



# Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church

1187 C.R. 128 & U.S. Rt. 20

Fremont, Ohio 43420

Pastor Tim Miller

93.1FM

Church: 419-332-6820

faithchurch@amplex.net

www.faithfremont.org

---

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**December 22, 2024**

---

Setting 3 with Holy Communion

\*Congregation please stand as you are able.

## **Introduction**

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."

**(8:00) Prelude:**                    *Mary Did You Know*

**(10:30) Prelude:**                *What Child Is This?*                    **George Lachenauer**

**Welcome & Announcements:** Joys and Concerns

Signing of the Pew Register by all present.

**\*(8:00) Gathering Song:**        *Mary Did You Know*

Mary, did you know

That your Baby Boy would one day walk on water?

Mary, did you know

That your Baby Boy would save our sons and daughters?

Did you know

That your Baby Boy has come to make you new?

This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you.

Mary, did you know

That your Baby Boy will give sight to a blind man?

Mary, did you know

That your Baby Boy will calm the storm with His hand?

Did you know

That your Baby Boy has walked where angels trod?

When you kiss your little Baby you kissed the face of God?

Mary, did you know  
That your Baby Boy is Lord of all creation?  
Mary, did you know  
That your Baby Boy would one day rule the nations?  
Did you know  
That your Baby Boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?  
The sleeping Child you're holding is the Great, I Am.

**\*(10:30) Gathering Song:** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs. 1-4)*

**ELW 257**

**GATHERING**

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

**\*Greeting**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**C: And also with you.**

P: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

**C: Lord, have mercy.**

P: For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

**C: Lord, have mercy.**

P: For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

**C: Lord, have mercy.**

P: For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, Let us pray to the Lord.

**C: Lord, have mercy.**

P: Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

**C: Amen.**

# **Advent's Holy Light Candle Lighting – Congregational Singing Part**

## **Lighting of Advent Candle**

P: Today the fourth candle, the candle of Love, joins the candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy. Like the combined glow of many candles, let this season remind us of the strength found in unity as we come together to love and uplift one another. Let the warmth of love illuminate the connections that bind us together and foster us in a deep sense of belonging.

P: Love creates the bonds that provide us with deep meaningful relationships.

**C: The greatest of all gifts is love.**

P: Love inspires random acts of kindness and generosity.

**C: The greatest of all gifts is love.**

P: Love causes us to only look for the best in others.

**C: The greatest of all gifts is love.**

P: Love allows us to be accepted for who we are, flaws and all.

**C: The greatest of all gifts is love.**

P: Gracious Creator, we gather in your presence today, hearts brimming with gratitude for the extraordinary gift of love you have bestowed upon us. May the celebration of love extend beyond our immediate circles, creating ripples of compassion and unity in the world. In recognizing the beauty of love, may we become vessels of your light, shining brightly for all to see. Amen.

## **Advent's Holy Light – Congregational Singing Part**

*Repeat from previous page*

### **\*Confession and Forgiveness**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,  
alive in the world,  
reviving creation,  
arriving soon.

**C: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God  
and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

P: God of mercy,

**C: we confess that we have sinned.**

**We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.**

**We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

P: God of might,

**C: we confess that we have sinned.**

**We have turned away from our neighbors.**

**We have trusted false promises.**

P: God in our midst,

**C: we confess that we have sinned.**

**We plead: come to us.**

**Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

P: A righteous branch springs forth:

it is Christ the Lord, our Savior,

in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,

receive the grace and forgiveness of God

through ✝ Christ Jesus,

whose day draws near.

**C: Amen.**

**Glory to God – sung to the tune of *Angels From the Realms of Glory***

**Glory be to God the Father and to Christ His Only Son.**

**Praises to the Holy Spirit, may our voices sing as one.**

**Come and worship, come and worship.**

**Glory be to God on high.**

**\*Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray.

**C: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

## WORD

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

### First Reading:

**Micah 5:2-5a**

*The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.*

R: A reading from Micah, the fifth chapter.

<sup>2</sup> But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.

<sup>3</sup> Therefore he shall give them up until the time  
when she who is in labor has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup> And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.  
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;

<sup>5a</sup> and he shall be the one of peace.

The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

### Responsive Reading:

**Luke 1:46b-55**

<sup>46b</sup> My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> **for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.**

**From this day all generations will call me blessed:**

<sup>49</sup> you, the Almighty, have done great things for me  
and holy is your name.

<sup>50</sup> **You have mercy on those who fear you,  
from generation to generation.**

<sup>51</sup> You have shown strength with your arm  
and scattered the proud in their conceit,

<sup>52</sup> **casting down the mighty from their thrones  
and lifting up the lowly.**

<sup>53</sup> You have filled the hungry with good things  
and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> **You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,  
to remember the promise of mercy,**

<sup>55</sup> the promise made to our forebears,  
to Abraham and his children forever.

**Second Reading:**

**Hebrews 10:5-10**

*The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.*

R: A reading from Hebrews, the tenth chapter.

<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,  
“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body you have prepared for me;

<sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’  
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

<sup>8</sup> When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second.

<sup>10</sup> And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The word of the Lord.

**C: Thanks be to God.**

**\*Alleluia – sung to the tune of *Infant Holy, Infant Lowly***

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Amen**

**Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Amen**

**Sing we praises to our Father, to Christ Jesus, to the Spirit.**

**Alleluia, Amen. Alleluia, Amen.**

**\*Gospel**

**Luke 1:39-45**

*Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.*

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

P: <sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup> and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup> And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup> For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord." [

The Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

**Children's Sermon**

**Sermon**

**\*Sermon Hymn:**

*Savior of the Nations, Come*

**ELW 263**



## **\*Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to the dead.\*  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

## **\*Prayers of Intercession**

R: As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

*A brief silence.*

R: God our uniter, increase communication and cooperation in our relationships with those of other traditions and religions. Root your church in the radical message of your incarnation, and enable us to pursue your justice in the world. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: receive our prayer.**

R: God our creator, we praise you for the beauty that surrounds us. Awaken in us a renewed sense of care for the wildlife in our communities. Form us into faithful stewards of what you have made. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: receive our prayer.**

R: God our sovereign, Mary proclaims a new way of life that lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. Nurture in local governments and municipalities a desire to care for all who are overlooked and ignored. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: receive our prayer.**

R: God our beacon, as the northern hemisphere begins its slow turn toward more daylight, remind us that even in the deepest nights, you are there. Comfort the lonely and bereaved. Hold closely the frightened, anxious, depressed, and ill, *especially those we name at this time (Pause for people to be named)*. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: receive our prayer.**

R: God our guide, shepherd the leadership of this congregation. Bless the council and staff in discerning future ministry and open their hearts to the voices of the community. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: receive our prayer.**

R: God our life, you remember the promises you have made to your people. In gratitude for those who have died, we praise you for your faithfulness throughout history. Lord, in your mercy,

**C: receive our prayer.**

R: Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

**C: Amen.**

### MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### \*Sharing of the Peace

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

(8:00) Praise Choir:

*Noel*

**M. Redman**

(10:30) Sr. Choir:

*Let the Savior In*

**S. Landon**

### Offering

*Give Thanks*

**Give thanks with a grateful heart.**

**Give thanks to the Holy One,**

**Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son.**

**Give thanks with a grateful heart.**

**Give thanks to the Holy One.**

**Give thanks because He's given Jesus Christ His Son.**

**Give thanks.**

### **\*Offering Prayer**

P: Creator God, you made the whole world,  
even the farthest stars, and you draw near to feed us.  
We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine.  
Strengthen us with this food, that we may live in expectation  
for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

### **\*The Great Thanksgiving**

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**C: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

P: 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 merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ.  
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 to judge the world in righteousness.

### **\*Thanksgiving at the Table**

P: Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:  
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.  
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.  
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.  
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.  
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.  
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus,  
the Word made flesh.

P: In the night in which he was betrayed,  
our Lord 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, he took the cup, gave thanks,  
and gave it for all to drink, saying:  
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,  
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

P: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:

**C: Christ has died.  
Christ is risen.  
Christ will come again.**

P: With this bread and cup  
we remember your Word dwelling among us,  
full of grace and truth.  
We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection.  
We look with hope for his coming.

**C: Come, Lord Jesus.**

P: Holy God, we long for your Spirit.  
Come among us. Bless this meal.  
May your Word take flesh in us.  
Awaken your people.  
Fill us with your light.  
Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**C: Come, Holy Spirit.**

P: All praise and glory are yours,  
Holy One of Israel,  
Word of God incarnate,  
Power of the Most High,  
one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

### **\*Lord's Prayer**

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

### **Invitation to Communion**

P: God feeds us with tender mercy.

Come to the table.

### **Lamb of God – sung to the tune of O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

**O Lamb of God you take away our sins.**

**Have mercy on us, Lamb of God.**

**O Lamb of God you take away our sins.**

**Have mercy on us, Lamb of God.**

**Amen, Amen. Thy name we praise. Have mercy on us. Amen.**

### **Distribution of Communion**

*Communion will be continuous. The ushers will invite you to come forward by the center aisle. You will be handed the bread with the words, "The Body of Christ given for you." You may respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God!". Step to the Communion Assistant and take the cup. They will speak the words, "The Blood of Christ shed for you." You may respond with "Amen" or "Thanks be to God!" Empty cups may be placed in the basket as you return to your seat by the side aisle.*

*If you prefer gluten-free bread, please let the Pastor know. If you prefer grape juice, please let the Communion Assistant know. If you prefer not to receive or have children who have not yet received, please let the Pastor know and he will offer a blessing.*

**(8:00) Communion Song:**

*Hallelujah*

I've heard about this baby boy  
Who's come to earth to bring us joy  
And I just want to sing this song to you  
He came from heaven and came to earth,  
To teach us peace and teach us love  
With every breath I'm singing Hallelujah.  
Hallelujah

The angel Gabriel to Mary came,  
And gently said, "Be not afraid,"  
And told her that she would bear a Son.  
My soul doth magnify the Lord.  
My spirit doth rejoice again  
I bear the Lord and Savior, Hallelujah  
Hallelujah

A couple came to Bethlehem  
Expecting child, they searched the inn  
To find a place for You were coming soon  
There was no room for them to stay  
So in a manger filled with hay  
God's only Son was born, oh Hallelujah  
Hallelujah

The shepherd's left their flocks by night  
To see this baby wrapped in light,  
A host of angels led them all to you.  
It was just as the angels said,  
You'll find him in a manger bed.  
Emmanuel and Savior, Hallelujah.  
Hallelujah

A star shone bright up in the east.  
To Bethlehem the wisemen three  
Came many miles and journeyed long for you  
And to the place at which you were,  
Frankincense, and gold and Myrrh  
They gave to you and cried Hallelujah.  
Hallelujah

**(10:30) Communion Hymns:**

ELW 242 *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*

ELW 239 *Hark, the Glad Sound!*

**\*Post Communion Blessing**

P: May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C: Amen.

**\*Prayer After Communion**

P: Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life,  
for the bread of salvation.

We thank you for coming among us,  
for leading us into peace.

We thank you for showering us with mercy,  
for sending us into the world.

Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us  
as we feed the hungry in your name.

C: Amen.

**SENDING**

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

**\*Blessing**

P: God of endings and beginnings,  
God in the darkness and the light,  
God, our hope for the journey,  
✠ bless and keep you now and forever.

C: Amen.

**\*Sending Song:**

*Joy to the World*

ELW 267

**\*Dismissal**

P: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

C: Thanks be to God.

**\*(8:00) Postlude:** *Joy to the World* Isaac Watts, arr. Lowell Mason

**\*(10:30) Postlude:** *Come, Christians, Join to Sing*

arr. Janet Linker

From sundaysandseasons.com. Copyright © 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SB150404.

New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Song *Mary Did You Know*, 1991, 1993 Rufus Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing) Curb Word Music (Admin. by WC Music Corp.). Song *Give Thanks*, 1978 Integrity's Hosanna! Music (Admin. by Integrity Music). Permission was gained thru CCLI License #1176607 for streaming and recording. Song *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*, Text © 1997 Augsburg Fortress. Song *Savior of the Nations, Come*, Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress. Song *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*, Text and music © 1983 GIA Publications, Inc., 7404 S. Mason Ave., Chicago, IL 60638. www.giamusic.com. 800.442.3358. Permission was gained thru One License #A-739669 for streaming and recording.

Used by permission. All rights reserved.

**WELCOME TO WORSHIP.** Like Mary and Elizabeth, we share the anticipation of what God is birthing — through Jesus, and in all our lives always.

**ALTAR FLOWERS** today are given in celebration of our 36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on December 23<sup>rd</sup> by Luis and Sharon Peña.



## Christmas Worship Schedule

**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:** There will be a 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Candlelight Service with Holy Communion. Offerings from these services and Thanksgiving offerings will go to ELCA – Good Gifts. Please invite your family, friends and guests as we celebrate our Savior’s birth.

**DECEMBER 29, 2024:** There will only be a 9 a.m. service this day with celebration of Holy Communion and Sunday School to follow.

**ANNUAL REPORTS DEADLINE** – In order to put the Annual Report into your hands a week earlier than the January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting, the deadline to have all committee reports submitted to the office is January 5, 2025. Please plan accordingly. **Having them in a Word document digital format will help me a lot.** Thank you. Barb

**HERMAN FUNERAL HOMES, LLC**, will be hosting Monarch Grief Center for a lunch and discussion on **Grief: Helping Yourself and Others** at 900 North Street, Fremont, Ohio on Friday, January 24<sup>th</sup>, 2025 from 12 p.m. to 2 p.m. You are invited! Are you or someone you know struggling with the loss of a loved one? Please RSVP by January 20, 2025 to 419-332-7391.



**THE FAITH WOMEN'S GROUP** were blessed to have Lutheran Church Charities Comfort Dogs, Claudia and Lazarus and their handlers Nancy, Mack, and Leslie at their recent program. This special group is based at Trinity Lutheran Church and School in Toledo. It was an informative and inspirational evening. Please admire the small display and information in the Narthex.

**CHRISTIAN MISSION AND OUTREACH**

During these cold, winter months we will be collecting items to donate to Pontifex to help keep homeless folks in our community warm. The mission of Pontifex is to provide hope, health, and healing to folks in need. Our mission and action team is purchasing coffee and hot chocolate at this time. There is a short list of other items needed right now. There is a box in the narthex in which you are invited to place your donations for those folks who are less fortunate. We will be gathering these items through January. Let's show God's love and care to those in need. Warm Winter Coats, Mittens, Scarves, Caps.

**PRAYER SISTERS FOR 2025** – You have the opportunity to be matched up with a prayer sister for 2025. Prayer sisters keep in touch with each other throughout the year. This can mean meeting for lunch or dinner, sending greeting cards, praying for each other regularly and anything else fun that you can think of to do together. **It really is quite rewarding!** If you would like to have a prayer sister, please let Barb Kocsis know (567-219-2603). Thank you.

**2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES** are available in the narthex. If you have not picked yours up yet, please do so.

**CHURCH TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES AND THE F.L.C.W. PROGRAM BOOKLETS** for 2025 are available in the narthex for you as well.

**REMINDER...** *When Sandusky County is under a Level 3 Snow Advisory the church will be closed. This includes Sunday services as well as all weekday events, meetings and activities for that day. If we are under a level 1 or 2 snow emergency, the church will be open and if it's on a day of worship, we will have worship.*

## ASSISTING TODAY

**Pastor:** Rev. Tim Miller    **Organist:** Parm Boyer    **Pianist:** Becky Fox  
**Sr. Choir Director:** Darla Brown    **Praise Choir Dir.:** Becky Fox  
**Flautist:** Marilyn Ring    **Soloist:** Shelli Burgoon

**8:00 a.m.**

**10:30 a.m.**

**Greeter:** Lillian Harder    Mike & Toni Cooper

**Lector:** Sandie Reed    Amy Wagner

**Acolyte:** Easton Root

**Communion:** S. Reed/D. Fahle    Amy Wagner & Marie Reiselt

**Counters:** Annie Gazdecki\* & Anne Gerner

**Fellowship Time Host:**

**Altar Guild:** Annie, Allison and Lauren Gazdecki

## ASSISTING CHRISTMAS EVE

**Preaching:** Pastor Tim Miller    **Organist:** Parm Boyer

**Bell Choir Director:** Darla Brown    **Senior Choir Dir.:** Darla Brown

**Praise Choir Director:** Becky Fox

**CHRISTMAS EVE – 4 P.M.**

**ASSISTING AT 7 P.M.**

**Greeters:** Ron & Nancy Root

Paeth Family

**Lectors:** Ken Walker, Jr.

Karly Paeth

**Acolytes:** Robert Fought

Karly Paeth

**Communion:** Kim Smith/Angi Miller

Cheryl Paeth/Jackie Seibert

**Counters:** Annie Gazdecki\* & Anne Gerner

**Altar Guild:** Annie, Allison and Lauren Gazdecki

## ASSISTING NEXT WEEK

**Pastor:** Rev. Tim Miller    **Organist:** Parm Boyer

**Sr. Choir Director:** Darla Brown

**9:00 a.m.**

**Greeter:** Paul Antesberger/Cindy Zorn

**Lector:** Darla Brown

**Acolyte:**

**Communion:** Darla Brown & Paul Antesberger

**Counters:** Cheryl Durnwald\* & Randy Koch

**Fellowship Time Host:**

**Altar Guild:** Annie, Allison and Lauren Gazdecki

**FAITH ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK OF – Dec. 15 to Dec. 22**

**Sunday**

Dec. 22-----8 & 10:30 a.m.   Worship with Holy Communion  
  9:15 a.m.    Sunday School & Fellowship Time

**Monday   OFFICE OPEN**

Dec. 23-----8 a.m.    Men’s Group in Fellowship Hall  
                                  10 a.m.    Valley View Tea Time with God

**Tuesday   OFFICE CLOSED**

Dec. 24-----4:00 p.m.   Candlelight Service with Holy Communion  
                                  7:00 p.m.   Candlelight Service with Holy Communion

**Wednesday   OFFICE CLOSED**

Dec. 25-----    **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**

**Thursday   OFFICE OPEN**

Dec. 26-----

**Friday    OFFICE OPEN**

Dec. 27-----

**Saturday**

Dec. 28-----

**Sunday**

Dec. 29-----9 a.m.    Worship with Holy Communion  
                                  10:15 a.m.   Sunday School & Fellowship Time

---

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024: ATTENDANCE: 194 – OFFERING: \$6,304.52  
NOISY OFFERING, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2024: \$164.05

---

**PRAYING DAILY**



**For healing and hope:** Pat Copley, Connie Diekman, Della Humbarger, Denny Krumnow, Bill Leutenegger, Stan Moyer, Nancy Mylander, Gary Overmyer, Letty Rusch, Bob Schneider, Bill Seibert, Dorothy Swedersky, Janet Tressler, Carnetta Weber, Linda Woessner. Sue Baker, Cameron Druyor, Allen Gazdecki, Kyla Johnson, Gayle Maves, Betsy Schwab, Rose Wensingler.

**For our Military:** Noah Egbert, Troy Halfhill, Jade Kayser, Daniel Linder, Tony Rozzi, Christopher Templeton, & Joshua Tooman.

**For our Bishops:** Bishop Christian Ndossa, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and NWOS Bishop Daniel Beaudoin and Staff

**For our partner congregation in Bumila, Tanzania**

**And its pastor:** Pastor Peter Magasi

# GOSPEL MESSAGE

December 22, 2024  
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

## Not Fate but Faith

It's easy to take for granted that everything came together just so. With Christmas only days away, the expectant mood of the Advent season turns swiftly to joy. We might as well already be pacing outside the stable as we eagerly anticipate the baby soon to be born. Because we know what happens next, we might even assume that events *had* to unfold exactly the way they did: The angel Gabriel came to Mary, her pregnancy seemed inevitable, and the promises God had made to Israel would be proven complete. We are not likely to give Mary's role in the story a second thought. We assume she had little choice. At least that's the way we often think about her response.

But that's not entirely the way the story goes. The gospel itself doesn't assume as much. Elizabeth certainly doesn't. She acknowledges Mary's willingness to honor the angel's announcement: "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord" (Luke 1:45). For indeed, the angel's words initially confused Mary: none of it seemed to make sense. Her part in the story could have ended there. And yet she is moved by what she hears. Her trust in God's word is neither coerced compliance nor certain knowledge, but a response rooted in trust—not a foregone conclusion but a faithful leaning into the promises presented to her. The story did not have to go the way it did, but Mary trusted that it would.

Often only when we reflect on the journey we've already made, do we fully appreciate the ways God has repeatedly shown up. There's a gift in such moments of clarity. There's also a gift in the realization that even in seemingly impossible circumstances, choices must often be made. This was true for Mary, and also for Jesus. His journey from the cradle to the cross was not fate: it was a series of faithful choices, like Mary's, to trust in God's promises of new life.