as they gazed on the face of the one who would be their Savior. They trusted in your promises and their hearts were filled with gladness as they watched your loving-kindness manifested in the face of a tiny baby in a lowly manger.

Father, you offer that same joy to us now if we know you and recognize Jesus as our Savior and Lord. You gave us a reason to celebrate when you gave us the unspeakable gift of Jesus Christ. You came to dwell among us. You went to Calvary's cross for us. You overcame death and rose from the dead for us. You forgive our sins and give us eternal life when we believe in you.

Our joy doesn't come from our jobs, our family, our relationships, our finances, or our success. Our joy doesn't come from what we have on earth or who we are with. Our joy is a gift. It is the gift that you gave us that first Christmas in Jesus Christ. Our joy is encompassed in our Savior, King Jesus. Flood our heart with joy this Advent season as we reflect on the good news of Jesus' birth. In Jesus' precious name we pray. Amen

Joy

"The joy of the
LORD is your
strength."

Nehemiah 8:10, NIV

