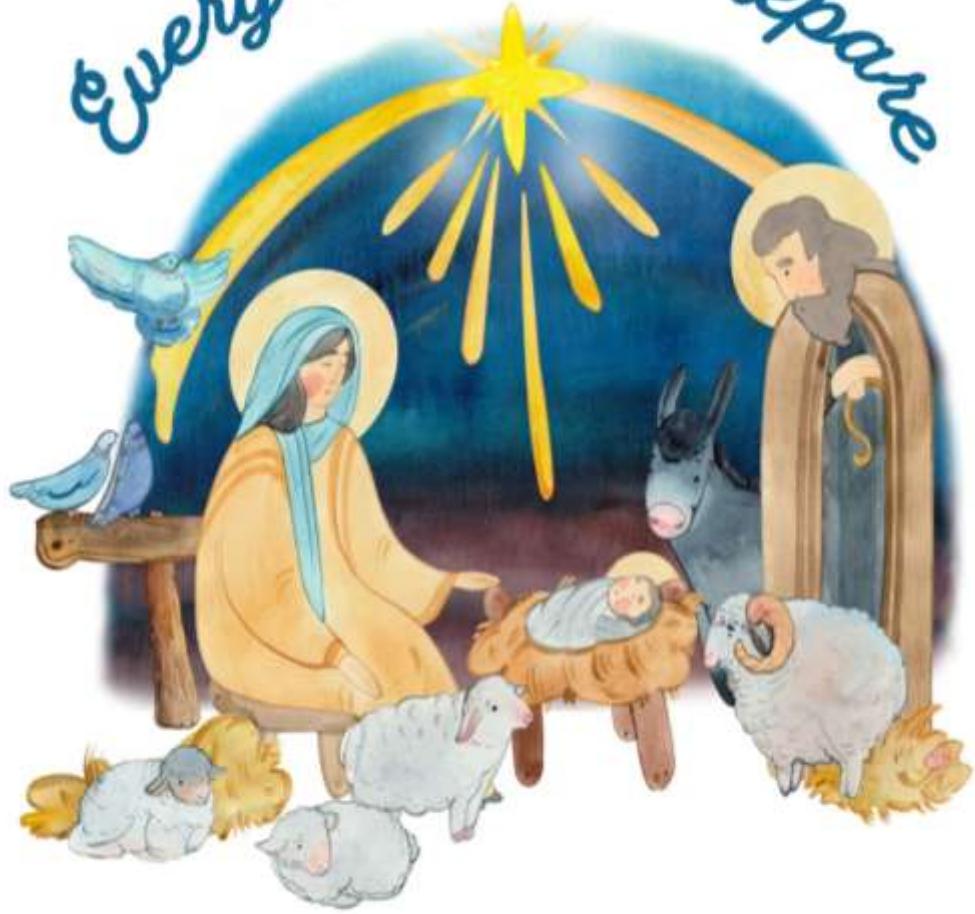


every heart prepare



Advent Midweek Three

ASCENSION LUTHERAN CHURCH

"A Church for Families, a Family for Everyone"

Wednesday, December 17, 2025

ADVENT MIDWEEK 3

WELCOME

We are glad you are with us! To all guests and visitors, we especially extend our hands of friendship. May God bless the worship time for each one of you. Please come again!

TITHES AND OFFERINGS

Please place your offering in the basket in the aisle. (Our offerings are made as an act of worship, given in loving response to all that God has graciously given us, both materially and spiritually.)

+ PREPARATION +

THEME: “CRECHE”

“Prepare!” is often the watchword of the season as the world gets ready for another celebration of Christmas. An integral part of any preparation is decoration. We see decorations everywhere this time of year. The world may not comprehend the real meaning of Christmas, but even secular preparations use many of the same decorations beloved by Christians—an appropriation we shouldn’t mind at all, because these decorations point us to Christ. This year, as we look forward again to the coming of the Messiah, we take a fresh look at how the adornments of the season draw our eyes to Jesus, that we may more richly behold the love, peace, joy, and hope He comes to bring as this beauty is set before us.

Tonight, we focus on the crèche—those miniature models of the nativity scene that abound each December. Unlike lights and evergreens, the symbols that aided our meditation these last two weeks, the crèche is distinctly Christian. In it, we behold Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the Magi, the angels, the stable animals, and, at the center, baby Jesus. Some places introduce the characters in chronological order; others put them all out at once. Either way, the crèche represents a crucial, historical event: God taking on human form and human nature so that He could take our place and redeem us from all sin. We behold it with fresh eyes this evening.

PRELUDE

WELCOME

“Savior of the Nations, Come”

LSB 332

- 1 Savior of the nations, come,
Virgin’s Son, make here Your home!
Marvel now, O heav’n and earth,
That the Lord chose such a birth.
- 2 Not by human flesh and blood,
By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh—
Woman’s offspring, pure and fresh.
- 3 Here a maid was found with child,
Yet remained a virgin mild.
In her womb this truth was shown:
God was there upon His throne.
- 4 Then stepped forth the Lord of all
From His pure and kingly hall;
God of God, yet fully man,
His heroic course began.

“Savior of the Nations, Come”, Text: attr. Ambrose of Milan, 340–397; German version, Martin Luther, 1483–1546; (sts. 1–2): tr. William M. Reynolds, 1812–76; (sts. 3, 6): tr. Lutheran Service Book, 2006; (sts. 4–5, 8): tr. F. Samuel Janzow, 1913–2001; (st. 7): tr. Gifford A. Grobien, 1973, Text (sts. 1–2): Public domain Text (sts. 3, 6–7): © 2006 Concordia Publishing House; (sts. 4–5, 8): © 1978 Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission: LSB Hymn License no. 110004673

INVOCATION

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

C Amen.

OPENING SCRIPTURE

P Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God shines forth.

C **Our God shall come; He does not keep silence.**

P Prepare the way of the LORD;

C **make straight in the desert a highway for our God.**

P Shower, O heavens, from above, and let the skies rain down righteousness.

C **Let the earth open, that salvation may sprout forth.**

P And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,

C **and all flesh shall see it together.**

CONFSSION

(Silence to reflect upon our sin.)

“Savior of the Nations, Come” (tune: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*)

- 1 To Thee, omniscient Lord of all,
In grief and shame I humbly call;
 I see my sins against Thee, Lord,
 The sins of thought and deed and word.
They press me sore; I cry to Thee:
O God, be merciful to me!
- 2 O Lord, my God, to Thee I pray:
O cast me not in wrath away!
 Let Thy good Spirit ne'er depart,
 But let Him draw to Thee my heart
That truly penitent I be:
O God, be merciful to me!
- 3 O Jesus, let Thy precious blood
Be to my soul a cleansing flood.
 Turn not, O Lord, Thy guest away,
 But grant that justified I may
Go to my house at peace with Thee:
O God, be merciful to me!

“Savior of the Nations, Come”, Text: Magnus Brostrup Landstad, 1802–80; tr. Carl Döving, 1867–1937, alt.
Text: Public domain

ABSOLUTION

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C **Amen.**

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray.

Almighty, ever-living, and everlasting God, our help in ages past and hope for years to come, You sent Your Son into our flesh to live among us in our world and to walk with us in our times and places so that we would be saved from all sins in every time and place. As we survey anew Jesus' journey from the manger to the cross, grant that we may draw great comfort and confidence in the reality of Your birth, that faith may again be kindled in our hearts; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

C Amen.

+ THE WORD +

FIRST READING

1 John 1:1-4 (ESV)

P A reading from First John, the first chapter.

¹That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the Word of life— ²the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— ³that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALMODY

Psalm 89:1-8 (ESV)



(congregation sings verses in **bold**)

O LORD God of hosts,
who is mighty as You are, | O LORD,*
with Your faithfulness all a- | round You?

I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, for- | ever;*
with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all
gener- | ations.

For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up for- | ever;*
in the heavens You will establish Your | faithfulness.”

You have said, “I have made a covenant with My | chosen one;*
I have sworn to David My | servant:

‘I will establish your offspring for- | ever,*
and build your throne for all gener- | ations.’”

**Let the heavens praise Your wonders, | O LORD,*
Your faithfulness in the assembly of the | holy ones!**

For who in the skies can be compared | to the LORD?*
Who among the heavenly beings is | like the LORD,

**a God greatly to be feared in the council of the | holy ones,*
and awesome above all who are a- | round Him?**

Glory be to the Father and | to the Son*
and to the Holy | Spirit;
as it was in the be- | ginning,*
is now, and will be forever. | Amen.

O LORD God of hosts,
who is mighty as You are, | O LORD,*
with Your faithfulness all a- | round You?

P ¹So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

C ³**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.** ⁴**Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

P ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

C ⁸**And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18-25 (ESV)

P A reading from St. Matthew, the first chapter.

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called His name Jesus.

P O Lord, have mercy on us.

C **Thanks be to God.**

RESPONSORY

Luke 1:32; John 1:14a; Isaiah 53:3d, 5

P 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 father
David.

C **The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.**

P He was despised, and we esteemed Him not.

C **The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.**

P But He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed
for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought
us peace, and with His stripes we are healed.

C **The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.**

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”

LSB 338

- 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.

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus”, Text: Charles Wesley, 1707–88, alt., Text: Public domain

SERMON“

A REMINDER”

Pr. Jim Sprengle

“Emmanuel”

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, His name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us, His name is called Emmanuel. (repeat)

“Emmanuel”, By Bob McGee, © 1976 C.A. Music. CCLI License No. 759893.

ADVENT LITANY

P In peace, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For eyes to behold the Father's hand in all creation, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P For awareness of beauty and the living traditions of the church that bring Christ to our eyes through arts and crafts, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may see the signs of Christ's return even as we celebrate His birth, and encourage one another all the more as we see the Day drawing near, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may be living testimonies of new life in Christ through our loving service to our neighbor—both in word and in deed—let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may be thankful for the bountiful harvest we enjoy amid the many festivities of this season, and be generous to the poor, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may love one another as God so loved us, forgive one another, and work together in the unity we have in Christ Jesus, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

P That we may not be lured into temptation or despair or be distracted by the false Christmases around us, but always hold the true meaning of Christmas in our hearts, let us pray to the Lord:

C **Lord, have mercy.**

CLOSING PRAYER

P O Most High, our rock and our salvation,

C **You have never abandoned us but have always come to the aid of Your people.**

P Grant that the eyes of our hearts would see You just as Your people of old saw Your Son when He came to this world, walked and taught among us, and gave His life for us.

C **Give us such faith that we may trust all that our fathers and mothers of old saw, touched, and heard—just as it has been revealed to us through Your Word.**

P For Your Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, and comes to us even now by Your Spirit's power; through Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end.

C Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

C **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.**

BENEDICTION

Philippians 4:19, 23, adapt.

P Let us bless the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

5 God the Father was His source,
Back to God He ran His course.
Into hell His road went down,
Back then to His throne and crown.

6 For You are the Father’s Son
Who in flesh the vict’ry won.
By Your mighty pow’r make whole
All our ills of flesh and soul.

7 From the manger newborn light
Shines in glory through the night.
Darkness there no more resides;
In this light faith now abides.

△ 8 Glory to the Father sing,
Glory to the Son, our king,
Glory to the Spirit be
Now and through eternity.

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
C Thanks be to God!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1440 SE 182nd Avenue, Portland, OR 97233
Office Phone: 503-665-8821 · Web Site: www.alcportland.org
Church Office Hours: Monday–Friday 9am to 3pm

Our Mission Statement:

~Go and Share Jesus Christ~

Our Vision Statement:

“Take part...Join Jesus on His mission.”

The members of Ascension Lutheran Church are committed to being God's witnesses in Gresham, and in all of Portland and the Northwest, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8):

With the universal Christian Church, we believe, teach and respond to the love of the Triune God—the Father, Creator of all that exists; the Son Jesus Christ, Who left His home in Heaven to become flesh and blood, to suffer and die for the sins of all peoples of the world, and Who rose from the grave, victorious over sin, death and the devil, that we too might live with Him in Heaven; and the Holy Spirit, Who creates faith in our hearts in Christ Jesus through God's Word and Sacrament. The three Persons of the Holy Trinity are one God, co-equal and co-eternal. The core teachings of our faith from the Lutheran perspective can be summarized in three short phrases: Grace alone, Scripture alone, Faith alone.

STAFF

Rev. Jim Sprengle, Pastor
pastor@alcportland.org

Rev. Ruberto Ek Yah, Pastor
rubastinoek@yahoo.com

Brad Hall, Worship and Music Coordinator
bdhall1982@yahoo.com

Michele Sprengle, Office Administrator
office@alcportland.org

Sheryl Maier, Treasurer
treasurer@alcportland.org

Wanda Cassetty,
Council Secretary
alccouncil1440@gmail.com

Laura Potter, Property Management
alccproperty1440@gmail.com