

Divine Messengers of Hope in the Midst of the Seemingly Impossible

**Immanuel Lutheran Church – LCMS
Lakefield, Minnesota
Advent 2 • December 11, 2024**

As We Gather: “The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary” (*Lk 1:26–27*). The message brought by Gabriel to Mary seemed impossible. Mary, a lowly young virgin, had been chosen by the Lord to give birth to the Son of God! “How will this be?” Mary exclaimed. “Nothing will be impossible with God,” responded the angel (*Lk 1:34, 37*). Mary’s response has become the primary model for all who would come to believe in Jesus: “Let it be to me according to your word” (*Lk 1:38*). In moments when it seems impossible that we could be forgiven and we’re without hope, God comes to us with words of forgiveness in Jesus, “*Let it be to me according to Your word.*” Or, when struck with grief when hope seems distant, God comes to us with words of life eternal in Jesus, “*Let it be to me according to Your word.*” Advent brings hope in life’s most impossible moments.

SERVICE OF LIGHT

Opening Sentences

(Pastor:) Jesus Christ is the light of the world,

(People:) **the light no darkness can overcome.**

By the Holy Spirit we cry out with the whole Church,
“Prepare the way of the Lord.”
 All who wait for Jesus to return pray,
Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Hymn: 891, “O Light Whose Splendor”

1 O Light whose splendor thrills and gladness
 2 As twilight hovers near at sunset,
 3 In all life's brilliant timeless moments,
 With radiance brighter than the sun,
 And lamps are lit, and children nod,
 Let faithful voices sing Your praise,
 Pure gleam of God's unending glory,
 In evening hymns we lift our voices,
 O Son of God, our Life bestower,
 O Jesus, blest Anointed One;
 To Father, Spirit, Son: one God.
 Whose glory lights less days.

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Thanksgiving For Light

(Pastor:) Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of the universe, who led Your people Israel by a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of Your Christ; may His Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path; for You are merciful, and You love Your whole creation and we, Your creatures, glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(People:) **Amen.**

Psalm 141

(Pastor:) Let us pray.

Let the incense of our repentant prayer ascend before You, O Lord, and let Your loving-kindness descend on us that, with purified minds, we may sing Your praises with the Church on earth and the whole heavenly host and may glorify You forever.

(People:) Amen.

Hymn: 341, "Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates" (vs 1, 2 & 5)



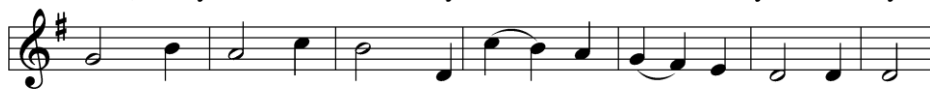
1 Lift up your heads, ye mighty gates! Behold, the
2 A righteous Help - er comes to thee; His char - iot
5 Re - deem - er, come and o - pen wide My heart to



King of glo - ry waits. The King of kings is draw - ing
is hu - mil - i - ty, His king - ly crown is ho - li -
Thee; here, Lord, a - bide! O en - ter with Thy grace di -



near; The Sav - ior of the world is here. Life and sal -
ness, His scep - ter, pit - y in dis - tress. The end of
vine; Thy face of mer - cy on me shine. Thy Ho - ly



va - tion He doth bring; There - fore re - jice and glad - ly sing.
all our woe He brings; There - fore the earth is glad and sings.
Spir - it guide us on Un - til our glo - rious goal is won.



To God the Fa - ther raise Your joy - ful songs of praise.
To Christ the Sav - ior raise Your grate - ful hymns of praise.
E - ter - nal praise and fame We of - fer to Thy name.

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Prayer

(Pastor:) Let us pray.

To You, O Lord, we lift up our heads to see the King of glory coming. Your angels declared His coming long ago in the age of the prophets. Your angel Gabriel, and a whole heavenly host, rejoiced and sang His glory at His birth. The two angels sitting in the empty tomb declared, "He is risen from the dead." The apostle John saw a vision with seven angels at Christ's coming again to wipe away every tear from our eyes. Lift up our heads and our hearts to see and rejoice: The King of glory comes!

(People:) Amen.

Hymn: 356, "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" (vs 1-3)



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;



With wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
All gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
"To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
Thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
"My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."



Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - ri - a!
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy," Glo - ri - a!
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy, Glo - ri - a!

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Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 35:1–10

(The desert shall rejoice and the ransomed shall return.)

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 singing. 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 have an anxious heart, “Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.” ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; ⁶ then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters 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; in the haunt of jackals, where they lie down, the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸ And a highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it. It shall belong to those who walk on the way; even if they are fools, they shall not 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 gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

(Pastor:) O Lord, have mercy on us.

(People:) **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:26–38

(The birth of Jesus foretold)

²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David.

And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

(Pastor:) O Lord, have mercy on us.

(People:) **Thanks be to God.**

In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of old by the prophets.

But now in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son.

Sermon: "Hope in the Midst of the Seemingly Impossible"

Hymn: 933, "My Soul Rejoices"



1 My soul re - joic - es, My spir - it voic - es— Sing the
2 His arm now bar - ing, His strength de - clar - ing— Sing the



great - ness of the Lord! For God my Sav - ior Has shown me
great - ness of the Lord! The proud He scat - ters, Their rule He



fa - vor— Sing the great - ness of the Lord! With praise and
shat - ters— Sing the great - ness of the Lord! Op - pres - sion



bles - sing, Join in con - fess - ing God, who is sole - ly Might - y and
halt - ed; The meek ex - alt - ed. Full are the hun - gry; Emp - ty, the



ho - ly— O sing the great - ness of God the Lord! His mer - cy
wealth - y— O sing the great - ness of God the Lord! Here is the



sure - ly Shall rest se - cure - ly On all who fear Him,
to - ken All that was spo - ken To A - br'ham's off - spring



Love and re - vere Him— O sing the great - ness of God the Lord!
God is ful - fill - ing— O sing the great - ness of God the Lord!

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(Offering plate is at the back of the sanctuary. Thank you.)

Prayer of the Church

(Pastor:) As we wait for You, O Lord, we pray for peace
among nations, peace across the factions in our nation, peace
in our households, and peace that surpasses human

understanding in our hearts. (*Then, after each petition Pastor says:*) Lord, in Your mercy,
(*People respond:*) **hear our prayer.**

(*Prayers conclude:*) O God, as You called Mary, so You call us to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that Your hand is leading us and Your love supporting us; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

(*People:*) **Amen.**

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.**

Benedicamus

(*Pastor:*) Let us bless the Lord.

(*People:*) **Thanks be to God.**

Benediction

(*Pastor:*) The almighty and merciful Lord, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, bless and preserve you.

(*People:*) **Amen.**

Hymn: 357, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

(vs 1, 6-7)



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som
6 O come, Thou Day - spring from on high, And cheer us
7 O come, De - sire of na - tions, bind In one the

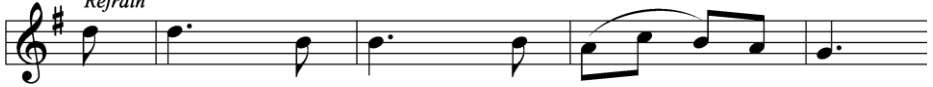


cap - tive Is - ra - el, That mourns in lone - ly
by Thy draw - ing nigh; Dis - perse the gloom - y
hearts of all man - kind; Bid Thou our sad di -



ex - ile here Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
clouds of night, And death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
vi - sions cease, And be Thy - self our King of Peace.

Refrain



Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



Shall come to thee, O Is - ra - el!

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Acknowledgments

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Assisting with the Service

Preacher Rev. Noel Herr
Elder Steve Matasovsky (7:00)
Organist Brenda Matasovsky (8:30)
Jayson Matasovsky (7:00)
Acolyte 7th-8th graders (8:30)
Nora Freking (7:00)
Usher 7th-8th graders (8:30)
Dave & Carolyn Hansen (7:00)

We Remember in our Prayers

Rev. Matthew Lane as he considers the Call to Immanuel and Peace Lutheran Church in Faribault, where he currently serves

Our residents at Colonial Manor, Valley View, Golden Horizons in Worthington, Good Sam in Jackson, Accura HealthCare in Milford, Lakeview in Heron Lake, Koronis in Paynesville

Keith Kolander, Loretta Palmer, Jackie Ward, Ken Pohlman, Marlene Hendricksen, Ines Henning, Merlyn Rossow, Betty Hage, Bev Hall, dealing with health issues

Miles Ramsey, toddler cousin of Amy Altman; Zach Williamson, friend of Pastor McDonald; Pastor Dennis Brech, Lake Shetek; Joyce Urmie, sister-in-law of Vickie Baumann; Stacey Dunker, mother of ILS student Janessa Dunker; Pastor Ben Rucker; Mitch Voehl, son of Lila Voehl; Marcus Lere, grandson of Joyce Bretzman; Denny Daberkow; Jim Salentiny, uncle of Mark Freking; dealing with cancer

Tina Olson, sister of Amy Altman; Suzanne Leopold, friend of Jan Bakalyar; Joe Bradley, nephew of Joyce Aden; Mary Holt, aunt of Debbi Gettler; Jeff Meyer, friend of Bruce and Jan Bakalyar; Rob Pohlman, son of Ken Pohlman; Curt Gates, brother-in-law of Miles Voehl (Lila's son), dealing with health issues

Our Missionaries in the Field, Our Country and Our Military

STARTING IN JANUARY

**OUR SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
TIME ALONG WITH SUNDAY
SCHOOL & BIBLE CLASS TIMES**

WILL CHANGE TO:

- ◆ *Worship: 9:00 a.m.*
- ◆ *Sunday School: 10:15 a.m.*
- ◆ *Bible Class: 10:15 a.m.*

Advent and Christmas Worship Schedule

Advent Services

Wednesday, December 11
8:30 AM & 7:00 PM

ILS Christmas Service

Wednesday, December 18
12:30 PM & 6:30 PM

Sunday School Christmas Service

Tuesday, December 24
4:00 PM

Christmas Day

Wednesday, December 25
10:45 AM Service with special
Pre-Service Christmas
Music and Carol Sing
starting at 10:20 AM



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