

A long-exposure photograph of a night sky filled with star trails, creating a sense of motion and light. In the lower-left foreground, the dark silhouette of a house with a chimney and a fence is visible against the horizon. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues and blacks, with the white and light blue of the star trails providing contrast.

Making Room HOPE

1st Sunday of Advent

November 28, 2021



Ascension Lutheran Church

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Welcome to Worship...

Welcome to all God's guests, including those who call themselves "members" of this church named Ascension Lutheran Church more than 50 years ago.

A special welcome to guests who are here for the first time or who call yourselves "visitors" among the people of this community. It is at God's invitation, through worship, the Holy Spirit calls each of us to come to a place of **community, communion** and **commitment**. Each of us brings a different lens to worship, and yet, in a worshiping community, these differences become celebrations of diversity.

**Children are always welcome in worship services;
however please know a nursery is provided for children under 4 years of
age.**

Introduction

We usually associate fasting with Lent, but the Eastern Church observes a "Nativity Fast" in preparation for the birth of Christ, understanding fasting as a way to "make more room" for the Holy and shift our focus to care of the neighbor. In a time when so many are suffering the economic consequences of the pandemic, we are invited this year to create room for more hope in the world as we learn to reallocate and multiply resources in ways that are just and right.

We Open the Door—HOPE

Welcome to Worship

P The pandemic has laid bare, and widened, economic disparity locally and globally.

As we enter the Advent season, how can our church become a house where the Holy will be born anew—offering respite, sustenance and care, opening the doors ever wider to those seeking shelter from the onslaught of life?

No one church can do it all,
but each can do something.

As we study the biblical prophets that call us to care for our neighbors and “make room in the inn,” the lonely and frightened spaces within us are filled with the light of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Cantors

**Hope waits for us as we wait.
Hope waits for us to trust.
Hope waits for our commitment
to a land that’s kind and just.
In this time of preparation
for the work of co-creation,
for the birthing of a world
that heals the ones in pain.
Hope is born in us again!**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

WA Today we offer the Light of Hope to illumine the Door of Welcome. May this light shine in our hearts, in our lives, and in our church. May Hope awaken us to possibilities and lead us to greater hospitality. There *IS* room in this Inn, a House for the Holy.

Opening Song



All Hope waits for us as we wait. Hope waits for us to trust. Hope waits for
our com - mit - ment to a land that's kind and just. In this time of
pre - par - a - tion for the work of co - cre - a - tion, for the birth - ing of a world that
heals the ones in pain, Hope is born in us a - gain.

Amanda Udis-Kessler

Sharing the Peace

In our continued physical distancing out of love for the health of one another, we will share the peace of our risen Lord by "speaking" that peace through sign language.

P Christ become Hope with you.

All **And also with you.**

Confession and Forgiveness

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God,
who alone does wonders,
who lifts up the lowly,
who fills the hungry with good things.

All **Amen.**

P Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God for whom we wait,

All in the presence of one another,
we confess our sin before you.
We fail in believing that your good news is for us.
We falter in our call to tend your creation.
We find our sense of self in material wealth.
We fear those different from ourselves.
We forget that we are your children
and turn away from your love.
Forgive us, Blessed One,
and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.

P God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you!
Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ✝ your sins are forgiven.
You are children of the Most High,
inheritors of the eternal promise,
and recipients of divine mercy.
God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

All Amen.

A Reading from Jeremiah, the 33rd chapter

In the Old Testament, “righteousness” often has to do with being faithful in relationship. God acts righteously both in punishing Israel for its sin and in having mercy. In today’s reading, Jerusalem’s future name—“The Lord is our righteousness”—proclaims that the Lord is even now working salvation for Israel.

¹⁴The days are surely coming, says the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David; and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. And this is the name by which it will be called: “The LORD is our righteousness.”

Jeremiah 33:14-16

L Word of God, Word of Life.

All Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation

Please stand in body or spirit.

♪ ♪ Emmanuel, Emmanuel, His name is called Emmanuel ♪ ♪
God with us revealed in us. His name is called Emmanuel

CCLI Song # 12949 Bob McGee
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Gospel Reading

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 21st chapter.

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

God will fulfill God's purposes and, already, hidden signs of that fulfillment abound. On that great day there will be dismay, perplexity, confusion, and terror, but God's people shall be given strength to stand boldly and receive God's promised redemption.

[Jesus said:] ²⁵“There will be signs in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and on the earth distress among nations confused by the roaring of the sea and the waves. ²⁶People will faint from fear and foreboding of what is coming upon the world, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. ²⁷Then they will see ‘the Son of Man coming in a cloud’ with power and great glory. ²⁸Now when these things begin to take place, stand up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

²⁹Then he told them a parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees; ³⁰as soon as they sprout leaves you can see for yourselves and know that summer is already near. ³¹So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near. ³²Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all things have taken place. ³³Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

³⁴“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life, and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, ³⁵like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of Man.”

P The Gospel of our Lord.

Luke 21:25-36

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

Hymn of the Day

Please stand in body or spirit.

Come And Behold Him

Verse 1

Come and behold Him. Come see His glory.
Come with an honest heart to see all He is.
We will discover All of His beauty.
His light will burn away all the darkness we've known.

Chorus

Come and behold Him. Come and behold Him.
Come with an honest heart to see all He is.
Come and behold Him. Wait now before Him.
Come with an honest heart to see all He is.

Verse 2

Come and behold Him. Come see His mercy.
Come find His tenderness reaching to you.
Just as a mirror shows a reflection,
His Word and Spirit come now reflecting His love. *Chorus*

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Prayers of Intercession

L In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

Make of my heart a sta-ble, a house for the Ho-ly, a warm and stur-dy
place for hope to live and grow.

(each prayer petition ends with)

L: Hear us, O God.

All: **Your mercy is great.**

Offering

[You may be Seated](#)

While we still will not physically pass the offering plates we will continue to have the plates available at the entrance to receive your offerings and will lift them up in thanksgiving before the throne of grace.

A Story of Innkeeping

The Bible doesn't actually mention an Innkeeper in the story of Jesus' birth.

But this popular notion is alive in our imaginations.

Sometimes the Innkeeper gets a bad rap, as if providing substandard accommodations for a family about to go through the birthing process.

But what if we saw the innkeeper as someone who, with a full house, thought literally "outside the box" to solve a problem?

What if we endeavored to do the same to provide ministry,
to "house the Holy"

in ways we have not yet imagined?

How might WE stir our imaginations and stoke the possibilities for hospitality
within our own community?

Offertory Prayer

P God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people.

All Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace.

The Great Thanksgiving and Words of Institution

P The Holy One be with you

All And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts

All We lift them up to our God.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God

All It is right to give our thanks and praise.

P It is right, and a good and joyful thing,
always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Birthing God,
creator of heaven and earth.

You formed us in our mother's womb, house of the holy,
growing us in your image.

Our hearts and lungs became a place of opening and welcoming,
doors for the Spirit of Life that you breathed into us.

We have not always understood ourselves as sacred creation,
a place for the dwelling of the Holy inside of us.

We have not always seen that in others.

When we turn away from each other and from you,
your love remains steadfast.

You deliver us from the captivity of isolation and fear,
make covenant to be our steadfast, indwelling God,
and continue to speak to us through prophetic utterance,
in the Spirit and through the people.

P And so,
 with your people on earth
 and all the company of heaven
 we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

O Ho - ly, Ho - ly, Ho - ly O Ho - ly God of

pow - er and might, Heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.

Ho - san - na in the high - est. Blessed is He

who comes in Your name Ho - san - na in the hi - est!

P In the midst of a time of despair, oppression, division, and fear,
 your gestation in the house of a holy womb—
 through an unlikely midwife of salvific power—
 brought Jesus, the Christ, into this world.

Into The Inn of simple means
 came a life dedicated and anointed by the Spirit
 to preach good news to the poor,
 to proclaim release to the captives
 and recovering of sight to the blind,
 to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
 and to announce that the time had come
 when you would save your people.

P In another house, on another night—
the night in which he gave himself up for us—
he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread,
gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.”

When the supper was over, he took the cup,
gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said:

“Drink from this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.”

And so, in remembrance of your mighty acts in Jesus Christ,
we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice,
in union with Christ’s offering for us,
as we proclaim the mystery of faith

***All* Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

P Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here,
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Open our hearts in and through this act,
stripping away any excuse or fearful hesitation,
so that we will open our doors to the world
as the body of Christ, redeemed by his love.

Through your Son Jesus Christ
with the Holy Spirit in your holy church,
all honor and glory is yours, almighty God,
now and forever.

***All* Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

P Let us approach the throne of grace as we pray as Jesus taught us:

***All* 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.**

The Invitation

P Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.

Communion Songs

Shine on Us

Verse 1

Lord let Your light, Light of Your face shine on us.
Lord let Your light, Light of Your face shine on us.
That we may be saved, that we may have life,
To find our way in the darkest night
Let Your light shine on us.

Verse 2

Lord let Your grace, Grace from Your hand fall on us.
Lord let Your grace, Grace from Your hand fall on us.
That we may be saved, That we may have life,
To find our way in the darkest night
Let Your grace fall on us.

Verse 3

Lord let Your love, Love with no end come over us.
Lord let Your love, Love with no end come over us.
That we may be saved, That we may have life,
To find our way in the darkest night
Let Your love come over us.

Ending

Let Your light shine on us

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Oh how He loves you and me

Oh how He loves you and me. Oh how He loves you and me.
He gave His life, What more could He give?
Oh how He loves you. Oh how He loves me.
Oh how He loves you and me.

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Post Communion Blessing *and* Prayer

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you
and keep you in his grace.

***All* Amen**

P Most High God,
you have come among us at this table.

***All* By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word,
sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all,
through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. Amen.**

Stewardship of Life and Ministry Announcements

Closing Carol

Each week of this series we will close out with a Christmas Carol. Yes, Advent is not yet the birth of Christ. However, as we prepare our homes and this house for the Holy, we live in the “already and not yet.” We already know “the rest of the story” AND YET we have not seen the fulfillment of a time when suffering ends. Today we sing “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” a carol written by Phillips Brooks in 1865 after a horseback ride between Jerusalem and Bethlehem on Christmas Eve .

An original verse not included in our hymnals is especially poignant for our theme:

**“Where children pure and happy
Pray to the blessed Child,
Where misery cries out to thee,
Son of the Mother mild;
Where charity stands watching
And faith holds wide the door,
The dark night wakes, the glory breaks,
And Christmas comes once more.”**

Let us remember that it was in a little and unassuming town where the Holy was housed. We too can offer light and hope and a place where “faith holds wide the door,” even and especially in our little town.

Benediction

Please stand in body or spirit.

P May God's Door of Welcome
swing open in your heart and in your life.

May Christ's humble first dwelling
remind you of the plenty you already know.

And may the Spirit lead you into
more possibility and hospitality than you can imagine,
making room in The Inn for all.

May it be so for you. ✝

May it be so for us.

May it be so for this church.

All Amen

Sending Song

O Little Town of Bethlehem

- 1 O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight.

- 3 How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of his heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming; but, in this world of sin,
where meek souls will receive him, still the dear Christ enters in.

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835-1893

Dismissal

P Go in peace. Christ is near

All Thanks be to God.

Readings for next Sunday,
December 5th
2nd Sunday of Advent

First Reading:

Malachi 3:1-4

Psalm:

Luke 1:68-79

Second Reading:

Philippians 1:3-11

Gospel:

Luke 3:1-6

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