

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

1410 Rogers St
Stevens Point, Wisconsin

Pastor Bruce Thorsen
Ministers: Every Baptized Member

Sunday December 14, 2025, 9:00 a.m.



TRINITY'S MISSION

Bringing God's love to the world in worship, witness, and service.

TRINITY'S VISION

A Christ and Scripture centered congregation.

- Mission centered congregation constantly evaluating its vision to accomplish its mission.
- A congregation whose members sense that they belong to the body of Christ and, in turn want to provide for the needs of others.

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

ACS HOLY COMMUNION SETTING 12

Introduction to the Day

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

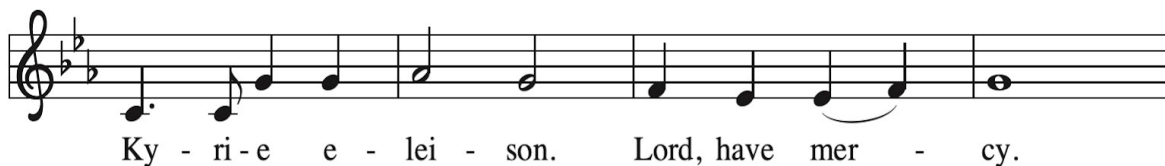
**Indicates stand*

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

*Confession and Forgiveness

As we begin this new church year, we ask, Loving Lord, that you guide us as we seek to live this new year centered in you. **(sing)**



We come before You now, acknowledging our shortcomings and the ways we have failed to live as Your faithful people. Forgive us, Lord, for the times we have turned away from Your guidance and neglected the needs of those around us. We pray for all who worship with us today, whether in person or online, that you feed our hungry souls with your word.

Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer and grant us Your forgiveness. Renew our hearts and help us walk in Your ways in this new year. **(sing)**

Gathering Song: Awake! Awake and Greet the New Morn

ELW 242

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 of the Day

Let us pray. Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Advent Wreath Lighting: The Gift of Love

Responsive Litany

Love is more than a flicker within the human heart.

Lord, reveal your love, and make us new.

In a hurried world with little time for others, Advent calls us to remember that...

Love is patient.

In a world where often we become consumed by our own interests, Advent calls us to remember that...

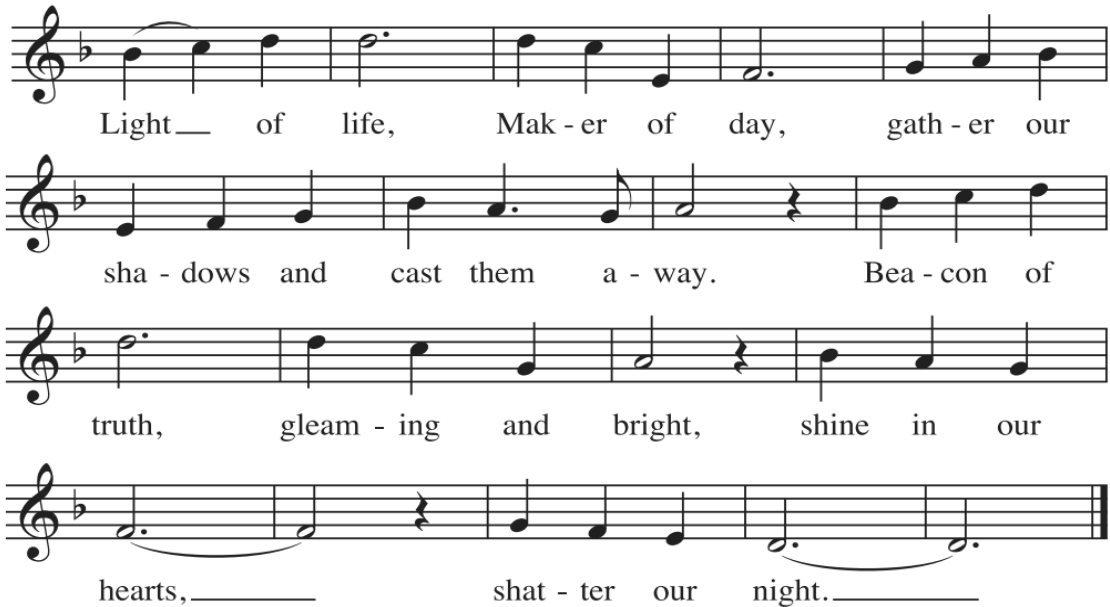
Love is kind.

In a world where often we are quick to anger and slow to forgive, Advent calls us to remember that...

Love is not easily angered, and through love we come to forgive.

This Advent let us behold the love of God embodied in our Savior's birth.

God is love. Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in them.

Congregation:


Light — of life, Mak - er of day, gath - er our
 sha - dows and cast them a - way. Bea - con of
 truth, gleam - ing and bright, shine in our
 hearts, _____ shat - ter our night. _____

Closing Prayer**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-10

A reading from Isaiah.

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; ⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; ⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water;

the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸ A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Bell Choir Anthem: *Emmanuel, El Shaddai*

Sondra Tucker

Psalmody: Magnificat - Luke 1:46-55 (read responsively)

46 Mary said: "My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,

47 and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.

48 For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant, and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed.

49 For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name.

50 Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you.

51 You have shown strength with your arm; you have scattered the proud in their conceit;

52 you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places.

53 You have filled the hungry with good things, while you have sent the rich away empty.

54 You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, mindful of your mercy—

55 the promise you made to our ancestors—to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever."

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

A reading from James.

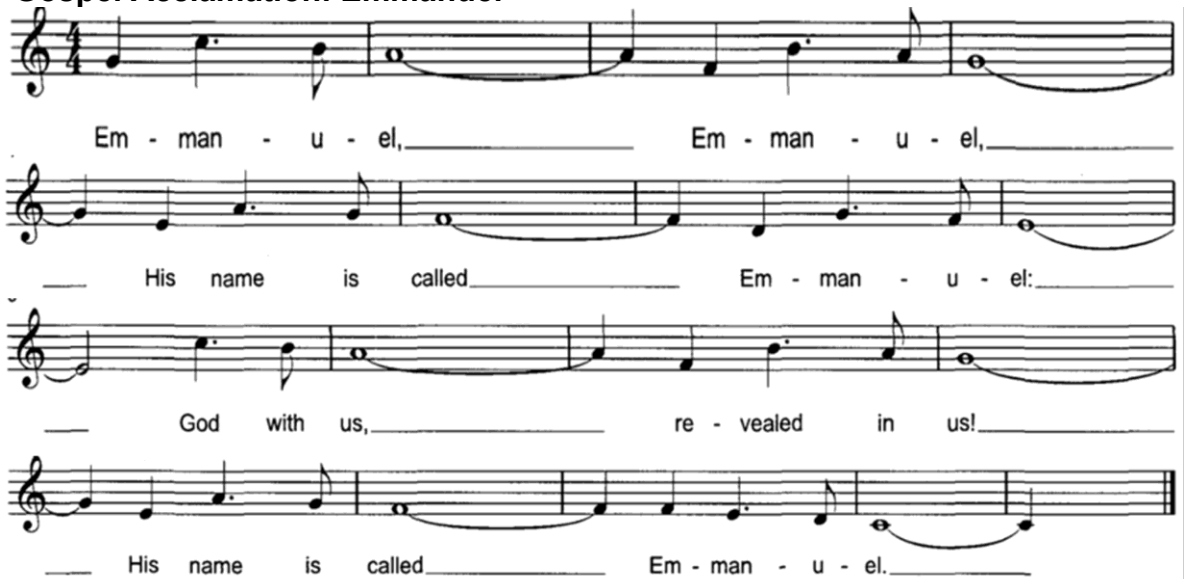
In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

Children's Message

*Gospel Acclamation: Emmanuel



Em - man - u - el, _____ Em - man - u - el, _____

_____ His name is called _____ Em - man - u - el: _____

_____ God with us, _____ re - vealed in us! _____

_____ His name is called _____ Em - man - u - el. _____

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

The holy gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth. From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me." ⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written, 'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' ¹¹"Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon:

Pastor Bruce Thorsen

***Hymn of the Day: Canticle of the Turning**

ELW 723

Advent Statement of Faith

**We believe in God, maker of the heavens and the earth,
whose light breaks into the darkness and whose promises awaken our hope.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ, the promised One, our Emmanuel. He was awaited by
the prophets, conceived in holy mystery, and born among us in humility and love.
For us he brings mercy, for us he shines light in every shadow, and for us he will
come again to renew all creation.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, who prepares our hearts for Christ's coming, who
stirs our longing, who leads us in peace, and who gathers the church to watch,
wait, and rejoice.**

**We believe in the dawn yet to come, the kingdom where justice and mercy meet,
and the life eternal promised in Christ, our Light and our Hope. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

O come Emmanuel.

(Sing) Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

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

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering: *"Mary's Song"*

Wendell Kimbrough

***Offering Prayer**

Let us pray. God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is sure. Word and water, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Receive the gifts we bring, and nourish us to proclaim your abiding love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. **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.**

Holy, Holy, Holy

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.... We praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and



God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your



glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the



Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table

Lord's Prayer

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

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as 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.

Invitation to Communion

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 sin of the world; have



mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the



world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Communion Song: Now the Heavens Start to Whisper

ACS 901



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.
2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.
3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:
Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.
come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!
Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.
In the lone - ly, in the strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.
Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.
Child who comes to grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: SŴO GÂN, Welsh melody

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Communion Song: He Comes to Us as One Unknown

ELW 737

*Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

Let us pray. We thank you, O God, that you have strengthened our hearts through this feast of life and salvation. Shine the light of Christ on our path, that we may do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you, now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Blessing

The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and your minds in ✝ Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

Sending Song: People, Look East

ELW 248

Dismissal

Go in peace. Remember the poor. **Thanks be to God.**

Postlude

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