



MAGNIFY

by Hannah Garrity Inspired by Luke 1:46-55 *Acrylic painting with mixed media on canvas*
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*Loved by God,
Sent to Serve.*

**4th Sunday in Advent
December 22, 2024**

Words for the Beginning | A Sanctified Art LLC
Evangelical Lutheran Worship Setting 6

GATHERING

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

Prelude: *Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)*

Arr. Alex-Zsolt

Call to Worship

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In this weary world,
we sing of joy.

In this fragile world,
we lift each other up.

In this beautiful world,
we look for God.

In this tender world,
we hold onto hope.

This is the invitation of faith. So in this time of worship,
may we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto our with-us God.

With hope in our hearts, amen!

Gathering Song: *Bring a Torch, Jeannette, Isabella*

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Bring a torch, Jeanette, Isabella!
Bring a torch, to the cradle run!
It is Jesus, good folk of the village;
Christ is born and Mary's calling;
Ah! ah! beautiful is the Mother!
Ah! ah! beautiful is her Son! | 2 It is wrong when the Child is sleeping
It is wrong to talk so loud;
Silence, all, as you gather around.
Lest your noise should waken Jesus.
Hush! hush! see how fast He slumbers;
Hush! hush! see how fast He sleeps! |
| 3 Softly to the little stable.
Softly for a moment come;
Look and see how charming is Jesus,
How he is warm, his cheeks are rosy.
Hush! hush! see how the Child is sleeping;
Hush! hush! see how He smiles in dreams. | |

Candle Lighting Liturgy | Love

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In a weary and worn world, how do we begin again? Where do we start?

Let us begin with tenderness.

Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve.

Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope.

Let us begin with love.

Yes, let us start with love. Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy and love.

May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone.

May the truth in these lights help us begin again.

May it be so!

Amen.

Call to Confession

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Friends,

Hope can feel slippery.

One moment we may believe that change will come, that good will win, that the suffering of today will not be the suffering of tomorrow.

The next moment we can receive word of more gun violence, of more mudslinging,

or yet another missile headed toward a group of humans.

Hope can feel slippery.

Fortunately for us, God's grace is not.

No matter what we are able to hold, God is able to hold onto us.

So trusting that God's grace does not let us go, join me in the prayer of confession:

Prayer of Confession

Gracious God,

You paint pictures of what could be,

but we declare those visions impossible.

You speak of the lion lying down with the lamb,

but we spout skepticism and uncertainty.

You dream of a more just day,

but we poke holes in the plan, unable to fathom that horizon.

Forgive us for losing sight of hope.

Forgive us for assuming that what we see is all there is.

Open up our hearts to see the world as you see it.

**Open up our hearts to risk hope, to dream dreams,
and to not be afraid of either.**

With gratitude we pray, amen.

Words of Forgiveness

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Friends,

No matter what you hold onto,

and no matter what you let slip through your hands,

God is holding onto you.

That good news will never change.

So hear and believe the good news of the Gospel:

Today is a new day. Today, we have reason to hope. Today, we are forgiven.

And the same will be true tomorrow.

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Amen.

Prayer for Illumination

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Holy God,

The stories of Advent are stories many of us have heard before.

We've arranged the nativity scenes.

We've read the children's books.

We've seen the movies.

We've sung the songs.

But as we come to your scripture this morning,

we pray: help us begin again.

Clear the distractions from our minds.

Center us in this space.

Move through the protective barriers we surround ourselves with

and speak to us here and now.

We are listening. We are hopeful.

Amen.

WORD

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

Gospel: : Luke 1:39-55

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

⁴⁶And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever. "

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Karla Wildberger

Hymn of the Day: *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

ELW 254

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | Come, thou long-expected Jesus,
born to set thy people free;
from our fears and sins release us;
let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
hope of all the earth thou art,
dear desire of ev'ry nation,
joy of ev'ry longing heart. | 2 | Born thy people to deliver,
born a child, and yet a king;
born to reign in us forever,
now thy gracious kingdom bring.
By thine own eternal Spirit
rule in all our hearts alone;
by thine all-sufficient merit
raise us to thy glorious throne. |
|---|---|---|--|

Affirmation of Faith

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Let us affirm our faith together...

**We believe in a God who gives us reason to hope,
a God who fills our nights with stars,
who follows winter with spring,
who dwells with and among us.**

**We believe that this God has dreams for creation,
dreams of justice like a mighty stream
and swords that will be beaten into plowshares.**

Therefore, we push cynicism aside.

We risk vulnerability.

We hold onto hope,

and we declare:

**“My soul magnifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”**

Prayers of Intercession

...Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

...in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

Offering: *Come Now, O Prince of Peace* vs. 2 & 4

ELW 247

2 Come now, O God of love, make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

4 Come, Hope of unity, make us one body.

Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.

Text & Music: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope

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Offering Prayer

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Let us pray.

Holy God, you knit us together, threading our lives to the generations before us and the generations after us. May these gifts be used to continue the work our ancestors began and to build on what we are doing now. Into your hands, we entrust these gifts so that our unfinished work will one day be complete. **Amen.**

Invitation to the Table

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Thanksgiving at the Table

Lord's Prayer

ELW p. 173

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

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.

Lamb of God

ELW p. 174



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
 2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
 3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
 4 Of her, Em-man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
 all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
 "To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said,
 in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
 thy son shall be Em-man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
 "My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
 and Chris-tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say:



most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
 most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
 Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,
 "Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."

Text Basque carol; para. Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834-1924 Music: Basque carol; arr. C. Edgar Pettman, 1865-1943, and John Wickham Arr. © 1955, 1983, E.H. Freeman, Ltd. Admin, Glenwood Music Corp. Used by permission OneLicense #A-718383

Prayer after Communion

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Nourishing God,

Sometimes we tell ourselves that too much has taken place to begin again.

We think the world is too far gone.

We think we have made too many mistakes.

We tell ourselves that we couldn't possibly begin again.

But then we come to this Table and we get a glimpse of your kingdom.

We come to this Table and all are welcomed, all are seen, all are fed.

And just like that, we have hope. Just like that, we begin again.

Thank you for the gift of this fresh start.

Thank you for planting hope deep in our bones.

Thank you for meeting us in ordinary bread and wine to remind us that it's never too late to build your kingdom here.

We are grateful. We are so grateful. **Amen.**

SENDING

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

Announcements

Blessing

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As you leave this place, may you have the wisdom to lean on one other.
May you have the courage to hold onto hope, the compassion to do the good that is yours to do, and the confidence to trust that God sees you as a blessing.
For in a world full of dead ends, Advent invites us to begin again.
So start here. Start now. Start with love and begin again. **Amen.**

Sending Song: *Joy to the World*

ELW 267

1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the

ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his right - teous -

room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his

sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing,
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy,
found, far as, far as the curse is found.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748 Music: English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792-1872 Public Domain.

Dismissal

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In the name of Christ, our new beginning, go in peace.

Amen.

Postlude: *Do You Hear What I Hear?*

Arr. Alex-Zsolt

Announcements

Altar Flowers today are provided by Jim & Bernita Gilbertson in memory of Carl & Bea Freymiller.

This Week at Lord of Life

Sunday, Dec. 22 8:00 AM Worship in-person
 No classes... just fellowship!
 10:30 AM Worship in-person or online

Tuesday, Dec. 24 **OFFICE CLOSED**
 4:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship in-person or online
 6:00 PM Christmas Eve Worship in-person

Wednesday, Dec. 25 **OFFICE CLOSED**

Advent/Christmas Special Collection

As we prepare for the Christ child, **we are collecting diapers for the Maria House and Teresa Shelter.**

Christmas Eve Worship

Once again we will be worshipping at 4:00 & 6:00 pm on Tuesday, the 24th. The service includes special music, communion and candle lighting. The 4:00 service will also be livestreamed.

Christmas Day Worship

Wartburg Theological Seminary will be hosting a Christmas Day worship service at 10:00 am in their Chapel where we are all welcomed.

Reminder

There will be only one service on December 29 at 10:30. This will be a service of lessons and carols with additional special music.

Acknowledgments

Words for the Beginning Liturgical prayers and Words for worship for Advent-Epiphany written by Rev. Sarah (Are) Speed | © A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org.

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COVER ART - ARTIST STATEMENT

MAGNIFY

by Hannah Garrity

Inspired by Luke 1:46-55

Acrylic painting with mixed media on canvas

The central image in this quilt square design is of Mary's soul, an abstract and concentric shape that begins to look like an eye. It originates as an outward spiraling abstraction of the soul magnifying God. For Mary's soul magnifies her creator. In her song, Mary honors her God who mirrors the life her son will live: lifting up the lowly, filling the hungry, coming to the aid of God's people, bringing down the powerful, sending the rich away empty, and scattering the proud.

One Advent, the art team at my church created a set of banners based on the story of Elizabeth and Zechariah in Luke 1. In the design, Elizabeth (Mary's cousin) stood, full with child. Surrounding her were patterns of tablets and writing tools (representing muted Zechariah's need to communicate through writing) and patterns of hands (representing Elizabeth's caretaking in raising up her son, John). The banners hung in the sanctuary throughout the whole Advent season. On December 24th, the pastor told me, "It's Christmas eve; I have to preach the Magnificat. Elizabeth will have to be Mary today."

It occurs to me that we are all Mary today, dreaming of a better world and working toward it through right relationships and healthy communities. So why does it seem that the world keeps falling apart? Where is the "arc of justice" of which Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke?⁶ Can you see it? Can you feel it? Why does it seem so far out of reach? Like Moses on the mountaintop, can you see the promised land? As global politics heat up, it feels so far away.

Mary is on the verge of delivering God's depth and beauty into the world; God will be embodied by a child. Mary, the earthly mother of our incarnate God, can see it. She can see hope, justice, and right relationships. In the Magnificat, she speaks the way of God into being, just before Jesus is born. Like my mother whispering in my ear when I was a child, calling forth whom I shall become, Mary speaks her dreams into existence.

—Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

⁶ "We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice." —Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., from his speech, "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution," delivered at the National Cathedral, March 31st, 1968.



Lord of Life Lutheran Church
2899 Hales Mill Road
Dubuque, IA 52002
(563) 582-7371
lordoflife.online



Lord of Life Lutheran Guest Wireless
Password: Lutheran

Interim Pastor
Rev. Karla Wildberger
pastor@lordoflifedbq.org

Administrative Assistant
Rita Dienst
office@lordoflifedbq.org

Musician
Jill Klinebriel
jill@lordoflifedbq.org

NOW Worship Leader
Bri Ensign
bri.ensign@gmail.com

Choir Director
Susan Hansen

Administrative Office Hours
Monday - Thursday
9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Worship Online

YouTube Channel: Lord of Life Lutheran Church; website: lordoflife.online
or Facebook: Lord of Life Lutheran Dubuque

This Week's Worship Servants

Ushers: 8:00 Sam & Sue Deaver

10:30 Joan Cram

Tech/PPT: 8:00 Rita

10:30 Nate Frambach/Barry Pickart