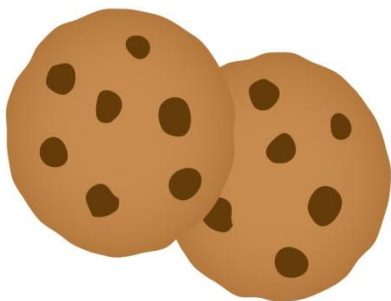
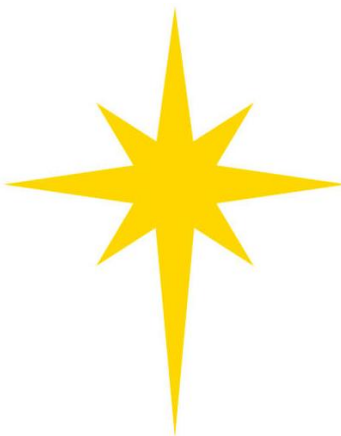




Salem Lutheran Church
401 S. Lake St. Lake Mills IA 50450

Welcome to the House of the Lord

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 18, 2022 – 9:00am



OUR MISSION: We are God forgiven and mission driven.

OUR VISION: To be that Lake Mills place where belonging, healing, growing, serving and believing are open to all, regardless of background, experience or aptitude. Central to this is that we are a -forgiving, mission-driven community, which means we all want to have an impact, shaped by the love of Christ to serve all others.

Sunday--9:00am Worship Service

Preaching: Pastor Joel Guttormson

Organist/Pianist: Ruth Sheldon

Readers: Faith Formation Students

Sound: Al Skellenger

Live Stream: Brad Evenson

Acolytes: Gavin Paton, Tori Sterrenberg

Ushers: Cora, Jen & Adam Sauer

Communion Servers:

Altar Guild for December: All members

Worship Coordinator: Mary Peterson

The Live Stream Broadcast is given in Loving Memory of Eva Colby and
Ardell & Phyllis Ausen From Doug & Candy Hanna

A Purple Poinsettia is displayed in Loving Memory
of Michael Gardner's Birthday, From His Family.
Michael's Birthday is December 18th.

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INTRODUCTION

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

GATHERING

PRELUDE

BELL

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones.

As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we wait and dream for you.

Bless us and let your face shine upon us,

More radiant than these candles, and more dear than all else we seek.

Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good.

Send us your promised child, our Emmanuel and Savior. Amen.

Four candles are lit as we sing the advent canticle

ADVENT CANTICLE *Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah* ELW #262



- | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Light one can-dle to | watch for Mes-si - ah: | let the light ban-ish | dark - ness. |
| 2 | Light two can-dles to | watch for Mes-si - ah: | let the light ban-ish | dark - ness. |
| 3 | Light three can-dles to | watch for Mes-si - ah: | let the light ban-ish | dark - ness. |
| 4 | Light four can-dles to | watch for Mes-si - ah: | let the light ban-ish | dark - ness. |



| | | | | | | | |
|------|---------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------|-------------|--------|----------------|
| He | shall bring | sal - va - tion | to Is - ra - el, | God | ful - fills | the | prom - ise. |
| He | shall feed | the flock | like a shep - herd, | gent - ly | lead | them | home - ward. |
| Lift | your heads | and lift | high the gate - way | for the | King | of | glo - ry. |
| He | is com - ing, | tell the | glad tid - ings. | Let | your | lights | be shin - ing! |

GREETING

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

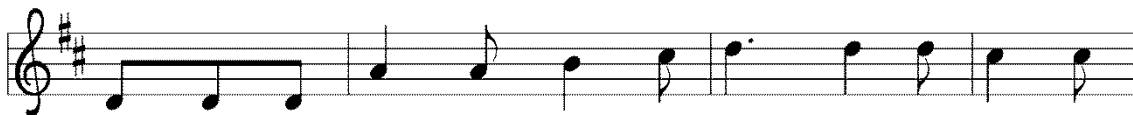
And also with you.

We stand for the gathering hymn as the children process

GATHERING SONG

People, Look East

ELW #248



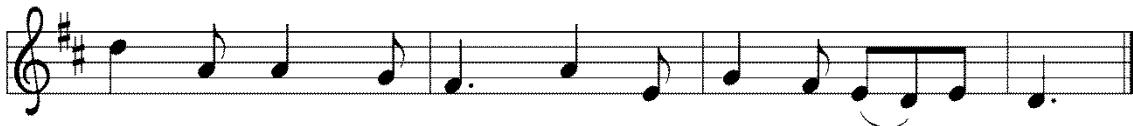
1 Peo - ple, look east. The time is near of the crown - ing
 2 Fur - rows, be glad. Though earth is bare, one more seed is
 3 Stars, keep the watch. When night is dim, one more light the
 4 An - gels an - nounce with shouts of mirth him who brings new



of the year. Make your house fair as you are a - ble,
 plant - ed there. Give up your strength the seed to nour - ish,
 bowl shall brim, shin - ing be - yond the frost - y weath - er,
 life to earth. Set ev - 'ry peak and val - ley hum - ming



trim the hearth and set the ta - ble. Peo - ple, look
 that in course the flow'r may flour - ish. Peo - ple, look
 bright as sun and moon to - geth - er. Peo - ple, look
 with the word, the Lord is com - ing. Peo - ple, look



east, and sing to - day— Love, the Guest, is on the way.
 east, and sing to - day— Love, the Rose, is on the way.
 east, and sing to - day— Love, the Star, is on the way.
 east, and sing to - day— Love, the Lord, is on the way.

THE SYMBOLS OF CHRISTMAS

Braylon: I love getting ready for Christmas!

Tatum: It's my favorite time of the year!

Jaden: This stuff just fills up the house and gets in my way.

Tori: I'm so glad you are excited about it. But you have to remember that this "stuff", as Jaden put it, means something as well. Why do we celebrate Christmas?

Tatum: It's Jesus' birthday!

Finn: It's when we remember that Jesus came into this world as a baby.

Tori: That's right.

Mason: Why do we have to decorate then?

Tori: Well, let's talk about some of this "stuff" and what it all means. Let's start with the evergreen tree that we decorate each year.

THE SYMBOL OF THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Mya: An **evergreen tree** has a very appropriate name. It is ever green – always green. It does not become dormant in the winter as other trees do. The color green represents new life and the needles of the evergreen always point up – heavenward. It symbolizes our everlasting life with Jesus Christ.

Paisley: We should be as the evergreen tree – always full of life, never becoming dormant in our life with Christ as our arms are lifted heavenward.

"The bread of God is the One who comes down from heaven. He gives life to the world"(John 6:33).

CHRISTMAS TREE SONG

O'Christmas Tree

Braylon: I didn't realize.

Tatum: Wow, I didn't either.

Finn: I just thought it was a tree.

Mason: Yeah, I didn't know that it meant something.

Jaden: What does this other stuff mean?

Tori: How about the ornaments?

Danika: **Ornaments** are used to decorate Christmas trees each and every year. People look for the perfect



ones to fit on their tree. Our Christmas tree just wouldn't seem complete without our ornaments. Ornaments can symbolize the blessings in our lives. Our lives just wouldn't be complete without God's blessings. Everything that we have is due to God loving us so much that He wants to shower us with His blessings.

Taryn: Just as ornaments are all different shapes and sizes, blessings are all different as well. God picks and chooses each blessing for us so that it will be just right. The next time you decorate your tree, and as you put up each ornament, think of a blessing that God has given you. I think you'll find that you'll run out of ornaments before you can run out of blessings!

"Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD your God that He has given you" (Deuteronomy 16:17).

Braylon: Blessings!

Tatum: We have so many blessings.

Finn: We have our home and our family.

Tori: Oh, there's so much more. How about we talk about the lights and candles.

THE SYMBOLS OF LIGHTS AND CANDLES

Gavin: **Lights and candles** are used to give light. When a room is full of darkness, it is dark. But, if you light a single match in a dark room, the room is light. There may be more darkness, but the light overpowers it. We are that light. We can be the single light in a world of darkness. We must share our light with the world so that the light increases.

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house."

Matthew 5:14-15

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SONG *This Little Light of Mine*

Braylon: I love the lights!

Tatum: They're so pretty!

Jaden: I guess I never looked at it that we are the lights for God.

Tori: Exactly. We also can decorate with bells.



THE SYMBOL OF CHRISTMAS BELLS

Kalen: The **bell** rings out to guide the lost sheep back to the fold, signifying that all are precious in the eyes of the Lord. Jesus is our shepherd and He laid down His life for us so that we may spend eternity with Him in heaven. He is calling us to follow Him through His Word. Are you going to listen? *If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leaven the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?*” (Matthew 18:12).

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).

CHRISTMAS BELLS SONG *Christmas Bells*

Braylon: The bells sound so beautiful.

Tatum: I just love to listen to them.

Tori: Who likes candy canes?

All Children: ME!



THE SYMBOL OF THE CANDY CANE

Griffin: The **Candy Cane** symbolizes multiple things. If you hold it upright...it looks like a shepherd’s crook. The shepherds were some of the few people who were able to see the baby Jesus in Bethlehem. If you turn the candy cane upside down...it looks like a “J”. Jesus starts with the letter “J”. The colors of the candy cane are also symbolic. The red represents the blood that Jesus shed for us on the cross and the white represents the purity of Jesus.

Taryn: There are candy canes with three small red stripes running around it. These stripes symbolize the Trinity – God the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. Who knew that this delicious simple candy was so profoundly symbolic of our Lord Jesus Christ and His simple birth?

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

Braylon: These are delicious!



Tatum: I love this part of Christmas.

Finn: It means so many things.

Mason: There seems to be a reason why we do everything that we do.

Jaden: I can see now how this “stuff” has meaning.

Tori: I’m so glad that you are changing your mind about some of these things. Do you know what the star represents?

THE SYMBOL OF THE CHRISTMAS STAR

Paisley: The **star** is a heavenly sign of prophecy fulfilled ages ago, the shining hope for all mankind. The star led the wise men to find the baby Jesus. These wise men traveled many miles following a star in the sky. The star was their “guiding light” to the Savior. God was the wise men’s travel agent, in sorts, leading them to the greatest destination known to man – the Savior.

Lily: We now have His Word as our “guiding light” to lead us to be with Him in heaven. Are you going to follow Him?

“And behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy” (Matthew 2:9b-10).

CHRISTMAS STAR SONG

Rise Up Shepherds and Follow

Braylon: I like that the star was their “guiding light”.

Tatum: They were able to follow the star to Jesus.

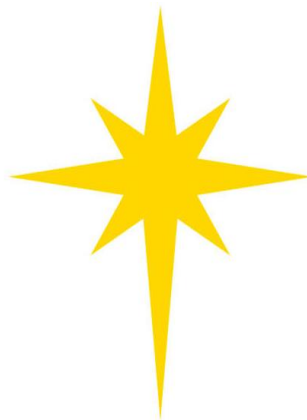
Finn: That must have been an amazing journey.

Mason: I’m glad that we have the Bible now to help lead us.

Jaden: Yes, God’s Word leads us to Jesus.

Tori: We like to put the angel on top of our tree.

Kenley: Imagine...you are a lowly shepherd, watching over your sheep. This night seems no different than any other. Then all of a sudden, an **angel** of the Lord is in the sky above you...telling you of the Savior’s birth. You, a shepherd? Why did God send an angel to tell shepherds? Because the message that God had about the birth of Jesus was for all people! Not just for the right, not just for the Jew...EVERYONE!



Madison: God chose His #1 messenger to tell the lowest of people (in the world's eyes) of His Son's birth! God looks at the heart – not what the world looks at – thank goodness!

“And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone ‘round about them: and they were so afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:9-11).

Finn: The angel was like a messenger of God.

Mason: The angel told the Good News of Jesus' birth.

Jaden: Wow! I didn't know. But what about all the other “stuff” that we put around the house.

Tori: Well, Let's talk about this holly that we're going to put on the table.

THE SYMBOL OF HOLLY AND WREATH

Knox: We see **holly** as decorations during the Christmas season. But do we really understand what holly stands for? The leaves represent the crown of thorns that were placed upon Jesus' head as He was being crucified. The berries symbolize the blood that He shed for us. He endured criticism, excruciating pain, and embarrassment...all for you and I.

Cam: The next time you see a decoration with holly on it, remember what was done for you so that He could spend eternity with you. I know that I will.

“And twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on His head and put a reed in His right hand. And kneeling before Him, they mocked Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” (Matthew 27:29).

THE HOLLY SONG *Oh What a Glorious Night*

Braylon: That's amazing what He did for us.

Tatum: It makes me feel blessed to know Him.

Finn: He went through all of that for me!

Mason: He came to this earth in order to die for me and you.

Jaden: That's quite an amazing thing to think about during this Christmas season.

Tori: That leads us to this wreath that we'll hang on the door.



Mya: The **wreath** has its evergreen branches bent in a circle so that the ends touch, having no beginning or end, just as there is no beginning or end of Jesus' eternal love for us. Just as the wreath looks the same throughout and seems to not change, so He will always be the same.

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

Jaden: That's a great reminder that even though we change and grow, He'll always be right there. Now what about the presents? Those can't have a meaning.

Tori: Well, you will be surprised then.

THE SYMBOLS OF THE WISE MEN'S GIFTS

Braxton: These days, the world has forgotten the reason for Christmas. Most people seem to think that getting presents is the greatest thing about Christmas. Other people seem to think that presents have nothing to do with Christmas. Well, they are both wrong. The **wise men** came to visit Jesus as a young child and gave Him presents. They gave Him gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Cooper: They offered Him gold, as a king, paying Him tribute; frankincense, as God, for they honored God with the smoke of incense; and myrrh, as a man that should die, for myrrh was used in embalming dead bodies. These men...these wise men...saw this child and knew that He is a king, is God, and that He would die for the sins of the world. How can anyone, with the knowledge that we have now, not believe?

"The Wise Men went to the house. There they saw the child with His mother Mary. They bowed down and worshipped Him. Then they opened their treasures. They gave Him gold, incense, and myrrh." Matthew 2:11



THE GIFT BEARERS SONG**We Three Kings**

Bell Choir

The pastor will sing the verses; all may join in singing the refrain

Refrain

Oh, star of won-der, star of night, star with roy-al beau-ty bright;
west-ward lead-ing, still pro-ceed-ing, guide us to thy per-fect light!

Braylon: I love to get presents!**Tatum:** I didn't know that was the reason we give gifts.**Finn:** But, Jesus is really the greatest gift to us all.**Mason:** He truly is.**Jaden:** I never knew that the wise men's gifts had meanings. What about the wrapping? That's just something that we came up with, right?**Tori:** Yes, and no. The bows and ribbons do have a special meaning that would be good for us to remember.**Jackson:** Many people spend hours wrapping all of their **presents** during Christmas time. They use ribbons, garland, and bows to make sure that their presents are as beautiful as possible. What they don't realize is that the items that they use to complete the outside of the gift have more meaning than the actual gift inside.**Daven:** The bow ties our present with a beautiful ribbon, just as Jesus ties us as Christians together in His love. We may not be in the same family, but we are all in the family of God. Jesus is the ribbon that binds us together.*"And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony" (Colossians 3:14).***OFFERING****MUSICAL OFFERING**

OFFERING PRAYER

God of abundance,
receive and bless these gifts we have offered. Join our hearts with the song of the angels. Strengthen us to share with all the world the abundance of your grace upon grace, poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. **Amen.**

THE TRUE CHRISTMAS GIFT SONG *Happy Birthday, Jesus*

Braylon: I just thought the wrappings were to hide the present inside.

Tatum: Yea, I never thought about them having their own meaning.

Finn: There's really a lot to think about.

Mason: I guess I'll have to look at things differently.

Jaden: That's for sure. I never knew that all of this "stuff" had meaning.

Tori: People do get a little crazy with the "stuff" of Christmas. The parties, the gift-giving, the "busy-ness" of the Christmas season. What we need to do is slow down and enjoy every moment by remembering the true meaning of Christmas.

Who wants a cookie?

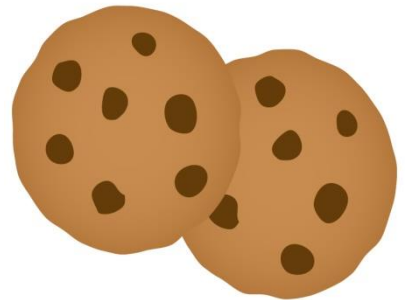
Jaden: I know there's not a meaning in the cookie.

Tori: Oh, you'd be surprised.

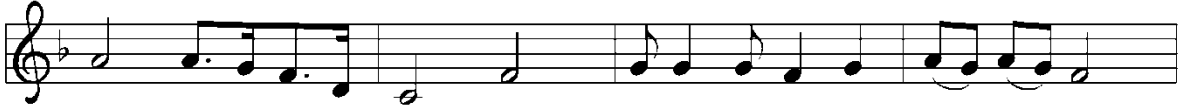
THE SYMBOLS OF COOKIES

Emeryn: Making **cookies** is a favorite pastime for most families during the Christmas season. Cookie cutters are used to turn ordinary dough into edible masterpieces. God doesn't use cookie cutters when He creates each one of us. He makes every one of us so special and unique that He would have to break the mold after just one use.

Kalli: He is the potter and we are His clay. He wants to mold us into His masterpieces. We only need to be moldable and willing to follow His lead. *"Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel"* (Jeremiah 18:6).



Please join us downstairs after the program for cookies!

SENDING SONG***Go Tell It on the Mountain*****ELW #290***Refrain*

Go tell it on the moun - tain, o-ver the hills and ev - 'ry - where;



go tell it on the moun - tain that Je - sus Christ is born!



- 1 While shep-herds kept their watch-ing o'er si - lent flocks by night,
- 2 The shep-herds feared and trem-bled when, lo, a - bove the earth
- 3 Down in a lone - ly man - ger the hum-ble Christ was born;

Refrain

be - hold, through-out the heav-ens there shone a ho - ly light.
rang out the an - gel cho - rus that hailed our Sav - ior's birth.
and God sent us sal - va - tion that bless-ed Christ-mas morn.

DISMISSAL

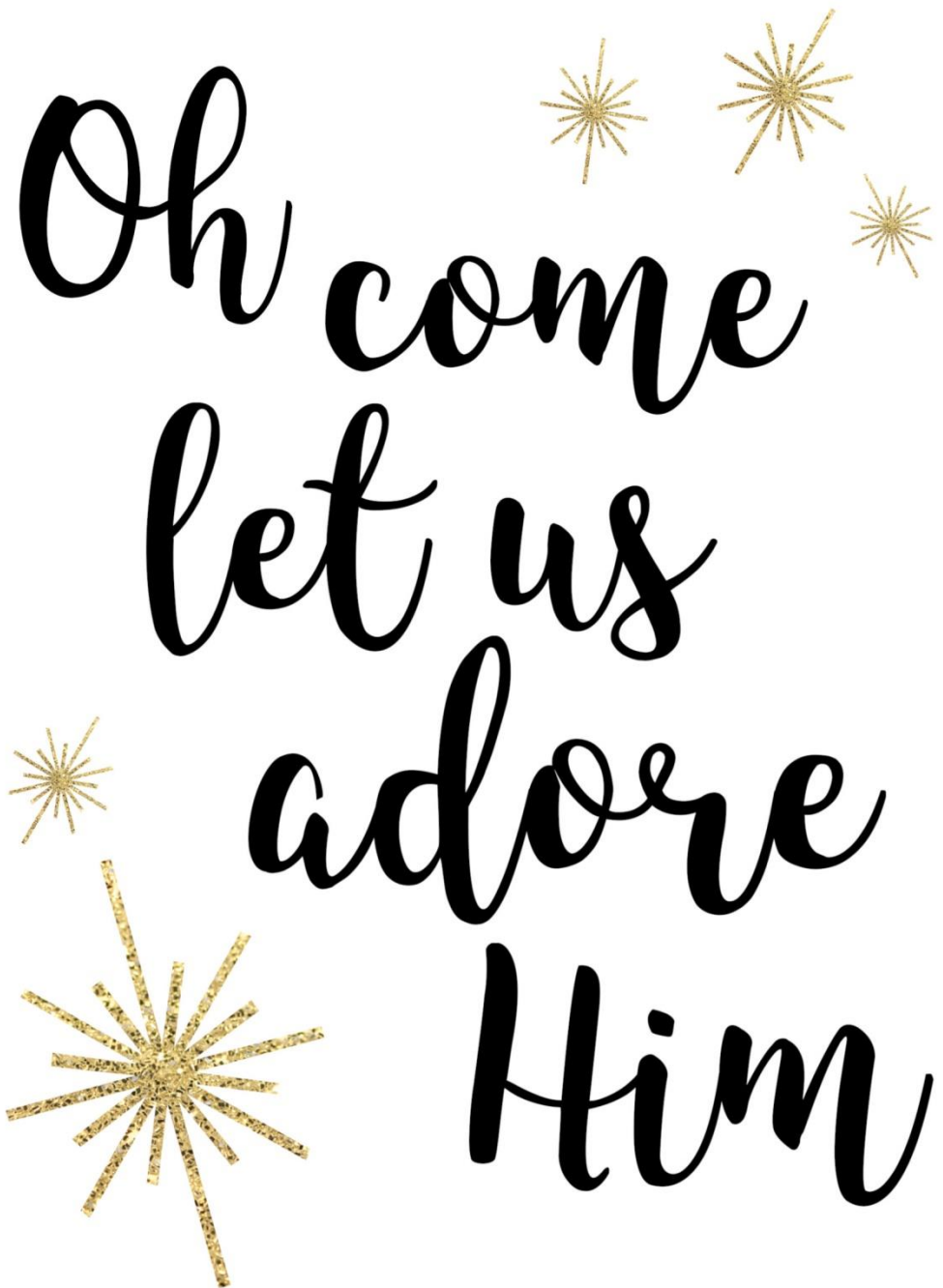
Go in peace. Christ is near.

Thanks be to God.**POSTLUDE**

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Oh come
let us
adore
Him





... and you shall call his name Jesus,
for he will save his people from their sins.
Matthew 1:21