



Lord of Life
Lutheran Church



*Loved by God,
Sent to Serve.*

**3rd Sunday in Advent
December 17, 2023**

Evangelical Lutheran Worship
How Does a Weary World Rejoice? © A Sanctified Art

GATHERING

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

Prelude: 8:00: *Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming* Setting by Valerie A. Floeter
10:30: *Wait For You* Nikki Fletcher, Luke Hellebronth and Tim Hughes

Confession and Forgiveness

If you spend any time with a child, you will quickly notice that children see the world differently.

For a child, a ladybug is a miracle. A pine tree is a wonder. Curiosity is a love language, and water is not only for survival, but for joy.

As adults, we forget this language of awe and wonder, and when we do, we distance ourselves from God. In confession, we have the opportunity to close that distance.

So let us return to God with hearts wide open. Let us return to God in prayer. Join me in the prayer of confession:

Holy God, Somewhere in our childhood we face pressure to outgrow awe. We turn into adults who obsess over data and facts.

We praise those who have answers, and assume that wonder is an answerless game.

Forgive us for closing that door to you. Remind us that the kingdom of God belongs to children.

Teach us the ways of awe and wonder, so that like Zechariah, when we find ourselves speechless, our first words will be words of praise.

With hearts open wide, we pray, Amen.

Family of faith, Just as we marvel at mountains and newborns, at sunrises and sunsets, God marvels at us. There is nothing you could do or leave undone that could prevent God from loving you.

So hear and believe the good news of the gospel:

We are forgiven.

We are loved.

We belong to God. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

How does a weary world practice joy?

By dancing, and throwing birthday parties.

By hanging Christmas lights, and holding sleepy babies. By singing loudly, and looking for good news.

By telling the story of Jesus, and showing up for our community.

There are a million ways to practice joy. So today we light the candle of joy as a reminder and a charge.

With God's help, may we bring joy into a weary world. Amen.

Gathering Hymn: *Let My Prayer Rise Up*

ELW 232

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

God of the universe, make our hearts porous. Open our eyes, as if for the first time, so that we might see your world with awe and wonder once again.

We often approach scripture with an analytical lens, intellectualizing the stories heard, bringing historical context and textual criticism to the table.

For just a moment, pause those instincts to make room for wonder. Help us greet this text with awe and gratitude before we begin dissecting it for truth. For I am confident, that in doing so, we will not only find you in the hallways of our thoughts, but in the pathways of our hearts.

With gratitude we pray: keep us open. **Amen.**

WORD

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

Readings

Psalm 126

Luke 1: 57-80

Sermon

The Rev. Karla Wildberger



1 On Jor - dan's bank the Bap - tist's cry an - nounce - es
 2 Then cleansed be ev - 'ry life from sin; make straight the
 3 We hail you as our Sav - ior, Lord, our ref - uge
 4 Stretch forth your hand, our health re - store, and make us
 5 All praise to you, e - ter - nal Son, whose ad - vent



that the Lord is nigh; a - wake and heark - en,
 way for God with - in, and let us all our
 and our great re - ward; with - out your grace we
 rise to fall no more; oh, let your face up -
 has our free - dom won, whom with the Fa - ther



for he brings glad tid - ings of the King of kings!
 hearts pre - pare for Christ to come and en - ter there.
 waste a - way like flow'rs that with - er and de - cay.
 on us shine and fill the world with love di - vine.
 we a - dore, and Ho - ly Spir - it, ev - er - more.

Text: Charles Coffin, 1676-1749; tr. composite Music: European tune, adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571-1621 Public Domain

Affirmation of Faith

Let us profess our faith together:

We believe in a God who hears our prayers, who knows the shape and form of our weariness. We believe in a God who wants joy and delight for us, not just survival and existence. We believe in a God who looks ahead, who is not done dreaming for the world — a God who sends hope in the form of people and change, movements and Spirit.

And so we return to this space. We bring our joy and our weariness like two sides of the same coin, and we trust that God is already at work.

Yes, we believe in a God who hears our prayers. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

...Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

...and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

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

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offertory: 8:00 *Of the Father's Love Begotten*
10:30: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* vs 1-4

Setting by Valerie A. Floeter
ELW 257

Offering Prayer

(inspired by Matthew 14:15-21)

Let us pray together,

On my own, what I have to give doesn't amount to much in the light of all you have given to me and in the face of so much need.

Put together as a congregation, what we offer you here in love becomes more, not simply added together, but somehow multiplied in its usefulness.

We ask you to bless our gifts and with the addition of your blessing, just as it was with the loaves and fishes, there is enough for all.

Amen

~ from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand website. <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/>

Invitation

365 times in scripture we hear the words: "Do not be afraid", not because fear is not real, but because God promises to be present with us. At this table we are invited into the life of God; into community with one another and deeper into joy.

Thanksgiving

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 God thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right to give our thanks and praise for all that we are thankful for.

In these ordinary gifts of bread and wine we receive a sacred gift and affirm that we belong to God. So with the saints before and beside us and with the angels above us, we join our voices together and say:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest!**

Blessed is Jesus, who walks the long and weary road of the world's suffering. On the night of his arrest, Jesus took bread and having blessed it, He broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying, This is my body, given to you. Do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way he took the cup having given thanks for it, He shared it with his disciples, saying, This cup is the new relationship with God. Take this and share it. Do this in remembrance of me.

Holy God, pour out your spirit upon this bread and wine, calling us into one body, sharing in your peace. Pour out your spirit on us, weaving us together in laughter and in hope, Sharing with one another in wisdom and joy.

When joy felt impossibly out of reach, Jesus became one of us and broke bread with friend and strangers.

When the weary world cried out for justice and for peace, Jesus came near to us in the offering of this cup.

(Communion liturgy adapted from Ellie Elia @asacntifiedart)

Lord's Prayer

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus 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.

Invitation to Communion

Communion Distribution Hymn: *Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* ELW 254



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo - ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra - cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir - it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer - it raise us to thy glo - rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788 Music: W. Walker, *Southern Harmony*, 1835 Public Domain.

Post-Communion Prayer

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Holy, gracious, God, Here at this table your promise of life is made tangible.

We have rested in the depth of your love;

We have tasted your nourishing, nurturing presence;

We accept you into our bodies, into our lives.

Together, at this table, you have offered us life.

Together, by your grace, we accept the life you offer.

And we give you thanks. Amen.

~ posted on Joanna Harader on her **Spacious Faith** blog. <http://spaciousfaith.com/>

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

Announcements

Benediction

Family of faith, as you leave this place, you go into a weary world —
so speak tenderly.

Do the good that is yours to do. Choose connection. Hold onto hope.

And remember that Christ took on flesh for you.

You are God's beloved. So go rejoicing. The world needs it.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Sending Song: *Light Dawns on a Weary World*

ELW 726



1 Light dawns on a wea - ry world when eyes be - gin to
2 Love grows in a wea - ry world when hun - gry hearts find
3 Hope blooms in a wea - ry world when crea-tures, once for -



see all peo - ple's dig - ni - ty. Light dawns on a
bread and chil - dren's dreams are fed. Love grows in a
lorn, find wil - der - ness re - born. Hope blooms in a



wea - ry world: the prom-ised day of jus - tice comes.
wea - ry world: the prom-ised feast of plen - ty comes.
wea - ry world: the prom-ised green of E - den comes.



The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;



the hills and moun-tains shall break forth with sing - ing!



We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,



as all the world in won-der ech - oes sha - lom.

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude: 8:00: *O, How Joyfully!*
10:30: *Light Dawns in a Weary World*

Arr. Cindy Berry

Announcements

Sweet Fellowship

Whether you attend the 8:00 or the 10:30 AM service, you are invited to enjoy some sweet fellowship between services. Come early or stay late, grab a cup of coffee and a sweet treat, spend some time visiting with friends, meeting some new friends, or attending an adult education class.

Altar Flowers today are provided by Tim & Heather Felderman in honor of Easton's baptism.

This Week at Lord of Life

Sunday, December 17	8:00 AM	Worship in-person
	9:15 AM	Faith Formation: SS, Confirmation, Adult
	10:30 AM	Worship in-person or online
	11:30 AM	Youth/All ages event in Lower level
Wednesday, December 20	6:00 PM	Longest Night Service

“The Giving Tree”

Please consider donating a personal care item/s to our Little Food Pantry during Advent. More information about this appeal is available in the church fellowship area.

Staff Gift

You are welcome to express appreciation to our paid staff through a monetary gift. Please note “staff gift” on the envelope or check and submit by December 17. Thank you to the dedicated staff who tirelessly support the life of this congregation.

Prayer List

David Cordes & Megan Dahlke and family
Craig & Joan Cram
Larry & Barb Croghan
Kevin & Darlene Curoe
Nancy & Clarence Davis
Margret Deason
Sam & Sue Deaver



Thank you for your continued support of the ministries of Lord of Life Lutheran Church. Scan the code to reach our website for further information.

Worship Online

Zoom:

<https://bit.ly/2PvSCQJ>
Meeting ID: 563 582 7371
Passcode: Luther

Phone in at:

(312) 626-6799
Meeting ID: 563 582 7371
Passcode: 456037

Worship Servants:

Sunday, December 17

	Tech	Assisting Min.	Reader	Ushers
8:00 AM			Susan Hansen	Gilbertsons
10:30 AM			Debbie Thomas	Jerry Merrick

Sunday, December 24

10:30 AM	Nate Frambach Barry Pickart			Galen Thomas
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Acknowledgments

Cover Art: “Watercourses” by Hannah Garrity | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org Inspired by Psalm 126 *Oil paint, charcoal, and copper leaf on canvas*

This painting is a meditation on the holy watercourses of the Negeb and all of the metaphors within that image. I painted with oil paint, charcoal, and copper leaf on canvas; the copper represents joy in our weary world.

For God, we are weary and we see no end to the weariness. Lament with us. Holy One, you are steadfast in your love like the watercourses of the Negeb. In your name, we call out evil. When we do, we are glimmers of hope. By your example, we act in the ways of Jesus. When we do, we are shimmers of joy. We often fall short; forgive us. We strive on, for when we succeed, your new heaven shines through. Strive with us.

Mother God, in this time of ascending fear, how do we stay aware of the needs of the world, active toward the renewal of your people, and focused on the specifics that are in your control through your call to us? Keep awake with us.

Adonai, it is in your name that we give ourselves time to lament. With you, we cry together. When our ancestors emerged from exile, by the rivers of Babylon, we sat down, and there we wept when we remembered Zion. The power of nostalgia—is it getting in the way of your work? Cry with us.

Holy Wisdom, we allow ourselves to be amazed, to dream, to lean into your call to garner your gifts the way raindrops become creeks and creeks become coursing rivers. We challenge ourselves to see the glimmers of hope in the murky waters of our current time. We beg you for clarity, but no, you continue to show us the way through subtle nudges, not obvious signs. We must flow on in endless song. How can we keep from singing? Perhaps our tears and our songs are one. Sing with us.

Holy Word, may our actions match your call, your claim on our lives. May we come together in our lament to sow the change your justice calls forth. Sow with us, we pray, that our next generation may reap our tears with shouts of joy. Amen.

—Hannah Garrity

Worship materials created with A Sanctified Art “How Does a Weary World Rejoice?” ©
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Liturgy by Rev. Sarah Speed A SANCTIFIED ART LLC | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

Other liturgical elements provided as noted.

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