

JOHN THE BAPTIZER POINTS EVERYONE TO THE MESSIAH

The Fourth Sunday of Advent
Rorate Coeli

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN | Kearney, NE

Sunday, December 24, 2017



WELCOME TO GOOD SHEPHERD!

We are so happy you could join us today! If we can assist you in any way with questions about our confession of faith, spiritual struggles, understanding our liturgical service, or any other need, please let us know. It is our prayer that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will strengthen and comfort you.

For your convenience, **Listening Devices** are available for those who need assistance in hearing the service. Please speak with an usher if you need one. A **Large-Print Service Folder** is also available if you are in need of it. A **Nursery** is also available and is equipped with a speaker so that a minimal amount of the service is missed. The nursery is located in the hallway just off the entryway (first door on left).

SERVICE NOTES FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

The coming of God in all His unveiled power at Mount Sinai was terrifying to the people of Israel. The thundering voice of the Lord puts sinners in fear of death (Deut. 18:15–19, *First Lesson*). God, therefore, raised up a prophet like Moses—the Messiah, the Christ. God came to His people veiled in human flesh. The skies poured down the Righteous One from heaven; the earth opened her womb and brought forth Salvation (*Introit*) through the blessed Virgin Mary, the mother of the Lord. The fruit of her womb is the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, the One whose sandal strap John was not worthy to loose (John 1:19–28, *Holy Gospel*). In Jesus we are delivered from fear and anxiety. In Him alone we have the peace of God which surpasses all understanding (Phil. 4:4–7, *Second Lesson*).

HOLY COMMUNION IS OFFERED TODAY

As Christians who believe that the Bible is inspired by God and that every word written in it is God's holy word, we believe that we receive the body and blood in, with, and under the bread and wine. While this is something that goes beyond our human understanding, our faith allows us to accept this as true. God warns us in the Bible that anyone who doesn't understand this teaching or who denies this real

presence of Christ's body and blood will do damage to his or her soul if not properly taught first (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

As a congregation we care about people and about the spiritual well-being of individuals, especially those attending the Lord's Table today. If you are a guest and desire to commune, please speak to the pastor before the service. Our altar is open to those who confess oneness with us in doctrine, are not under church discipline in another congregation, and are members of our congregation, one of our sister congregations in the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod [WELS], or a member of our sister synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod [ELS].

THE ADVENT WREATH



The traditional Advent Wreath is a combination of two very common symbols: light and the fir tree. From the early centuries of Christianity, it has been the practice to represent Christ by a burning candle. The fir tree also has a long history of religious use, and no doubt the idea of an Advent Wreath was inspired by the fir tree.

It seems that the Advent Wreath originated a few hundred years ago among the Lutherans of eastern Germany. A wreath of evergreens, made in various sizes, was either suspended from the ceiling or placed on a table. Four candles representing the four Sundays of Advent were fastened to the wreath. In modern use, including our own chancel, Advent wreaths have been adapted, often as a modern form of liturgical art.

Eventually, the use of the Advent Wreath became widespread and moved from the home into the church. The general symbolism of the Advent Wreath lies in the growing light of the wreath, increasing each week as we approach the birthday of Jesus, the Light of the world.

ABOUT THE COVER

The artist, Ed Riojas, beautifully illustrates the verse immediately following the Holy Gospel for today: "The next day, John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn. 1:29) This Lamb, like so many lambs throughout the centuries, would be sacrificed—for you for the forgiveness of sins. So, prepare yourselves to meet the Christ—when he comes as a humble babe, and as he meets your lips as bread and wine.

The Fourth Sunday of Advent is traditionally known as *Rorate Coeli*, which are the first Latin words of the *Historic Introit* assigned to this Sunday. *Rorate Coeli* means "Drop down dew, O heavens" (*Rorate, coeli, desuper, et nubes pluant iustum* = Drop down dew [i.e., Shower], O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness). An *Introit* is a chanted or spoken psalm that traditionally followed the Confession and Absolution and preceded the Salutation ("The Lord be with you.") that begins our *Service of the Word* (p. 7). *Introit* means "entrance," and it was during this psalm that the pastor/priest and those involved in the service would "enter" the chancel and altar area.

THE DIVINE SERVICE

The Service of Word & Sacrament — Christian Worship, pg. 26



For more information about this **hymn**, see the insert.

OPENING HYMN

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers | CW 7

INVOCATION

2 Corinthians 13:14

Please stand.

- M The grace of our Lord ❖ Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellow-ship of the Holy Spirit be with you.
- C And also with you.

CONFESSION OF SINS

- M If we say we have fellowship with him but still walk in darkness,
- we are lying and do not put the truth into practice.
- M But if we walk in the light, just as he is in the light,
- we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus 1 John 1:6,7 Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin.
- M God invites us to come into his presence and worship him with humble and penitent hearts. Therefore, let us acknowledge our sinfulness and ask him to forgive us.

Silence for meditation on God's Word and for self-examination as you consider your thoughts, words, and actions according to the Ten Commandments.

M Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful, and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly

Our worship before God is based on what he has taught us through his Word, the Bible. Since it is God who graciously gives us life and salvation, we first gladly receive from him and then respond in prayer and praise. This is called the Divine Service because in it God serves us through his Word and Sacraments. He serves us his gifts, and we thankfully receive. Our worship then stems from our faith, and speaks the words of faith given us by God in his

Word.

sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner.

ABSOLUTION

- God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by his authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son ♣ and of the Holy Spirit.
- c Amen.

LORD, HAVE MERCY — Kyrie

Matthew 20:30; Mark 10:47; Psalm 6:2

For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.



M For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.



For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.



Kyrie eleison [kir-ē-ā ə-lā-ə-sān] is a Greek phrase meaning "Lord, have mercy." We have already received the mercy of God for forgiveness in Holy Absolution. Now we ask his mercy for all other things we need for a God-pleasing spiritual life.

Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care:



Advent, much like the season of Lent, is a season of preparation and expectation. As such, the Gloria in Excelsis is omitted during the season of Advent. In its place the church lights the Advent wreath as a remembrance of Christ's coming.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

- M We light four Advent candles, remembering Jesus, the light of the world. He came to defeat the prince of darkness.
- We remember Jesus, who came in answer to his people's prayers. John proclaimed him the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.



- M We hear his call to see the light.
- We light three Advent candles as a sign of our trust and confidence.
- M Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.
- Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.

ADVENT HYMN

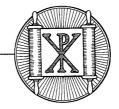
O Lord, How Shall I Meet You | CW 18 (1,5)

During the hymn, two Advent candles are lit.

O Lord, how shall I meet you,
How welcome you aright?
Your people long to greet you,
My Hope, my heart's Delight.
O Jesus, let your Word be
A lamp to light my way,
To show me how to please you,
To guide me ev'ry day.

Sin's debt, that fearful burden,
Let not your souls distress;
Your guilt the Lord will pardon
And cover by his grace.
He comes, for you procuring
The peace of sin forgiv'n,
His children thus securing
A heritage in heav'n.

The Service of the Word



PRAYER OF THE DAY — Collect

M Let us pray.

Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that the sins which weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



Be seated.

FIRST LESSON

Deuteronomy 18:15-19

HE LORD YOUR GOD WILL RAISE UP FOR YOU A prophet like me from among you, from your brother Israelites. Listen to him.

¹⁶ That is exactly what you asked from the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly. You said, "Do not let me hear the voice of the LORD my God anymore, and do not let me see this great fire again, or I will die."

¹⁷ Then the LORD said to me, "They have done well by saying what they said. ¹⁸ I will raise up a prophet for them from among their brothers, like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them everything that I command him. ¹⁹ Anyone who will not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name, I myself will call him to account.

M The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

Here Moses clearly describes his own end, and he yields his mastery to the Prophet who is to come...Here he prophesies that Christ will be true man and will come from the blood of the Tews. because salvation is from the Jews (cf. In. 4:22). No one has ever arisen from this people who taught a different word from the word of Moses and suet up a new ministry except this one Christ of ours."

— Martin Luther

PSALM OF THE DAY





Luther suggested that the words of verse 4, "the Lord is gracious and merciful," should be painted in golden letters around a portrait of the Lord's Supper (AE 13:375), for in the Supper Christians continue to remember both the words and the works of the Lord.

Refrain

Great are the works | of the LORD; they are pondered by all who de- | light in them.

Glorious and majestic | are his deeds, and his righteousness endures for- | ever.

He has caused his wonders to be re- | membered; the LORD is gracious and com- | passionate.

Refrain

The works of his hands are faith- | ful and just; all his precepts are trust- | worthy.

He provided redemption for his | people; he ordained his covenant for- | ever.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of | wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good under- | standing.

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son and to the Holy | Spirit, as it was in the be- | ginning, is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

Refrain

Worshippers may bow toward the altar during the first two lines of the Gloria Patri (italics; Latin for "Glory be to the Father). This action shows honor and glory in physical form as we give our Triune God glory with our lips.

EJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS! I WILL SAY IT AGAIN: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not worry about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

- M The Word of the Lord.
- C Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Please stand.

M Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain down righteousness! Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come! Alleluia!



When life makes no sense, God's peace sustains and directs us. Peace, not readiness or zeal, acts like a guardian angel. This peace resides in Jesus, as the angels will soon announce to the shepherds.

HOLY GOSPEL John 1:19-28

M The Holy Gospel appointed for the Fourth Sunday of Advent according to St. John, chapter one.

HIS IS THE TESTIMONY JOHN GAVE WHEN THE JEWS from Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?"

²⁰ He confessed and did not deny. He confessed, "I am not the Christ."

²¹ And they asked him, "Who are you then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

"No," he answered.

As a faithful servant,

John sets an example

Ironically, the One whose sandal John

was unworthy to

untie became the Suffering Servant,

who bore all our sins.

of humility and reverence for us.

- ²² Then they asked him, "Who are you? Tell us so we can give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"
- ²³ He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' just as Isaiah the prophet said."
- 24 They had been sent from the Pharisees. 25 So they asked John, "Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Christ, or Elijah, or the Prophet?"
- ²⁶ "I baptize with water," John answered. "Among you stands one you do not know. ²⁷ He is the one coming after me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to untie."
- ²⁸ These things happened in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.
- M This is the Gospel of the Lord.



Be seated.

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Jesus, Lamb of God, You Are | CW 27

SERMON John 1:19-28

Remember Who He Is

NICENE CREED

Please stand.

g	We believe in one God,	Dt. 6:4
	the Father, the Almighty,	2 Cor. 6:18
	maker of heaven and earth,	Is. 51:13
	of all that is, seen and unseen.	Col.1:16
	We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,	1 Cor. 8:6
	the only Son of God,	Jn. 3:18
	eternally begotten of the Father,	Heb. 1:2,5
	God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,	Jn. 1
	begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.	Jn. 10:30
	Through him all things were made.	Jn. 1:3
	For us and for our salvation,	1 Th. 5:9
	he came down from heaven,	Jn. 6:38
	was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary,	Lk. 1:35
	and became fully human.	Gal. 4:4
	For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.	Mk. 15:15
	He suffered death and was buried.	1 Cor. 15:3-4a
	On the third day he rose again in accordance	1 Cor. 15:4b
	with the Scriptures.	
	He ascended into heaven	Ac. 2:33-34
	and is seated at the right hand of the Father.	Heb. 1:13
	He will come again in glory	Mt. 25:31
	to judge the living and the dead,	2 Tim.4:1
	and his kingdom will have no end.	Lk. 1:33
	We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,	Job 33:4
	who proceeds from the Father and the Son,	Jn. 15:26
	who in unity with the Father and the Son	Jn. 4:24
	is worshiped and glorified,	
	who has spoken through the prophets.	2 Pet.1:25

Public confession is faith's response to God's saving Word. Christians composed the Nicene Creed in the 4th century to defend the Bible's teachings that both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are true God, equal to the Father in one eternal, undivided Trinity.

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We believe in one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

Eph. 4:5; Ac. 2:38

Mt. 16:18; Eph. 2:19-20

We look for the resurrection of the dead

1 Cor. 15:21-22

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Rev. 22

Be seated.

OFFERING

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Please stand.

This morning each petition of the prayer will be prayed and then concluded in this way:

- M ...Lord, in your mercy,
- C Hear our prayer.

The final petition of the prayer will be concluded in this way:

- ...who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and M forever.
- С Amen.

The Service of the Sacrament

SALUTATION

Ruth 2:4; 2 Timothy 4:22

The Lord be with you. M



Moved by God's love in Christ, by our Offering we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him. If you are visiting with us today, please do not feel obligated to give an offering.

"I certainly love it with all my heart, the precious, blessed Supper of my Lord Jesus Christ, in which He gives me His body and blood to eat and to drink orally, with the mouth of my body, accompanied by the exceedingly sweet and gracious words: Given for you, shed for you."

-Martin Luther

PREFACE

M Lift up your hearts.

Lamentations 3:41



M Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

Psalm 136

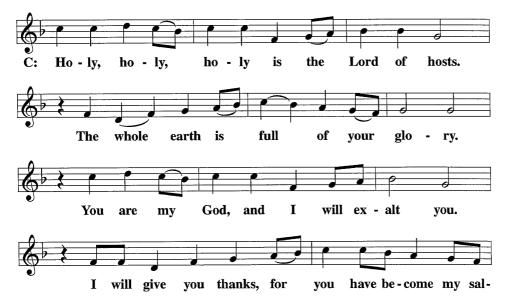


Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In love he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Through his holy prophets, he promised a King to bring light to those living in darkness and in the shadow of death. Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ. To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and thanks and honor and glory for ever and ever:

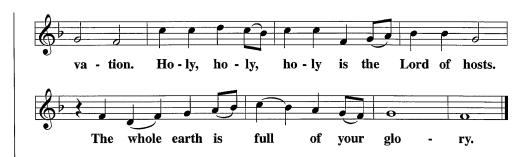
First recorded in A.D. 220, this dialogue and prayer (Salutation & Preface) begins the liturgy of the Lord's Supper. Each season has it's own text (italics).



Isaiah 6:3; Psalm 118



Sanctus means "holy." Used possibly as early as the 2nd century, this canticle was in wide use among Christians in worship by the 14th century.



This Prayer of Thanksgiving is appropriate for Advent. We pray out of thanks (cf. the Salutation: "Let us give thanks to the Lord.") for the blessings we receive in this Sacrament through the Incarnation (that is, God "becoming flesh") and ask that he bless us through the eating and drinking of Christ's body and

blood.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

M Blessed Lord, we praise you because you have fulfilled what you promised through your holy prophets of long ago and have sent your Son, Jesus Christ, to redeem us. We give you sincere and humble thanks for your Son's gracious advent. He has come near to us in human flesh, redeeming the world from darkness; He comes near to us in Word and sacrament, giving us life and light; He will come near in glory, banishing forever the shadows of night. As we receive his body and blood, once given and poured out for us, lift up our hearts to the day when we will see our Redeemer face-to-face. Then we will need no light, nor lamp, nor sun, for the Lord will be our light. Come, Lord Jesus, quickly come.

Now hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

LORD'S PRAYER — Pater Noster

Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4

"The Lord's Prayer is a prayer above all prayers, the greatest of all prayers, which has been taught by the greatest Master of all, in which all spiritual and bodily trouble is comprehended and which is the strongest consolation in all temptations, and in the last hour."

Martin Luther

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.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver \(\Phi \) us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION — Verba

Matthew 26:26-30; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-25

M Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: "Take and eat. This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

PEACE OF THE LORD — Pax Domini

John 20:19

M The peace of the Lord be with you always.

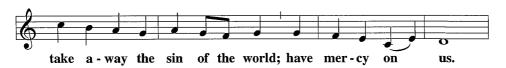


LAMB OF GOD — Agnus Dei

Iohn 1:29







The pastor speaks the Lord's own words.
These words give and bestow what they declare: the body and blood of Christ.

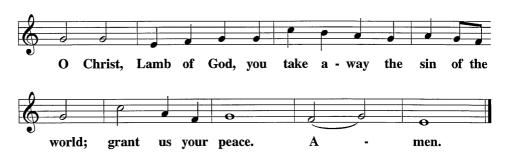
With the body and blood of our Lord Jesus in his hands, the Celebrant turns and speaks the "peace of the Lord" to those assembled. These words are drawn from Jesus' greeting to the Apostles after his resurrection from the dead: "Peace be to you." The Pastor, as Christ's called servant, offers us the same peace in the presence of the risen Christ in bread and wine.

With the words of John the Baptist, the Agnus Dei (Latin for "Lamb of God") confesses the mercy and peace that we receive from the Lamb of God in His Supper. We come to the Lord's Table hungry and thirsty, and He feeds

us with His body and refreshes us with His blood. It is the Lord's Supper. As Luther reminds us, "Our Lord is at one and the same time chef, cook, butler, host, and food."

Good Shepherd confesses and practices the Biblical teaching of a Closed Communion. We ask that only members of the Wisconsin Synod [WELS] or the Evangelical Lutheran Synod [ELS] join us at the Lord's Table. If you have questions concerning our communion practice, or would like to inquire about how you, too, can commune with us, please speak with the Pastor following the service.

Using the words of King David as the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the Tabernacle, we thank the Lord and praise him for what he has done. He sustains us in this precious service with His very body and blood for the forgiveness of all our sins.



Be seated.

DISTRIBUTION

Those who will be receiving Holy Communion today may wish to read **Personal Preparation for Holy Communion**, found on page 156 in the front section of the hymnal. This page helps us put into practice what the Bible encourages: "Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup." (1 Corinthians 11:28)

Prayer suggestions for before and after receiving the Lord's Supper can be found in the hymnal on pages 10-11 and 134-139.

In dismissing the communicants, the minister says:

M Now, may this true body and blood strengthen and keep you in the true faith to life everlasting. Your sins ❖ are forgiven. Go in peace. Amen.

THANK THE LORD

1 Chronicles 16:8-10

Please stand.



C: Thank the Lord and sing his praise. Tell ev-'ry-one what he has done.



Let all who seek the Lord re-joice and proud-ly bear his name.



He re-news his prom-is - es and leads his peo-ple forth in joy with



POST-COMMUNION ANTIPHON & COLLECT

M Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,

1 Corinthians 11:26

we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

M Let us pray.

Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



BLESSING

Numbers 6:22-27

The LORD make his face shine on y

The LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The LORD look on you with favor and \bullet give you peace.



Be seated.

CLOSING HYMN

Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel | CW 23

(responsive reading) and Collect (prayer) echoes the words of St. Paul. We are reminded that the Lord's Supper does not merely look back in time, commemorating and remembering a meal celebrated long ago, but it also looks forward to the feast in the presence of the Lord on the Last Day.

The Antiphon

The blessing of Aaron has been spoken over God's people for over 3,500 years. The Lord said, "So they will put my name on [them], and I will bless them."



SERVING IN THE DIVINE SERVICE

Preacher & Presiding Minister	Pr. Nathanael Seelow
Pianist	Michelle Reinsch
Ushers	Les & Riley Adelung
Greeters	Vivian Alexander
Sound Technician	Jamie Scott

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Christmas Eve Morn Sunday, December 24											Christmas Eve Sunday, December 24									
Advent 4 Service										Nine Lessons and Carols										
9:30a										7p										
Christmas Day											New Years' Eve									
Monday, December 25												Sunday, December 31								
Festival Service												Festival of the Circumcision								
with Holy Communion											and Name of Jesus									
10a											9:30a									



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