

Sunday, December 15, 2024

Advent 4

Pastor Kim Swenson

Warm the Time of Winter



Worship Assistants

Assisting Minister: Cindy Michalski

Reader: Dar Schuurmans

Altar Guild: Terri Hilbert

Communion Assist: Dar Schuurmans

Ushers: Dave & Mary Hansen

Video Tech: Doug Hanson

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

GATHERING

Welcome

Warm the Time of Winter Confession

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
alive in the world,
reviving creation,
arriving soon. **Amen.**

Friends, Hope can feel slippery. One moment we may believe that change will come, that good will win, that the suffering of today will not be the suffering of tomorrow.

The next moment we can receive word of more gun violence, of more mudslinging, or yet another missile headed toward a group of humans.

Hope can feel slippery.

Fortunately for us, God's grace is not.

No matter what we are able to hold, God is able to hold onto us.

So trusting that God's grace does not let us go, join me in the prayer of confession:

Opening Hymn

Warm the Time of Winter

vss. 1&2

1. When the wind of win-ter blows, bring-ing times of
2. When we shiv-er in des-pair, when the chill of
3. When in days of fall-en snow, change con-founds or

sol - i - tude, fill the si - lent, ic - y night;
death comes near, hold us, Spir - it, calm our fear,
love burns low, from the ash - es may there rise

be our hearts' com - pas - sion,
while the eve - ning deep - ens.
phoe - nix of our grow - ing.

Ho-ly light, warm our night; warm the time of win-ter.

Ho-ly light, warm our night; warm the time of win-ter.

Gracious God,
 You paint pictures of what could be,
but we declare those visions impossible.
 You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,
but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.
 You dream of a more just day,
but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that horizon.

Forgive us for losing sight of hope.
Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.
 Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.
**Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams,
 and to not be afraid of either.**
With gratitude we pray, Amen.

Opening Hymn

Warm the Time of Winter

vs 3

Friends, No matter what you hold onto,
 and no matter what you let slip through your hands, God is holding onto you.
 That good news will never change.

So hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:
 Today is a new day. Today, we have reason to hope. Today, we are forgiven.
 And the same will be true tomorrow.

Thanks be to God for a love like that. **Amen.**

Kyrie

17 *f* Cantor

Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e, e - le - i - son.
 Chr - ste, Chri - ste, Chri - ste, e - le - i - son.
 Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e, e - le - i - son.

21 *f* *All*

Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.
 Chr - ste, Chri - ste, Chri - ste e - le - i - son.
 Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e, Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son.

F Cmaj7 D/F# Bm7 Cmaj7

25 1., 2. 3. Am Em/G

1., 2. 3. You will
 Priest: (spoken) May almighty God have mercy on us.

Almighty God has had mercy upon us, has forgiven us our sins, and has brought us to everlasting life. **Amen**

Prayer of the Day

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Let us pray, Holy God, **The stories of Advent are stories many of us have heard before. We've arranged the nativity scenes. We've read the children's books.**

We've seen the movies. We've sung the songs.

But as we come to your scripture this morning, we pray: help us begin again.

Clear the distractions from our minds. Center us in this space. Move through the protective barriers we surround ourselves with and speak to us here and now.

We are listening. We are hopeful. Amen.

Tone Chimes

Hark the Glad Sound

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

WORD

Candle Lighting:

In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again?

Where do we start?

Let us begin with tenderness.

Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve. Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope.

Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us start with love.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone.

May the truth in these lights help us begin again.

May it be so! **Amen.**

First Reading: Luke 1:46-55

⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Word of God, Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

Word for All Ages

Gospel Acclamation

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

Cranberry 247 vs 2

O - so - sŏ o - so - sŏ, pyong - hwa - ũi - im - gŭm
1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.

u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sŏ.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

The Holy Gospel according to Matthew. **Glory to you, O Lord**

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *How Can it Be* (to the tune of "Great is Thy Faithfulness")

How can it be, that the wicked ones prosper?
How can it be, that the greedy ones thrive?
How can it be, that oppression and anger
Hold such control, while the poor just survive?

Refrain:

Though hope is hidden now, God changes nations.
God brings the powerful down to their knees.
God sets a table of great celebration.
God sent us Jesus who welcomes and frees.

Old ways of selfishness, old ways of sinning,
Old ways of apathy seem to go on.
Old angry patterns still seem to be winning,
Old fears and prejudice shadow the dawn.

Refrain

Prophets proclaim it in times of despairing,
Pushing toward justice while others destroy.
Precious the gift! And it's ours for the sharing!
Precious is Christ, who brings hope, giving joy.

Refrain

Evil may prosper, but God's love is stronger.
Everyone, some day, will know this is true:
Envy and strife will not win any longer.
Eternal God, all our hope is in you!

Refrain

Though hope is hidden now, God changes nations.
God brings the powerful down to their knees.
God sets a table of great celebration.
God sent us Jesus who welcomes and frees.

Refrain

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Affirmation of Faith

**We believe in a God who gives us reason to hope, a God who fills our nights with stars,
who follows winter with spring,
who dwells with and among us.**

**We believe that this God has dreams for creation, dreams of justice like a mighty stream
and swords that will be beaten into plowshares.**

**Therefore, we push cynicism aside. We risk vulnerability.
We hold onto hope,
and we declare:**

**“My soul magnifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”**

Prayers of the People

Mighty One, we magnify your glory. You have done great things for us, showing mercy to your people from generation to generation. Hear the prayers of your people in this time and place.

Show your strength and scatter the proud . . . (pause)
Deliver us from the evil powers of sickness,
sorrow, suffering, and sin,
so that all may know fullness of life in you.
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Bring down the powerful and lift up the lowly . . . (pause)
Humble the leaders of nations
and give justice to the oppressed,
so that all may live in dignity and peace.
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Fill the hungry with good things
and empty the pockets of the rich . . . (pause)
Teach us to share our gifts and reorder our priorities,
so that all may seek the common good.
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For what else do the people of God pray?
Silent and spoken prayers are invited

Mighty One, we give thanks for your grace.

As you have helped your people
from generation to generation,
remember your mercy here and now.
This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Peace

Glory to God in the highest,
And peace to God's people on earth.

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

MEAL

Offering

Offering Prayer

Let us pray, 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. Amen.**

Great Thanksgiving *(set to tune of O Come, O Come Emmanuel)*

The God of grace be here with you.
The God of grace be also with you.
Lift up your hearts in thanks and praise.
**Our hearts and hopes to God we raise.
Rejoice! Rejoice! For holy is the Lord,
On earth and in the heav'nly heights adored.**

When Jesus sat at table with his friends,
He took the bread, and blessing it, he said:
"This is my body, offered for you;
Take, eat, this meal of grace and truth."
**Rejoice! Rejoice! We share this living bread,
And seek a day when all shall be fed.**

When supper ended, Jesus took the cup.
He blessed it and he raised it up.
"This cup is life poured out for you.
My promise to make all things new."

**Rejoice! Rejoice! We share the cup of peace
With those who thirst for justice and release.**

O Spirit, fire of hope sent from above
Unite us in salvation and love.
Bless these, your gifts of bread and wine
And fill us with your joy divine.

**Rejoice! Rejoice! We share this meal
And bless our God, who feeds and heals.**

The Lord's Prayer

With hope in our hearts, we unite our voices once more to pray the words your son taught us.

**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.**

Communion Hymns

All Earth is Hopeful

Cranberry 266



To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor
 1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
 3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
 4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



y el sur - co a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el
 Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
 "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
 new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
 This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -
 la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
 here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
 world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
 stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
 clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
 Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

2 *Dice el profeta al pueblo de Israel:*
"De madre virgen ya viene Emmanuel,"
será "Dios con nosotros," hermano será,
con él la esperanza al mundo volverá.

3 *Montes y valles habrá que preparar;*
nuevos caminos tenemos que trazar.
Él está ya muy cerca, venidlo a encontrar,
y todas las puertas abrid de par en par.

4 *En una cueva Jesús apareció,*
pero en el mundo está presente hoy.
Vive en nuestros hermanos, con ellos está;
y vuelve de nuevo a darnos libertad.

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

Music: TODA LA TIERRA, Alberto Taulé

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- 1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.
 2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, but the mys - tic Breath of God,
 3 Won - drous birth—oh, won - drous child—from his throne, a vir - gin mild!
 4 From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, back to God his path - way leads;



Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth: God has cho - sen such a birth.
 was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of wom - an, blos - som fresh.
 Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
 out to van - quish death's com - mand, back to reign at God's right hand.

5 Now your manger, shining bright,
 hallows night with newborn light.
 Night cannot this light subdue;
 let our faith shine ever new.

6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
 virgin's son, incarnate Word!
 To the holy Trinity
 praise we sing eternally!

Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340–397; Martin Luther, 1483–1546; tr. hymnal version

Music: NUN KOMM, DER HEIDEN HEILAND, J. Walter, *Geistliche Gesangbüchlein*, 1524

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Post Communion Prayer

Nourishing God,

Sometimes we tell ourselves that too much has taken place to begin again.

We think the world is too far gone.

We think we have made too many mistakes.

We tell ourselves that we couldn't possibly begin again.

But then we come to this Table and we get a glimpse of your kingdom. We

come to this Table and all are welcomed, all are seen, all are fed.

And just like that, we have hope.

Just like that, we begin again.

Thank you for the gift of this fresh start. Thank you for planting hope deep in our bones. Thank you for meeting us in ordinary bread and juice to remind us that it's never too late to build your kingdom here.

We are grateful. We are so grateful. **Amen.**

Announcements

Benediction

As you leave this place,
may you have the wisdom to lean on one other.
May you have the courage to hold onto hope,
the compassion to do the good that is yours to do,
and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing.
For in a world full of dead ends,
Advent invites us to begin again.
So start here. Start now. Start with love and begin again.

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. **Amen.**

Closing Hymn

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Cranberry 244



1 Re - joice, re - joice, be - liev - ers, and let your lights ap - pear;
2 The watch - ers on the moun - tain pro - claim the bride - groom near;
3 The saints, who here in pa - tience their cross and suf - f'ings bore,
4 Our hope and ex - pec - ta - tion, O Je - sus, now ap - pear;



the eve - ning is ad - vanc - ing, and dark - er night is near.
go forth as he ap - proach - es with al - le - lu - ias clear.
shall live and reign for - ev - er when sor - row is no more.
a - rise, O Sun so longed for, o'er this be - night - ed sphere.



The bride - groom is a - ris - ing and soon is draw - ing nigh.
The mar - riage feast is wait - ing; the gates wide o - pen stand.
A - round the throne of glo - ry the Lamb they shall be - hold;
With hearts and hands up - lift - ed, we plead, O Lord, to see



Up, pray and watch and wres - tle; at mid - night comes the cry.
A - rise, O heirs of glo - ry; the bride - groom is at hand.
in tri - umph cast be - fore him their di - a - dems of gold.
the day of earth's re - demp - tion that sets your peo - ple free!

Text: Laurentius Laurenti, 1660–1722; tr. Sarah B. Findlater, 1823–1907
Music: HAF TRONES LAMPA FÄRDIG, Swedish folk tune

Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

Thanks be to God.

Fellowship hour continues in the lounge.

Funding for Mission & Budget

Monthly Receipts through 12/10/24 \$12,317.30

Monthly Budget Expenses:..... \$18,743.00

YTD Receipts through 11/30/24..... \$ 214,286.00

Yearly Budget..... \$ 224,917.00

The Bethel Weekly

Fellowship Hour: Please, if you are able to help on a future date in December or January, sign up in the hallway.

2025 Budget Meeting: is today immediately following worship. Please plan on staying for this important meeting. Please pick up a copy of the proposed budget in the narthex or lounge.

Midweek Advent Service: This Wednesday, December 18th, will be the final Holden Evening Prayer at 6:30pm.

Christmas Eve Worship: Services will be Tuesday, December 24th at 4:00pm with Tone Chimes special music and 9:00pm for the candlelight service with Choir. There will be no service on Wednesday, December 25th. Please see the sign-up sheet in the hallway for Worship volunteers.

Reverse Advent Calendar: Remember to pick-up items for the Resurrection Pantry. Those can be brought in anytime during the month of December.

2025 Offering Envelopes: Are available for pick-up in the lounge. Please do not start using until January 1st.

Aebleskiver 2025: It's never too early to start looking for sales on ingredients and basket items.

Handbags for Hope: In conjunction with the Resurrection Food Pantry, we are asking all the ladies to bring in any unwanted purses. Donations are also needed of travel size hygiene items such as toothbrushes, shampoo, lip balm, etc. to fill the purses prior to distribution. Suggestions can be found on the front of the bin in the lounge.

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