

Sunday Worship Service – December 7, 2025
Second Sunday of Advent
The hymns are from ELWB

Words of Welcome by Pastor

Land Acknowledgement & Welcome Statement

Advent Wreath Lighting

The first candle was the candle of peace. This is the candle of hope.
 It reminds us to follow the example of the prophets who waited with hope
 for the coming of the Savior.

Let us pray.

Loving God, you reach out to all people in love and kindness. Teach us your
 ways of justice, peace, and hope. Help us to look for you in every situation,
 and to wait with hope for the new things you are going to do in our lives.
 Amen.

***A Candle is Burning*¹ (tune: #277 *Away in a Manger*)**

Verse 2

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
 A Candle of HOPE in December's dark night
 While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky
 Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

Prayer of Confession*

God of hope, **you call us to wait, to watch, to be ready.**
But we are so easily distracted, busily doing other things.
We grow drowsy and complacent.
Give us wisdom, as we prepare for your coming.
Forgive our foolishness and our impatience.
Restore us by your grace.
Look upon us with your favour, that we might know your presence.
Shape us into vessels of blessing, for we are your children,
longing to touch your Spirit. Amen.

¹ Written by Rev Sue Neville, ELCIC pastor of Eastern Synod

Words of Assurance

God calls us to be watchful, awakened to new possibilities and vibrant growth. Know that God restores us to abundant life.

We are recreated in God's holy image

With growth in the Spirit, we know that God is near and forgives us:
in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

#254 Gathering Hymn *"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"*

1. **Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev'ry nation, joy of ev'ry longing heart.**
2. **Born thy people to deliver, born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever, now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.**

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.**

Call to Worship²

Hope is gravity for the broken— **Pulling us up.**

Hope is manna in the wilderness. **When we want to give up.**

Hope is seeing stars in the city. **When we forget the sky is there.**

Hope is the anthem of faith. **And the reason we're here.**

So come to this place with your hopes and your fears,

For the God of new life is drawing near. Let us worship God!

Prayer of the Day³

God of all hopefulness, **in you we trust. Help us to become beacons of hope
in our church and in our communities. As we push the darkness away,**

² *What Can't Wait* written by: Sarah Are, sanctifiedart.org

³ Written by Rev Sue Neville, ELCIC pastor of Eastern Synod

guide us to follow the star to Bethlehem and behold the greatest hope of humankind. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

First Reading: Isaiah 11: 1-10

In the reading from Isaiah, the prophet describes the coming of a future, ideal ruler who will renew David's royal line (the stump of Jesse). Gifted by the spirit of God, this ruler will reign with perfect justice. Enmity and danger will be restored to harmony and peaceful coexistence.

A shoot will grow up from the stump of Jesse; a branch will sprout from his roots. God's spirit will rest upon him, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of planning and strength, a spirit of knowledge and love of God. He will delight in loving God. He won't judge by appearances, nor decide by hearsay. He will judge the needy with righteousness, and decide with equity for those who suffer in the land. He will strike the violent with the rod of his mouth; by the breath of his lips he will kill the wicked.

Righteousness will be the belt around his hips, and faithfulness the belt around his waist.

The wolf will live with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat; the calf and the young lion will feed together, and a little child will lead them. The cow and the bear will graze. Their young will lie down together, and a lion will eat straw like an ox. A nursing child will play over the snake's hole; toddlers will reach right over the serpent's den. They won't harm or destroy anywhere on my holy mountain. The earth will surely be filled with the knowledge of God, just as the water covers the sea.

On that day, the root of Jesse will stand as a signal to the peoples.

The nations will seek him out, and his dwelling will be glorious.

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

Second Reading: Romans 15:4-13

In the reading from Romans, God's promise to include Gentiles within the circle of God's blessed people has been fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Christians live out their unity by welcoming and encouraging each other just as Christ has welcomed them into God's family.

Whatever was written in the past was written for our instruction so that we could have hope through endurance and through the encouragement of the scriptures. May the God of endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude toward each other, similar to Christ Jesus' attitude. That way you can glorify the God and Jesus Christ together with one voice.

So welcome each other, in the same way that Christ also welcomed you, for God's glory. I'm saying that Christ became a servant of those who are circumcised for the sake of God's truth, in order to confirm the promises given to the ancestors, and so that the Gentiles could glorify God for mercy. As it is written, *Because of this I will confess you among the Gentiles, and I will sing praises to your name.*

And again, it says, *Rejoice, Gentiles, with God's people.*

And again, *Praise God, all you Gentiles, and all the people should sing God's praises.*

And again, Isaiah says, *There will be a root of Jesse, who will also rise to rule the Gentiles. The Gentiles will place their hope in him.*

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in faith so that you overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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

#262 Gospel Acclamation "*Wait for the Lord*"

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart! (2x)

Gospel Reading: Matthew 3:1-12

In the gospel from Matthew, John the Baptist appears just before Jesus begins his public ministry, calling people to mend their ways and speaking of a powerful one who is to come.

The holy gospel according to Matthew, the 3rd chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the desert of Judea announcing, "Change your hearts and lives! Here comes the kingdom of heaven!" He was the one of whom Isaiah the prophet spoke when he said: *The voice of one shouting in the wilderness, "Prepare the way for the Lord; make his paths straight."*

John wore clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey.

People from Jerusalem, throughout Judea, and all around the Jordan River came to him. As they confessed their sins, he baptized them in the Jordan River. Many Pharisees and Sadducees came to be baptized by John. He said to them, "You children of snakes! Who warned you to escape from the angry judgment that is coming soon? Produce fruit that shows you have changed your hearts and lives. And don't even think about saying to yourselves, Abraham and Sarah are our parents. I tell you that God is able to raise up Abraham and Sarah's children from these stones. The ax is already at the root of the trees. Therefore, every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be chopped down and tossed into the fire. I baptize with water those of you who have changed your hearts and lives. The one who is coming after me is stronger than I am. I'm not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The shovel he uses to sift the wheat from the husks is in his hands. He will clean out his threshing area and bring the wheat into his barn. But he will burn the husks with a fire that can't be put out."

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

Sermon

#255 Hymn of the Day *"There's a Voice in the Wilderness"*

1. **There's a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod:
Prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God!
The valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low;
make straight all the crooked places where the Lord, our God, may go!**
2. **O Jerusalem, herald good tidings; ascend to the heights and sing!
Proclaim to a desolate people the coming of their King.
Like the flow'rs of the field we perish; like grass our works decay.
The pow'r and the pomp of nations shall pass like a dream away.**
3. **But the Word of our Savior is faithful; the arm of our God is strong.
Who stands in the midst of the nations, and soon shall right the wrong.
Lord feed your flock like a shepherd, the lambs so gently hold,
in pastures of peace now lead them, and bring them to your fold.**

Affirmation of Faith for Advent⁴

We believe in God, creator and lover of the earth,
origin and destiny of us all.

We believe in Jesus the Christ—

God coming to us in the fragile promise of a baby yet unborn—
who emerges as the herald of hope, God's laughter in the face of despair.
Plunged into death and hell, he broke free the captives,
and is leading the way to the land of promise
where justice and peace will flourish.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, who implants the seed of truth,
brings us to birth as the body of Christ,
and empowers us to confront and transform
all that is corrupt, degrading and deceitful.

We believe in the coming reign of God.

Announced by John the Baptist, it has drawn near to us in Jesus,
and gathers into the joyous fulfilment of God's desire.

For the coming of that day on this day, we pray:

Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

Prayers of Intercession⁵

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your
promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation. Prayer
petitions will end with “God of hope” and the congregation is invited to
respond by saying: **“receive our prayer.”**

A brief silence.

With wisdom and understanding, inspire the faithful around the world.
Unite hearts and minds in work to address poverty, access to housing,
and equity among peoples. God of hope, **receive our prayer.**

⁴ <https://re-worship.blogspot.com/2011/11/advent-affirmation-of-faith.html>— written by Nathan Nettleton, and posted on his Laughingbird website.

⁵ <https://members.sundaysandseasons.com/Home/TextsAndResources/2025-12-07/0#texts>

With counsel and might, move us to care for creation. As we dream of the day when all creatures will flourish alongside one another, guide us in ways humanity and all creation will mutually thrive. God of hope, **receive our prayer.**

With righteousness and faithfulness, encourage nations to live in harmony with one another. We pray for our partner churches, and for the mission of Canadian Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran World Federation. God of hope, **receive our prayer.**

With steadfastness and encouragement, strengthen those who have lost hope in the face of grief, depression, or disease. Renew the spirits of those recovering from surgery and medical procedures. God of hope, **receive our prayer.**

With welcome and hospitality, embolden us in our shared ministry to overcome all that divides. In acts of repentance, reconciliation, and reparation, may we serve in the way of Christ. God of hope, **receive our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel, God with us. **Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

Offering Prayer*

God of hope, **in gratefulness for calling us as your own, we offer you our thanks and praise. Receive the gifts of our hands, and use them to bring light to the darkness, and hope to places of despair. Amen.**

Holy Communion⁶

God is with you. **And also with you.**

Come, Emmanuel into our longing hearts. **We lift them up to You.**

As we gather at this table, **in anticipation and hope.**

God of hopeful expectation, who enters into our stories,
who births new life into creation,

⁶ Written by Rev Tanya Ramer, ELCIC pastor in the Eastern Synod

who invites us into a rich and restoring relationship.
We come before you with humble hearts To greet you in our midst.

You were there when creation burst into being, with endless possibilities.
You were there when the Israelites tasted liberty,
and you opened their eyes to new freedom.
You were there, with Mary, when she became a powerful vessel and witness,
to birth love into the world.
You were there with Jesus when he prayed in the garden,
when he confronted death and brought resurrection life to your people.

And you are with us now, as we gather at your table;
Your meal and gift of love for all who come hungry and thirsty today.
We come, like those first disciples,
gathered around the table to hear Jesus' words of promise and hope.

On the night that he last ate with his disciples,

Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat, this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, Jesus took the cup,
Gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the covenant in my blood,
Shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering Jesus' life, death and resurrection,
We offer these fruits of creation, bread and wine,
And ourselves in grateful service.

Thank you for your Spirit who works in and among us,
in times of hope-filled anticipation.
Who strengthens and sustains us,

and who, challenges and prods us.
 Who gives us life and continues to surprise us with extravagant grace.
 Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit.
 All honour and glory are yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

Communion Distribution

#247 Communion Hymn *"Come Now, O Prince of Peace"*

1. **Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one body.
 Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.**
2. **Come now, O God of love, make us one body.
 Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.**
3. **Come now and set us free, O God, our Savior.
 Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.**
4. **Come, Hope of unity, make us one body.
 Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.**

Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

We give you thanks almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of love and forgiveness. Strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you in love toward one another. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Announcements

Blessing*

May the God of **hope** fill you with all joy and peace in faith
so that you overflow with **hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit.
In the name of + God our Creator, Jesus our Friend,
and the Holy Spirit, our Comforter. Amen

#248 Sending Hymn “*People, Look East*” (v.1-3)

- 1. People, look east. The time is near of the crowning of the year.
Make your house fair as you are able, trim the hearth and set the table.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Guest, is on the way.**

- 2. Furrows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is planted there:
Give up your strength the seed to nourish,
that in course the flower may flourish.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Rose, is on the way.**

- 3. Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the bowl shall brim,
Shining beyond the frosty weather, Bright as sun and moon together.
People, look east and sing today: Love, the Star, is on the way.**

Sending

Go in peace and hope, to love and serve God. **Thanks be to God!**

Sources:

- Bible passages (except where otherwise indicated) from Common English Bible (CEB) and have been adapted for inclusive language.
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