



Third Sunday of Advent

“Helping others receive grace, purpose and direction by proclaiming Christ’s love.”

17 East 27th Street
Scottsbluff, NE
(308) 632-8023
calvarylutheranscottsbluff.org

Sunday Morning Worship
10:00 a.m.
December 17, 2023

Third Sunday of Advent

A Warm Welcome to all as we gather as God's people to worship our Lord. We pray our worship together would strengthen your faith and desire to know and serve the One who loves us with an everlasting love as made known to us in Jesus Christ.

Visitors, if you are worshipping with us today, we are glad to have you with us.

(In preparation for our worship together, you are invited to take a moment of silence to offer your own prayers of worship and praise.)

KEY: ELW and any page number = Worship hymnal (cranberry),
OSB = Other Song Book (red), W&P = Worship & Praise (purple).

* Indicates please stand if able. Congregational responses are printed in **BOLD** type.

Prelude Music

**“It Came upon the Midnight Clear”
“Bethlehem Highway”**

**ELW #282
Dakota Road Music**

Welcome and Announcements

†WE PREPARE OUR HEARTS†

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Every year we light candles as we prepare for the coming of Christ. More and more candles, more and more light, as we watch and wait for Jesus, the Light of the World. **God of Promise, come into our darkness. Renew your hope, your peace, your joy in us, for you alone bring life out of death.**

Receive God's promise of hope from Psalm 28: Praise be to the Lord for he has heard my cry for mercy. The Lord is my strength and my shield.

My hearts trusts in him, and I am helped. My heart leaps for joy and I will give thanks to him in song.

(Light the Candles of Hope, Peace, and Joy)

Candle Lighting Song:

“The Messiah”

v. 2

**Someone’s shouting from city. I am young, I am cold.
Someone’s shouting from the country. I am lonely, I am old.**

Chorus: **Messiah, Come and be our King.** (repeat)

Welcome Song:

“Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Moon”

ELW #242

vv. 1&4

**1. Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door
and lives now inside us forever.**

**4. Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer
and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share
and bring us at last into glory.**

***Confession of Sins/Assurance of Forgiveness**

(All may make the sign of the cross ✝ the sign marked at baptism, as we begin)

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation. **Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

(Silence is kept for reflection.)

Everlasting God,
you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all. **Amen.**

Song of Praise:

“Emmanuel”

W&P #36

**Emmanuel, Emmanuel,
His name is called Emmanuel;
God with us, revealed in us;
His name is called Emmanuel. *Repeat***

***Greeting**

Christ comes to lighten our darkness.

Come, Lord, Jesus.

May the light of God's glory be with you always.

And also with you.

***Prayer of the Day**

Stir up the wills of your faithful people,

Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

‡GOD'S WORD SPEAKS TO US‡

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

¹The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners;

²to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

³to provide for those who mourn in Zion — to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

⁴They shall build up the ancient ruins, they shall raise up the former devastations; they shall repair the ruined cities, the devastations of many generations.

⁸For I the LORD love justice, I hate robbery and wrongdoing; I will faithfully give them their recompense, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them.

⁹Their descendants shall be known among the nations, and their offspring among the peoples; all who see them shall acknowledge that they are a people whom the LORD has blessed.

¹⁰I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my whole being shall exult in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

¹¹For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord GOD will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm 126

¹When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
then were we like those who dream.

²**Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy.
Then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."**

³The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are glad indeed.

⁴**Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like the watercourses of the Negeb.**

⁵Those who sowed with tears
will reap with songs of joy.

**⁶Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed,
will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.**

Epistle Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

¹⁶Rejoice always, ¹⁷pray without ceasing, ¹⁸give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. ¹⁹Do not quench the Spirit.

²⁰Do not despise the words of prophets, ²¹but test everything; hold fast to what is good; ²²abstain from every form of evil. ²³May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do this.

The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***Gospel Acclamation: "Open our eyes, Lord"**

W&P #113

**Open our eyes, Lord; we want to see Jesus,
To reach out and touch Him, and say that we love Him.
Open our ears, Lord, and help us to listen.
Open our eyes, Lord, we want to see Jesus.**

***Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28**

Response after the announcement of the gospel:
Glory to you, O Lord.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. ⁸He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. ¹⁹This is the testimony given by John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" ²⁰He confessed and did not deny it, but confessed, "I am not the Messiah." ²¹And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the prophet?" He answered, "No." ²²Then they said to him, "Who are you? Let us have an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" ²³He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.

²⁴Now they had been sent from the Pharisees. ²⁵They asked him, "Why then are you baptizing if you are neither the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the prophet?" ²⁶John answered them, "I baptize with water. Among you stands one whom you do not know, ²⁷the one who is coming after me; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandal." ²⁸This took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing.

Response after the gospel reading:
Praise to you, O Christ.

Kid's Sermon:

Angie Hinze

Sermon:

PMA Bill Huelle

(Silence for Reflection and Meditation.)

‡WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD‡

***Song of the Day:**

"Hark, the Glad Sound"

**ELW #239
vv. 1,2&4**

- 1. Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,
the Savior promised long;
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
and ev'ry voice a song.**

- 2. He comes the pris'ners to release,
in Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.**

- 4. Our glad hosannas, Prince of peace,
your welcome shall proclaim,
and heav'n's eternal arches ring
with your beloved name.**

***Profession of Faith: The Apostles Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

***Prayers of the Church:**

Tune: "What Child is This"

(Sung Prayer Response)

**Lord, hear my prayer,
Lord, hear my prayer:
when I call, answer me.
Lord, hear my prayer,
Lord, hear my prayer:
come and listen to me.**

***Sharing of the Peace**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.
And also with you.

"Shepherd, Do You Sleep?"

Choir
Flute – Deb Raines

***Offertory Prayer**

God our provider,
by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

†HOLY COMMUNION†

Here our Lord gives to us His own Body and Blood for the forgiveness of all our sins.

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Words of Institution

***The Lord's Prayer**

**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.**

Invitation to Communion

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together.
Come, take your place at the table.

Distribution of Communion:

Christ is truly present in the Lord's Supper with gifts of forgiveness, life, and salvation.

All are welcome and invited to receive Holy Communion.

(Communion will be served continuously at two stations in the front of the church.

WHITE GRAPE JUICE and GLUTEN FREE WAFERS are available. Just ask the server.

Children who are not yet communicants are invited to come forward for a blessing.)

**Long time ago in Bethlehem
So the Holy Bible say
Mary's boy child, Jesus Christ
Was born on Christmas Day
Hark, now hear the angels sing
New King is born today
And man will live forevermore
Because of Christmas day**

**While shepherds watched their flocks by night
They saw a bright new shining star
And heard a choir from heaven sing
The music came from afar
Hark, now hear the angels sing
New King is born today
And man will live forevermore
Because of Christmas day**

**Now Joseph and his wife Mary
Came to Bethlehem that night
They found no place to bear her Child
Not a single room was in sight**

**By and by they found a little nook
In a stable all forlorn
And in a manger cold and dark
Mary's little Boy Child was born
Trumpets sound and angels sing
Listen to what they say
That man will live forevermore
Because of Christmas day.**

***Post-Communion Blessing**

***Post-Communion Prayer**

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

‡WE DEPART TO SERVE‡

***Benediction**

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ‡ remain upon you now and forever. **Amen.**

***Sending Song:**

“Great is The Lord”

OSB #66

**Great is the Lord, He is holy and just,
by His power we trust in His love.
Great is the Lord, He is faithful and true,
by His mercy he proves He is love.
Great is the Lord, and worthy of glory.
Great is the Lord, and worthy of praise.
Great is the Lord, now lift up your voice,
Now lift up your voice: Great is the Lord!
Great is the Lord!**

**Great is the Lord, He is holy and just,
by His power we trust in His love.
Great is the Lord, He is faithful and true,
by His mercy he proves He is love.
Great are you, Lord, and worthy of glory.
Great are you, Lord, and worthy of praise.
Great are you, Lord, I lift up my voice,
I lift up my voice: Great are you, Lord!
Great are you, Lord!**

**Great is the Lord, and worthy of glory.
Great is the Lord, and worthy of praise.
Great is the Lord, now lift up your voice,
Now lift up your voice: Great is the Lord!
Great is the Lord!**

***Dismissal**

Go in peace. Keep awake..
Thanks be to God.

Postlude

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Janie Voss, 12/18; Jacey Cochran, 12/18;
Julie Aschenbrenner, 12/19; Jessica Laughlin, 12/20

If we have missed your birthday, please let the office know. Thanks.

In Our Thoughts and Prayers†

Prayers for healing: **Ruth Harris** (recovery from a fall), **Jan Martin** (health problems—Susan Martin's relative), **Karen Stevens** (hip surgery recovery & complications—Gail Bruflat's sister), **David Pickett** (Healing—son of Virginia Pickett), **David Stevens** (recovering), **Fran Johnson** (recovering from surgery), **Joy Arnold** (Cancer), **Joni** (stage 4 cancer), **Aimee Roos** (colon cancer & critical kidney disease—Penny Stevens' nephew's wife), **Kathy Johnson** (health issues), **William Gibbs** (Cancer—brother of Larry Gibbs), **Vicki Schmidt** (cancer treatment), **Linda Spomer**, **Catherine Rahrs** (Val Rahrs' mother), **Patty** (cancer—Jim Dorn's sister-in-law).

Prayers for comfort and safety: **Jeffery Christeleit** (deployed—Brian & Jodi Christeleit's son and Jim & Sheila Miller's grandson).



YOUR GIVING ONLINE

Scan the **QR code** to the right, go to our website: www.calvarylutheranscottsbluff.org and click on the **Give Online** button OR download the **Vanco Now App** on your smartphone. It's safe and secure.



DECEMBER FOOD DONATIONS REQUESTED

FOOD PANTRY: Packaged Cookies

BACKPACKS: Applesauce

Containers are located outside Fellowship Hall.

Thanks for your generosity.



Thank you

Thank you to all of you for your support of the Angel Tree. You are giving these special little angels a wonderful Christmas this year by purchasing gifts and donating money to purchase gifts. God Bless you all!



JAM & EPIC on Christmas Break until January 10, 2024



ELCA GOOD GIFTS *How it works*

- 1**  Choose your gift.
- 2**  Get a card.
- 3**  Change lives.

Give an unexpected gift this Christmas. Gifts that grow the church, fight hunger, and transform lives. Meaningful gifts for everyone on your list. See the bulletin board next to the Fellowship Hall or visit <https://goodgifts.elca.org/> for your gift options.

Sunday, December 17th

Christmas Caroling Party with JAM & EPIC! Meet at the church at 4 pm - we will go caroling and spread Christmas cheer! All are welcome. If you would like to carol, come join us. We will return to the church for dinner!



CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

We invite you to **bring a poinsettia** to decorate our sanctuary for Christmas. If you would like to dedicate your poinsettia *in honor of* or *in memory of* a loved one, forms will be available December 1 outside the office door. The remembrances will be printed in the Christmas Eve bulletins. Please bring your poinsettia anytime after December 17th and then stop by to pick it up after Christmas to enjoy at home.



Ecumenical Blue Christmas Service

December 21st @ 7p.m.

First United Methodist Church – 2002 4th Ave Scottsbluff

A service for those for whom Christmas is not joyful; for those who are confronted with the loss of loved ones, feeling isolated and alone, perhaps even feeling depressed. On this longest night of the year, we remember and place our hope in Christ. All are welcome to attend.



Hey, have you seen our new activity on Facebook? Check it out and make sure you share! We want Calvary Lutheran to be showing up in people's feeds, to see the amazing things we have to offer here. If you have events, pictures or items that you wanted posted or shared, please send information to Tracy Steele (308) 631-4417 or tsteele@geringschools.net, Becca Pierce (785) 899-6951 or rrusch18@gmail.com.

MAKE SURE TO LIKE OR LOVE! MAKE SURE TO SHARE!!



Endowment Fund application forms are now available in the office. These funds may be used for outreach: Churchwide, Nebraska Synod, and local. The deadline is January 31, 2024.



WORSHIP LEADERS

This Sunday – December 17

USHERS: Vicki Howell & Deb Brown

LAY READER: Angie Hinze

HEAD COMMUNION ASST: Barb Jensen

COMMUNION ASSTS: Rick & Lynn
Margheim

POWERPOINT: Shawna Payne

ACOLYTES: Brynlee Payne & Ben Moravec

MEDIA: Chris Jensen

AUDIO: Jack Martin

ALTAR GUILD: Abby Newsom, Maunette
Loeks-Van Patten, Barb Jensen, Nannie Walsh

PIANIST: Tahnee Hutchinson

COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP: *Please sign up!*

Next Sunday – December 24

USHERS: Monty & Shari Copsey

LAY READER: Marti Wegelin

HEAD COMMUNION ASST: Shari Copsey

COMMUNION ASSTS: Tracy Steele &
Chris Thomas

POWERPOINT: Andi Dorn

ACOLYTES: Kippen & Jacey Cochran

MEDIA: Jeff Van Patten

AUDIO: Jim Dorn

ALTAR GUILD: Deb Brown, Vicki Howell,
Tracy Steele, Shari Copsey

PIANIST/ORGANIST: Tahnee Hutchinson

COFFEE & FELLOWSHIP: *Please sign up!*

Christmas Eve – December 24

5:30 P.M. Service

USHERS:

LAY READER:

COMMUNION ASST:

POWERPOINT:

MEDIA:

ORGANIST: Tahnee Hutchinson

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, December 17

10 a.m. – Worship

11 a.m. – Coffee & Fellowship

4 p.m. – JAM/EPIC Christmas Caroling
Party!

Monday, December 18

5 p.m. – Elders

6 p.m. – Stewards

6 p.m. – Worship & Music

Tuesday, December 19

12 p.m. – Sarah Circle

1 p.m. – Quilting

Wednesday, December 20

NO JAM

NO Confirmation

7p.m. – Choir Practice

Saturday, December 23

NO Worship

Sunday, December 24

10 a.m. – Worship

11 a.m. – Coffee & Fellowship

5:30 p.m. – Christmas Eve
Candlelight Service

DECEMBER 17, 2023
THIRD SUNDAY
OF ADVENT



taking
faith
home

Faith in Jesus brings joy.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 1:6-8, 19-28	John's witness to the light
Monday	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Good news of deliverance
Tuesday	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	A call to rejoice
Wednesday	Luke 1:39-55	The Magnificat
Thursday	Psalms 30	Thanksgiving for illness recovery
Friday	James 1:2-4	Faith and wisdom
Saturday	Psalms 126	A people who dream
Sunday	Luke 1:26-38	The birth of Jesus foretold

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them." Psalm 126:1-2 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty and living God, in you we find our hope, peace, and joy, during times of sadness and grief, give us faith to trust in your never-failing love through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Dear God, with this food give us strength to witness to your love and goodness through Jesus Christ, the one who has come to give us joy. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God of peace give you joy at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

DECEMBER 17, 2023
HYMN OF THE WEEK
Joy to the World



taking
faith
home

WEEKLY MILESTONES
Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- Think or talk about something that has brought you joy.
- When have you experienced joy with others in the Christian community?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Psalm 126.

The psalm begins with a reference to Israel's return from exile. It was too good to be true, but it was true. It was like a dream, but it was real. Relying on that memory, the people once again seek God's intervention. "Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like the watercourses of the Negeb" (v. 4). The words are dry riverbeds (watercourses) in the south of Israel (Negeb) that look barren until they are filled with flash floods. Then living waters overflow the riverbanks. Psalm 126 poetically seeks a similar and dramatic restoration for God's life-giving powers to restore God's people. We are encouraged by the history of God's favor that reaches us again and again, now through Jesus. Psalms like this one strengthen us, trusting that the God who came in Jesus will continue to intervene in our lives with grace. Verse six describes a life of faith. We know what it is to mourn, but our life is meant for joy. In the meantime, we go out with our task at hand, seeds to be sown in faith, ready for a harvest of joy.

Discuss: How does faith in Christ lead you to live a life of joy?
Pray: God of our past and future, give us faith to dream dreams filled with faith, hope, and love that our daily lives may know the eternal joy of Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord. Amen.

SERVICE

Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you support and encourage someone who is mourning?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

The scripture readings during Advent point to Jesus. This week we light three candles on the Advent wreath. The third candle is the candle of joy. Psalm 126 describes the Israelites' joy and thanksgiving to God upon their return to Jerusalem after their exile in Babylon: "Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy." Think or talk about how God brings joy in good times and bad times.

Light the first candle of hope, the second candle of peace, and the third candle of joy and say: "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." (John 1:5)



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