

# *Third Sunday of Advent*

**December 14, 2025**

**10:15 am**

## **Prelude**

## **Announcements**

### **Call to Worship**

Family of faith, God is at work!

**God is healing and creating,**

redeeming and dreaming,

**calling and sending,**

listening and loving.

**Yes, indeed, God is at work!**

So may we worship our God who never gives up.

**May we worship our God who holds onto hope. Amen.**

### **Call to Confession**

Friends, often in life, when we make mistakes, we want to keep those mistakes to ourselves. We don't want to advertise our blunders. We don't want to highlight our failings. We can be tempted to brush those things under the rug and move on. But when it comes to God, there is nothing we need to brush under the rug. God welcomes and loves our full, honest, messy selves—blunders and all. So let us go before God in prayer, trusting that there is nothing we need to hide from our Creator. Let us pray.

### **Prayer of Confession**

**Courageous God, you invite us to live into our call. You invite us to act, to serve, and to trust. Instead of responding with a resounding "yes," we often hide our face. We dig our heels in. We look for someone else to volunteer. Spark courage in us. Remind us that every person is capable of making a difference. Remind us that even when we're scared, we are not alone. You invite us forward. With baby steps we hope, we pray, amen.**

### **Words of Forgiveness**

Family of faith, no matter where your path has led you in the past, today is a new day. So join me in declaring this good news:

**We are known. We are forgiven! We are sent to serve.**

**May we step forward in faith, always moving closer to God's call. Amen.**

### **Advent Candle Lighting**

In a world full of fear, where do you see glimmers of joy?

**We see glimmers of joy in birthday candles and homemade cards. We see joy**

**in the laughter of children and the delight of grandparents. We see joy in meals around the table and in the singing of Christmas songs.**

You are right. Even in a fearful world, joy is all around us. Today we light the candle of joy as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, joy is here. Joy is real. We only have to look for it.

*Light candle.*

**Thanks be to God for that good news! Amen.**

**Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## **Gathering Hymn: ELW #242**

### ***"Away! Awake, and Greet the New Morn"***

- 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 forever.**
- 2. To us, to all in sorrow and fear, Emanuel comes a-singing, his humble song is quiet and near, yet fills the earth with its ringing; music to heal the broken soul and hymns of loving kindness, the thunder of his anthems roll to shatter all hatred and blindness.**
- 3. In darkest night his coming shall be, when all the world is despairing, as morning light so quiet and free, so warm and gentle and caring. Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in wonder, the weak be raised above the strong, and weapons be broken asunder.**
- 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.**

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## **Prayer of the Day**

**Holy One, the story of this season is not a new one. We've heard this tale before. We've seen the nativities, watched the plays, sung the songs, witnessed the children act it out. The story of this season is not a new one, and yet we long to hear it as if it is. So spark our spirits awake. Call forth awareness, attention, and reverence in us. Allow us to hear this ancient tale with brand new ears. With hope we pray, amen.**

## *Readings and Psalm*

### **First Reading: Jeremiah 1:4-10**

<sup>4</sup> Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,

<sup>5</sup> "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations."

<sup>6</sup> Then I said, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." <sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to me,

"Do not say, 'I am only a boy,' for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. <sup>8</sup> Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord."

<sup>9</sup> Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth.

<sup>10</sup> See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant."

### **Psalm: Psalm 146:5-10**

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God, **<sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;**

<sup>7</sup> who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets the prisoners free;

**<sup>8</sup> the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous.**

<sup>9</sup> The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

**<sup>10</sup> The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!**

### **Second Reading: James 5:7-10**

<sup>7</sup> Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. <sup>8</sup> You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near.<sup>[a]</sup> <sup>9</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! <sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

### **Gospel Acclamation**

The Holy Gospel according to Luke starting with the 1st Chapter. **Glory to you O Lord.**

### **Gospel: Luke 1:26-40**

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>29</sup> But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup> He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup> Mary

said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>35</sup> The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born<sup>[d]</sup> will be holy; he will be called Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.<sup>39</sup> In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup> where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

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

## **Hymn of the Day: ELW #265**

### ***"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Come"***

1. **The angel Gabriel from heaven came, with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame: "All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary, most highly favored lady." Gloria!**
2. **"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be, all generations laud and honor thee; thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favored lady." Gloria!**
3. **Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head; "to me be as it pleaseth God," she said. "My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name." Most highly favored lady, Gloria!**
4. **Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn, and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: "Most highly favored lady." Gloria!**

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## **Affirmation of Faith**

**We have seen the valley.**

**We have seen a sky without stars.**

**We have seen the longest night, and *still* we believe.**

**We believe in a with-us God.**

**We believe in the hope of tomorrow.**

**We believe that good news is louder than fear.**

**We believe this good news is for all people.**

**So even when our knees shake, even when our voice trembles, even when fear is all around us, we will hold onto that good news.**

**We will reach for each other.**

**We will look for God in our midst.**

**We will sing songs of joy.**

**We will proclaim: *Unto us, love is born.***

**We have seen the longest night, and we have seen unimaginable love.**

**So *still*, we believe. Amen.**

## Sharing of Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you all. **And also with you.**

## Prayers of the People

Calling God, if you tapped on my shoulder today, would my knees shake?

Would my mind race?

Would my voice waver?

Or, knowing the stories of all the faithful folks you've called before, would I be ready?

Would I be brave enough to follow?

Would I hear your call for what it is?

Would I reply, "*Let it be with me according to your will*"?

It's hard to know.

But what I do trust is that you are a God who calls.

You called Mary and Moses, Jeremiah and Peter.

You have called ordinary people throughout all of time.

You have called artists and activists, poets and prophets, teachers and healers—young and old alike.

So as we move through this world, open our ears to hear your voice.

As we move through this world, open our hearts to the invitations, the inspiration, and the nudges you place in our lives.

As we move through this world, God, allow us to hear whatever call you have in store for us in this season.

For no matter how big or how small, we trust that you are a calling, inviting, nudging, inspiring God who sees us in the best light. With hope we lean forward, we listen for your word. Amen

## Offering and Offertory Hymn: ELW #253 "*He Came Down*"

- 1. He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.**

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## Offering Prayer

**God of healing and hope, you bless those who are hungry, promising to fill them with good things. Fulfill that promise through us and these your gifts. Nourish us with the abundance of your feast and unite us into the blessed body of Jesus Christ our Savior, now and forever. Amen.**

## The Great Thanksgiving

With-us God, We live in a fearful world. If we're honest, we come to this Table today with the taste of fear on our tongues. We come to this Table carrying our anxiety. We come to this Table asking for guidance. We come to this Table with all of life's "what-ifs."

But you do not disregard our fear. You do not brush it under the rug or call us foolish. You do not ignore the realities in front of us. You do not dish out hurtful platitudes, telling us to "toughen up" or "power through." Instead, you meet us here. You listen to

our fears. You remind us that we are not alone. You surround us with people who love us. You show us where we are strong. You walk beside us. So today we pray, gracious God: replace the fear on our tongues with these words of hope:

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

As we come to this Table, pour out your Spirit on this bread and cup. Remind us that even in a fearful world, you are on the move. Remind us that even in a fearful world, you are here, inviting us to the Table, nourishing our spirits, reminding us that we belong, calling us by name.

Instill that good news in us, for this is a joyful feast. Fear is not the loudest voice today. What a gift that is. Now with hope for a better tomorrow, we join our voices together to pray the prayer your son taught us to pray, saying. . .

### **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 the Table**

Friends, did you ever have a moment growing up when you walked into the school cafeteria, panned the faces in the crowd, and wondered if you were going to have a place to sit? Did you ever have a moment, maybe as a new student or at the start of a new school year, when fear nibbled at the back of your mind because you weren't sure where you belonged? I imagine, at some point or another, most of us have experienced that kind of fear. But here at this Table, you never have to wonder. Here at this Table, there is enough room, enough food, enough love for everyone. Here at this Table, Jesus is standing up on his chair, waving his hands over his head, saying to each of you, "I saved you a seat!" Here at this Table, you are wanted and welcomed. You are safe and loved. Here at this Table, you belong. So my friends, there is no need for fear here, for this is a joyful feast. And you are invited. Come. All are welcome.

### **Distribution Hymn: ELW #715 "Christ, Be Our Light"**

**1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness. Longing for truth, we turn to you.  
Make us your own, your holy people, light for the world to see.**

*Refrain:* **Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.  
Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.**

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled. Longing for hope, many despair. Your word alone has pow'r to save us. Make us your living voice. *Refrain:*
3. Longing for food, many are hungry. Longing for water, many still thirst. Make us your bread, broken for others, shared until all are fed. *Refrain:*
4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless. Longing for worth, many are cold. Make us your building, sheltering others, walls made of living stone. *Refrain:*
5. Many the gifts, many the people, many the hearts that yearn to belong. Let us be servants to one another, signs of your kingdom come. *Refrain:*

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### **Prayer after Communion**

Loving God, In a world racked with fear, you gather us together. You set the table. You meet us here. You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits. You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot win every time. So with renewed courage, with renewed hope, with renewed conviction, send us out into the world. Help us to feed others as you have fed us. With gratitude we pray, amen.

### **Benediction**

In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach for each other's hands. May you choose courage whenever you can. And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear. In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with—go in peace and *be not afraid*. **Amen.**

### **Sending Hymn: ELW #266 "All Earth is Hopeful"**

1. All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last! Furrows lie open for God's creative task; this, the labor of people who struggle to see how God's truth and justice set everybody free.
2. People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell; "A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel"; she conceived him, "God with us," our brother, whose birth restores hope and courage to children of this earth.
3. Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared; new highways opened, new protocols declared, almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace! All clear ev'ry gateway, in haste, come out in haste!
4. We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib. This same Lord Jesus today has come to live in our world; he is present, in neighbors we see our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.

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### **Dismissal**

Go in peace. Do not fear.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

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 **Prayers:** Please continue to keep our members and loved ones in your prayers, including Arlen, Lan-Shiang, Deb, Ruth, Barry, Monica, Dennis, Nathan, Sue and Donna Richards and the family of Beverly Devoe.

Calvary Lutheran Church  
19216 Rapidan Avenue  
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

Pastor Jenna Couch  
Ministers: All Members

Church Phone: 507-278-3317  
E-mail: [office@calvaryrapidan.org](mailto:office@calvaryrapidan.org)  
Website: calvaryrapidan.org  
Facebook: Calvary Lutheran Rapidan

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