

WORSHIPPRELUDE *O, Come, O Come Emmanuel*

Kristal Sneed

+GATHERING+

WELCOME—Meditative Choir Music for Lighting of the Advent Candles

APOSTOLIC 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.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

What does the Lord want to do for us this season of Advent? God wants to renew us in our spirit, to cleanse whatever prevents us from having life and life abundant. It starts with our complete surrender to the HEART of God as we say: **“Holy God, and whom we live and move and have our being, help us to know and love You more; help us to empty ourselves of our false and fearful Ego, and be filled with the Holy Spirit until our cup is overflowing. Make our souls ready to receive the gift of the vulnerable Christ child, to let Him nestle in our heart and teach us His Way”.**

God in Christ does not want the punishment of the sinner but the transformation of the sinner’s heart, until it is “no longer the sinners who live, but Christ who lives in them.” Hear the Good News: You are children/adults of your father in heaven who makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. You are forgiven and made new in Jesus Christ, our Lord. You are free to become everything that God made you to be! **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN: *“Fling Wide the Door”* (verses 1, 2, & 4) # 259

MORNING PRAYER

You Christ are born again and again in our hearts and in our world. Mary, your mother, holy and strong gave you from her precious life and the very life of God. We are waiting for your manifestation his Advent and always. Amen.

FIRST READING ISAIAH 7:10-16

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as hell or high as heaven. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test. Then Isaiah said: Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. Word of God Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 1

**Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked,
or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in the seat of scoffers;**

but their delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law they meditate day and night.

**They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season,
and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.**

The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not

stand in the judgement, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;
for the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

SECOND READING: ROMANS 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Word of God Word of Life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION "*Light One Candle*" (verse 4) # 240

THE HOLY GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW 1:18-25

Glory to you, O Lord. Now 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. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But 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. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the maiden shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but 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 "*The Morality Police or God's Grace?*" Pastor Stahlberg

HYMN OF THE DAY "*Mary Did You Know*"with Pentatonix

STATEMENT OF FAITH

We believe God, a divine presence, gentle and loving, the ground of our being. We believe Jesus, who embodied the love of God, and who urged his followers to express that same love in their daily lives. We believe the Holy Spirit, as God's continuing presence in our world, surrounding us with compassion. We believe the church is the Body of Christ where people gather to praise and learn about Christ, to share our concern for one another, and to bring justice and healing to all of God's Creation. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR THE PEOPLE OF GOD

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope. God, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**
Let's share Christ's peace with one another.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY SONG “GIVE THANKS”

Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the holy one, give thanks because he’s given Jesus Christ, his son. And now let the weak say, I am strong, let the poor say, I am rich because of what the Lord has done for us. Give thanks. Give thanks.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Eternal God, you make the desert bloom and send springs of water to thirsty ground. Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money, and make us messengers of your mercy and love for all in need of your healing and justice. We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

THE LORD’S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, +bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN “*Drawn to the Light of God*” (verses 1 & 3).....#593

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near. **Thanks be to God.**

SONG OF PEACE (*You may join hands.*)

C: My peace I give unto you. It’s a peace that the world cannot give. It’s a peace that the world cannot understand. Peace to know, peace to live. My peace I give unto you.

NO SERVICE NEXT SUNDAY ~ wishing you a very Merry Christmas surrounded by the LOVE of your family and friends!

Christ’s Law is Love and His Gospel is Peace

Santa Clause is coming to LCOR! Join us for our Christmas event on Thursday, December 22nd from 4-6pm. Santa, Mrs. Clause and one of their reindeer will be here to visit. Help spread the word!

We are in need of council members to serve in 2023. If you are interested, please contact a member of the nominating committee: Karen Temple, Bob Dorn, Carri Brown, Andy Gerken, or Rick Mai.