

**Peace Lutheran Church of Lincoln, ND  
Worship Plan for Sunday, December 21, 2025  
Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**GATHERING**

**LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH  
WEEK 4: LOVE**

Leader 1: We gather in the season of Advent, waiting and watching for the One who comes not in splendor, but in humility. The God of the universe has changed addresses—leaving heaven’s throne to dwell among us in a manger. This is grace: not earned, not expected, but freely given.

Leader 2: We light the candle of Love, marveling that the Creator of galaxies chose a manger as a cradle.

*All: Jesus, your love is not distant. It is near to us, flesh and bone, living and breathing. Let your love transform our lives.*

**ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING SONG – LOVE**

*To the tune of “Away in a Manger”*

*The candle of Love now tenderly shines,  
A sign that God’s heart beats close to our minds.  
No throne, but a stable; no crown, but the hay—  
Love stooped to the ground to show us the Way.*

**PRAYER:**

*God of love, you moved into our world with tenderness and truth.  
May we welcome you not just in our churches but in our hearts. Amen.*

**# CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,  
who forgives all our sin,  
whose mercy endures forever.  
*Amen.*

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

***Amen.***

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Gracious God,

***have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.***

***Amen.***

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

***Amen.***

**GATHERING SONG *Fling Wide the Door* (ELW 259)**

## Fling Wide the Door



1 Fling wide the door, un - bar the gate; the King of glo - ry  
 2 He is the rock of our be - lief, the heart of mer - cy's  
 3 Oh, hap - py towns and bless - ed lands that live by their true  
 4 Come, Lord, our Sav - ior, Je - sus Christ; our hearts are o - pen



comes in state; the Lord of lords and King of kings, the  
 gen - tle self. His king - ly crown is ho - li - ness; his  
 king's com-mands. And bless - ed be the hearts he rules, the  
 wide in trust. Oh, show us now your love - ly grace, up -



Sav - ior of the world who brings his great sal - va - tion  
 scep - ter is his love - li - ness; he brings our sor - rows  
 hum - ble plac - es where he dwells. He is the right - ful  
 on our sor - rows shine your face, and let your Ho - ly



to the earth. So raise a shout of ho - ly mirth and  
 to an end. Now glad - ly praise our king and friend, and  
 Son of bliss who fills our lives and makes us his, cre -  
 Spir - it guide our jour - ney in your grace so wide. We




praise our God and Lord, Cre - a - tor, Spir - it, Word.  
 wor - ship him with song for sav - ing us from wrong.  
 a - tor of the world, our on - ly strength for good.  
 praise your ho - ly name, from age to age the same!

## 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.*

## KYRIE – AM

*Refrain*



Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, on our world and on our way.



Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, ev-'ry day.

For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the unity of all;  
for this holy house, for all who worship and praise,  
let us pray to the Lord,

### *Refrain*

That we may live out your impassioned response to the hungry and the poor;  
that we may live out truth and justice and grace,  
let us pray to the Lord,

### *Refrain*

For peace in our hearts, for peace in our homes, for friends and family;  
for life and for love, for our work and our play,  
let us pray to the Lord,


### *Refrain*

For your Spirit to guide; that you center our lives in the water and the Word;  
that you nourish our souls with your body and blood,  
let us pray to the Lord,


### *Refrain*

## CANTICLE OF PRAISE

*Refrain*



Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and



peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

1 Lord God, heav-en - ly King, al - might-y God and Fa - ther,

we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you

*Refrain*  
for your glo - ry. Glo - ry to God in the high-

est, the high - est, and peace to God's peo-ple on earth.

2 Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God,

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the

world: have mer - cy on us; you are seat-ed at the

right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

*Refrain*  
Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and

peace to God's peo - ple on earth. 3 For you a -

lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,

you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the

Ho - ly Spir - it, in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther.

A - men. A - men. A - men.

*Final refrain*

Glo - ry to God in the high - est, the high - est, and peace to God's

peo - ple on earth. Glo - ry to God in the high -

est, the high - est, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

*A brief silence is kept before the prayer.*

***Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.***

***Amen.***

## WORD

**FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16**

*An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!*

<sup>10</sup> The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, <sup>11</sup> “Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” <sup>12</sup> But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.” <sup>13</sup> Then Isaiah said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? <sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. <sup>16</sup> For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.”

Word of God, word of life.

*The assembly responds:*

***Thanks be to God.***

**PSALM:** Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

Theme: Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

- <sup>1</sup> Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;  
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
- <sup>2</sup> **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,  
stir up your strength and come to help us.**
- <sup>3</sup> Restore us, O God;  
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
- <sup>4</sup> **O Lord God of hosts,  
how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**
- <sup>5</sup> You have fed them with the bread of tears;  
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.
- <sup>6</sup> **You have made us the derision of our neighbors,  
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**
- <sup>7</sup> Restore us, O God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.
- <sup>17</sup> **Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,**

**the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

<sup>18</sup> And so will we never turn away from you;  
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

<sup>19</sup> **Restore us, O Lord God of hosts;  
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

## **SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7**

*Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.*

<sup>1</sup> Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, <sup>2</sup> which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, <sup>3</sup> the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh <sup>4</sup> 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, <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, <sup>7</sup> 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.

*The assembly responds:*

***Thanks be to God.***

## **# GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**



Al-le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the  
words of e - ter - nal life. Al-le - lu - ia.



## # GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

***Glory to you, O Lord.***

*Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."*

<sup>18</sup> 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 pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." <sup>24</sup> When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.


The gospel of the Lord.

***Praise to you, O Christ.***


## SERMON

## HYMN OF THE DAY *That Boy-Child of Mary* (ELW 293)


*Refrain*



That boy - child of Mar - y was born in a sta - ble,




a man - ger his cra - dle in Beth - le - hem.



1 What shall we call him, child of the man - ger?  
2 His name is Je - sus, God ev - er with us,  
3 How can he save us, how can he help us,  
4 Gift of the Fa - ther, to hu - man moth - er,

*Refrain*



What name is giv - en in Beth - le - hem?  
God giv - en for us in Beth - le - hem.  
born here a - mong us in Beth - le - hem?  
makes him our broth - er in Beth - le - hem.

5 One with the Father,  
he is our Savior,  
heaven-sent helper  
in Bethlehem.

6 Gladly we praise him,  
love and adore him,  
give ourselves to him  
in Bethlehem.

## # NICENE CREED

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,**

**of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation**

**he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,**

**who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\***

**who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION – AM**

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

*A brief silence.*

In the anticipation of these days, prepare our hearts for your arrival. Stir our spirits through the gifts of artists, musicians, poets, and preachers, as together we proclaim your advent among us. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

The earth breaks forth in singing as it heralds the Messiah's coming. Fill our hearts with wonder as we join heaven and nature in announcing this holy birth. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

You send your saving grace and peace to the nations. Lead us in work for justice and care for the common good. May we meet the Christ-child we seek in the faces of our neighbors. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

When tears of grief, exhaustion, or loneliness come, or physical or emotional hurt overwhelms us, come to our aid. Uphold all who are anxious, who know the challenges of depression, or who are ill, especially those from our midst: Don Franklund, Doug Rebel, Myron Kroh, Wade Schultz, Elmer Wagner, Gerold Stern, Brian Ventsh, Kyla Guthmiller, Jenny Masset, Jason Wentz, and all others on our hearts and minds. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Surround expectant parents and those suffering from infant loss with communities of support. Bless young children and new parents. Guide us in ways that provide safety for all children and those who care for them. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for all who have treasured the gospel and lived in faithful service. Strengthen our earthly journeys until, at the last, your face shines upon us and we are held in your love. God of grace,

**hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

**Amen.**

## PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.  
*And also with you.*

## MEAL

## OFFERING





### # OFFERING PRAYER – AM

Let us pray.

Holy God, gracious and merciful, you bring forth food from the earth and nourish your whole creation. Turn our hearts toward those who hunger in any way, that all may know your care; and prepare us now to feast on the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

*Amen.*

## GREAT THANKSGIVING

### DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

*And also with you.*

Lift up your hearts.

*We lift them to the Lord.*

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

*It is right to give our thanks and praise.*

### PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should at all times and in all places  
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,  
through our Savior Jesus Christ;

who, sharing our life, lived among us to reveal your glory and love,  
that our darkness should give way to your own brilliant light.  
And so, with all the choirs of angels,  
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,  
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

## HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,  
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry, full of your glo-ry. Ho -  
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high -  
est. Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -  
san - na, ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

God of our weary years, God of our silent tears,  
you have brought us this far along the way.

In times of bitterness you did not abandon us,  
but guided us into the path of love and light.  
In every age you sent prophets  
to make known your loving will for all humanity.  
The cry of the poor has become your own cry;  
our hunger and thirst for justice is your own desire.  
In the fullness of time, you sent your chosen servant  
to preach good news to the afflicted,  
to break bread with the outcast and despised,

and to ransom those in bondage to prejudice and sin.

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 all people for the forgiveness of sin.  
Do this for the remembrance of me.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup  
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Remembering, therefore, his death and resurrection,  
we await the day when Jesus shall return  
to free all the earth from the bonds of slavery and death.  
Come, Lord Jesus! And let the church say, Amen.  
**Amen.**

Send your Holy Spirit, our advocate,  
to fill the hearts of all who share this bread and cup  
with courage and wisdom to pursue love and justice in all the world.  
Come, Spirit of freedom! And let the church say, Amen.  
**Amen.**

Join our prayers and praise with your prophets and martyrs of every  
age,  
that, rejoicing in the hope of the resurrection,  
we might live in the freedom and hope of your Son.  
Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honor is yours, almighty Father, now and forever.  
**Amen.**

## # LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

*Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.*

*Give us today our daily bread.*

*Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.*

*Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.*

*For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.*

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

## COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

*Each person responds*

*Amen.*

## COMMUNION SONG

Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the world; have

mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the

world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a-way the sin of the



## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION – AM

Let us pray.

Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

*Amen.*

## SENDING

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

*Brief announcements may be made.*

### BLESSING

The God of steadfastness and encouragement  
grant you to live in harmony with one another,  
in accordance with Christ Jesus.

*Amen.*

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,  
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Amen.*

The God of all grace ✙ bless you now and forever.

*Amen.*

## SENDING SONG *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELW 257)

# O Come, O Come, Emmanuel



- 1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive  
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things  
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on  
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



- Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;  
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law  
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,



- un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joice! Re-joice!  
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.  
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



- Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

- 5 O come, O Key of David, come,  
 and open wide our heav'nly home;  
 make safe the way that leads on high,  
 and close the path to misery. *Refrain*
- 6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;  
 O Sun of justice, now draw near.  
 Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
 and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*
- 7 O come, O King of nations, come,  
 O Cornerstone that binds in one:  
 refresh the hearts that long for you;  
 restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*
- 8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
 and ransom captive Israel,  
 that mourns in lonely exile here  
 until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

**DISMISSAL – AM**

Fed, nourished, and forgiven, go in peace. Christ is with you.

***Thanks be to God.***

*# - Congregation Stands*

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