



*Loved by God,
Sent to Serve.*

**1st Sunday in Advent
December 3, 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: *Bethlehem Calls: An Advent Reflection* Brian Gibson
10:30: *Wait For You* Nikki Fletcher, Luke Hellebronth and Tim Hughes

Confession and Forgiveness

Friends, in today's scripture passage, a man named Zechariah is given good news from God and his response is to ask, "How can this be?"

Have any of you ever felt that way when receiving good news?

It can be hard to receive good news when we don't expect it.

It can be hard to accept God's grace and God's love when we think we don't deserve it.

But friends, scripture tells us over and over again of a loving, generous, and gracious God. So may we come to the prayer of confession today, not with fear, but with an awe so deep that we ask ourselves, "How can this be?"

Let us pray:

Gracious God, we are weary.

For weary bodies that ache and cry out, we pray:

Forgive us for pushing ourselves too hard.

Remind us that we deserve Sabbath rest.

For weary minds that feel overwhelmed and saturated with news, we pray:

Forgive us for creating so many distractions.

Remind us that in the quiet, we can hear you.

For weary hearts that long to feel the joy of this season, we pray:

Forgive us for being impatient with ourselves.

Remind us that healing takes time, and that joy and grief can coexist.

For the weary edges of our faith that struggle to hold onto hope,

Forgive us. Remind us of Zechariah and Elizabeth.

Remind us that your good news knows no bounds. Amen.

Family of faith,
no matter how many times we wear ourselves thin,
no matter how many times we lose ourselves to distractions,
no matter how many times we ask ourselves, “How can this be?”
God’s love keeps showing up for us.

So say this with me:

We are loved. We are claimed. We are forgiven.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

How does a weary world hope?

**By telling stories of hope, by lighting candles in the night,
and planting seeds in the winter that
will bloom in the spring.**

By praying for children as they grow, and
picking up trash on the sidewalk.

**By insisting that small acts can make a
difference.**

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

**With God’s help, may we bring hope
into a weary world. Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: *Let My Prayer Rise Up*

ELW 232

Prayer of the Day

Let us pray.

Loving God, the source of our joy, as we turn our hearts toward your Word, we ask that you would soften us. Soften the callouses on our hearts. Weave yourself in between the cracks in our spirits. And plant hope where there is room. And as you do this, like flowers toward the sun, we will turn ourselves toward you, eager to hear a Word so good that we cannot help but ask ourselves, “How can this be?”
With openness and gratitude we pray. **Amen.**

WORD

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

Readings

Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19 (*read responsively*)

Luke 1: 1-23

Children's Time

Sermon

The Rev. Karla Wildberger

Hymn of the Day: *Blessed be the God of Israel*

ELW 250



1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free
2 With prom-ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,
3 My child, as proph-et of the Lord you will pre-pare the way,



and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da-vid's tree.
the oath once sworn to A - bra-ham, from foes to save us all;
to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.



So have the proph-ets long de-clared that with a might-y arm
that we might wor - ship with-out fear and of - fer lives of praise,
Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease



God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.
in ho - li - ness and righ - teous-ness to serve God all our days.
to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.

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 Prelude on “Wachet Auf”

10:30: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel vs 1-4

Lani Smith

ELW 257

Offering Prayer in unison

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

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.

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.**

~ posted by 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.

Refrain

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: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*
10:30: *Blessed Be Your Name*

Faye López
by Matt Redman and Beth Redman

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 Bri Ensign & Morgan Kennedy in honor of Val Kennedy's birthday on the 6th.


This Week at Lord of Life

Sunday, December 3	8:00 AM	Worship in-person
	9:15 AM	Intergenerational Faith Formation
	10:30 AM	Worship in-person or online
Wednesday, December 6	6:00 PM	Holden Evening Prayer Service
Thursday, December 7	1:00 PM	Prayer Shawl Ministry
	6:30 PM	Bell Choir practice

Wednesday Advent Services

Advent services will be held on Wednesdays at 6:00 pm. Holden Evening Prayer Service will be sung on the 6th and 13th and the Longest Night service will be on the 20th. We look forward to sharing the season with you all in prayer and song.

Christmas in the Barn

Join us on Sunday, December 10, as we reinstate the Christmas in the Barn  service at 4:00pm. There is a signup sheet in the Narthex so we have an idea of how many to expect. Our hosts: Ted & Angie Boyle and family 7393 Sundown Road, Peosta, will provide hot chocolate & apple cider. Please bring a plate of cookies to share.

“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

Mike & Stephanie Ackerman and family
Earl & Angie Alexander
Karin Anderson and family
Kevin & Rev. Denise Anderson
Sandy Arp
Mike & Sue Asche
Donald & Kayleen Backhaus



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 3

	Tech	Assisting Min.	Reader	Ushers
8:00 AM			Sandy Heer	Susan Hansen
10:30 AM			Sandy Arp	Tim/Heather Felderman

Sunday, December 10

8:00 AM		Steve Heer	Dan & Joan Decker
10:30 AM	Diane Frambach	Joe Klinebriel	Tara Grace

Acknowledgments

Cover Art: "Annunciation to Zechariah" by Lauren Wright Pittman | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org Inspired by Luke 1:1-23 *Acrylic and ink on wood panel*

Zechariah is dressed in a breastpiece, ephod, robe, checkered tunic, turban, and sash, just as the book of Exodus specifies. In my painting, gold, blue, purple, and crimson yarns are woven together and bejeweled with engraved stones which bear the names of the sons of Israel (Exodus 28:4).

Zechariah stands in the Holy Place wearing the most meticulous of garments. Does he expect to encounter the divine? Or is he just going through the motions, lighting the incense as an all-too-familiar scent fills the air?

After all these years of fulfilling priestly duties and “living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord” (Luke 1:6), Zechariah and his wife are still childless. Regardless of their desire for children, in their culture and context, childlessness bore the implication of God’s contempt.

I ruminated on this image... a weary priest wrapped in layered fabrics, colors, symbols, textures, and rare stones that proclaim God’s providence and power. The contrast is not lost on me.

I often try to neglect my weariness by putting on a veneer of unwavering trust in God—while feeling like I may suddenly unravel into a pile of beautifully-curated threads, stones, and gold accessories.

In this image, I decided to depict the angel as smoke from the altar of incense. Zechariah has one hand over his mouth in fear and disbelief, while his other hand cradles the notion—not yet hope—of his son’s existence.

Do you bind up your weariness in a neat and tidy bow, put your head down, and project okay-ness like me? What would it look like to acknowledge our weariness, quit powering through, and open ourselves up to what God might have in store for us? Perhaps we’ll meet an angel. —Rev. Lauren Wright Pittman

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

Liturgy by Rev. Sarah Speed A SANCTIFIED ART LLC | SANCTIFIEDART.ORG

Other liturgical elements provided as noted.

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