

TRINITY EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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(A member of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod)

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Advent 4

December 18, 2022

This final and Fourth Sunday in Advent preps us to joyfully anticipate the fulfillment of the virgin birth of Immanuel—Jesus' name meaning "God with us." Christmas celebrates God's gift of this Baby of Bethlehem.

Yet, we don't allow Jesus' humble human beginning to overshadow the truth that He is the Son of God from eternity. In this mystery of Jesus, the second person of the Godhead made flesh, we recall why He had to assume this human nature. Jesus had to subject Himself under God's holy law to live it perfectly as our Substitute (Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 5:17-18; 5:48). Jesus had to die as the God-man on the cross to pay for sin (Psalm 49:7). Jesus had to rise from death to assure He conquered our sin and defeated death's sting (Romans 4:25; 1 Corinthians 15).

As we stand at the threshold of Christmas, let us never forget that Christ must come to save us. Paul penned why: "*For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all...*" (1 Timothy 2:5-6) Indeed, Jesus has come to us: His Bethlehem birth; He continues to come to us through His word and sacraments; and He will come to us again when He returns on Judgment Day to take us both glorified body and soul to heaven.

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THE LAST VIOLET CANDLE...of our Advent wreath is named after the angels who announced the Savior's birth and praised Him with their songs of "Glory to God." The "Angel's Candle" reminds us that in a world darkened by the burdens of sin, fear and sorrow, there is a great light shining, the light of God's love for sinners. His gift of everlasting life takes away our fear of death and hell. His sure promise of heaven is the biggest and best Christmas present we have ever received! May His light continue to shine in our hearts and lives as we follow Jesus, the Light of the World, to everlasting glory!
Order of Worship: ELH Page 60, **Divine Service** "*Rite Two*" communion.
Hymns: 110 (1,4-6), 105, 111 (1), 88 (4)

THE SERVICE OF THE WORD

Old Testament: Isaiah 7:10-14. Isaiah declares the LORD's gracious sign: "*The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel*"—God with us. That this sign was given to unbelieving King Ahaz only underscores the LORD's grace to sinners and calls us to imitate the faith of Joseph (Gospel) in receiving the miracle of the virgin birth of Christ.

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Psalm of the Day: Psalm 24. Psalm 24 presents a "last call for readiness" in Advent. "*Lift up your heads*" and be ready to receive "*the King of glory*"

(Supplement).

Epistle: Romans 1:1-7. As Paul begins his letter to the Romans, he affirms the two natures of Christ—true man, the descendant of David, born of Mary; yet "*declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead.*" As we prepare to celebrate the birth of the God-man, we rejoice He came to live, die, and rise again that we may be saved by grace through faith.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. "Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel," which means, "God with us." Alleluia. (Matthew 1:23, EHV)

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25. Mary, the virgin chosen by grace, fulfills the sign of God given through Isaiah as she miraculously bears the Savior. Matthew presents the birth of Jesus from Joseph's perspective. His example urges us to live in obedient faith to the One who comes.

Sermon: Romans 1:1-7

Theme - "Grace And Peace Belong To You"

Points to ponder from the day's Scripture readings:

- Old Testament: Isaiah vividly portrays what miraculous truth about Immanuel's birth?
- Epistle: As Paul opens the Holy Spirit's letter to the Romans, what two things does he affirm about the person of Jesus?
- Gospel: When understanding teachings about the Bible, God wants us to "let Scripture interpret Scripture." How does the Holy Spirit in Matthew's gospel clarify any potential misunderstanding about what Isaiah prophesied?
- Gospel: How is Mary's pregnancy different than any other human conception in history?
- Gospel: Jesus' name means "Savior." The name Immanuel stresses what truth about Jesus?

Announcements:

+ Please join us for Bible class and Sunday school: 8:00 a.m. No Sunday school/Bible class on December 25. Christmas Service: 9:00 a.m.
+ Confirmation Class: Monday 3:30-5:00 p.m.
+ timeofgrace.org – a resource for timely, topical subjects answered by pastors from the Wisconsin Synod.
+ **Guests and Visitors** – We are pleased to have you worship with us today. Please sign our guest book before you leave. Our church provides a free daily devotional booklet (*Meditations*). The *Lutheran Sentinel*, a news and informational publication of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, is also available. Please ask for a free copy.

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Isaiah 7:10-14 - The LORD spoke to Ahaz again. He said, "Ask for a sign from the LORD your God. Ask for it either in the depths below or in the heights above." But Ahaz responded, "I will not ask. I will not

test the LORD.” So Isaiah said: Listen now, you house of David. Is it not enough for you to test the patience of men? Will you test the patience of my God as well? Therefore the Lord himself will give a sign for all of you. Look! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and name him Immanuel. (EHV™)

Romans 1:1-7 - Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised in advance through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures. This gospel is about his Son—who in the flesh was born a descendant of David, who in the spirit of holiness was declared to be God’s powerful Son by his resurrection from the dead—Jesus Christ, our Lord. Through him we received grace and the call to be an apostle on behalf of his name, to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles, including you, who were called by Jesus Christ. To all those loved by God who are in Rome, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (EHV™)

Matthew 1:18-25 - This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. His mother, Mary, was pledged in marriage to Joseph. Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her. So he decided to divorce her privately. But as he was considering these things, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” All this happened to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: “Look, the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son. And they will name him Immanuel,” which means, “God with us.” When Joseph woke up from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him. He took Mary home as his wife, but he was not intimate with her until she gave birth to her firstborn son. And he named him Jesus. (EHV™)