



⁷⁸ *Because of the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
79 to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”*

Luke 1:78-79 (NRSVUE)

Sunday, December 21, 2025

4th Sunday of Advent

*Please be seated, silence all devices, and prepare yourself for worship.
All are welcome in this sacred space, including the wiggles and giggles!*

◆ PLEASE RISE IN BODY OR SPIRIT

PRELUDE *Angels We Have Heard on High* Marsha Trelstad and Mary Dailey

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING Paul Parish and Linda Diekvoss

...God's love is made visible.

**He rules the world with truth and grace, and makes the nations prove
The glories of His righteousness and wonders of His love.**

We light this candle for love.

Christ is coming. Come, Lord Jesus.

ADVENT WREATH HYMN *Light the Advent Candle*

Light the Advent candles in the wreath of green.

Let them be an offering fit for a King.

**One for hope and one for love,
one for joy and peace, glowing in the darkness,
shine for all to see.**

~~~ GATHERING IN GOD'S PRESENCE ~~~

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Murray

◆ SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

The Peace of Christ be with you! And also with you!

◆ CALL TO WORSHIP (FROM PSALM 8)

Rick W

*Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
who has looked with compassion on all creation.*

**The Holy One has raised up a light for all people,
shining into every shadowed place.**

In a world longing for peace, for justice, for love made real —

God's tender mercy dawns upon us.

*Come, let us lift our voices with the angels, the prophets, and the generations
before us.*

**With hope and joy,
we worship the God who guides our feet into the way of peace.**

◆ HYMN 100 (vs. 1, 2, 4)

Canticle of the Turning

Congregation

~~~ **LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD** ~~~

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

Rick W

◆ SCRIPTURE Luke 1:68-79

*This is the Word of the Lord.*

**Thanks be to God!**

PRAYER OF CONFESSION (*we begin in silent confession and then pray together*)

**Merciful God, we confess that though your light has come into the world, we often choose shadows. You call us to prepare the way of peace, yet we cling to resentment, fear, or convenience. You invite us to speak words of justice and compassion, yet we stay silent when voices are needed. You shine with tender mercy, yet we fail to see the sacred in our neighbors and the holy in ourselves.**

**Forgive us, O God. By your dawn from on high, guide our feet again into the way of peace, that we may bear your light to all. Amen.**

HYMN 551

*LORD, HAVE MERCY*

Congregation

*Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy upon us.*

SHARING GOD'S LOVE AND FORGIVENESS

Rick W

*...Believe the Good News:*

*In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, restored, and made whole.*

**Thanks be to God!**

◆ HYMN 113 (Refrain)

*Angels We Have Heard on High*

Congregation

PASTORAL PRAYERS AND THE LORD'S PRAYER (page 35)

Pastor Winslow

PRESENTATION OF THE WORD  
Sorenson

*A Service of Lessons and Carols* arr. Heather  
for Congregation and Choir

*...through the birth of Jesus we remember that you are faithful. Because of this:  
We come today in gratitude.*

*...As far as the curse is found, your blessings search us out and cover us.*

**We come today in humility.**

*Stripped of pride, accepting you as our eternal gift, given by God the Father.*

**We come rejoicing**

*...Our heavenly adoption brings us life and the richness of your presence.*

**We come in faith**

*...You are the God who comes and stays and delivers. Because of this:*

**You are our Hope!**

*Our hope for things to come*

**Our hope for unresolved situations today.**

#### *JOY TO THE WORLD*

*... we must also ask ourselves have we made room for you in our lives?*

**We invite you into our homes.**

*...to see the best and the worst of us.*

**We create room for you in our workplaces.**

*Where tensions often run high, and people can be difficult.*

**We invite you into our conflicts.**

*...and wisdom to resolve situations that wound us.*

**We create room for you in our finances.**

*...And for those who struggle during the Christmas season.*

**We invite you into our struggle.**

*...May every heart prepare room for you in this season and throughout the year.*

**Amen.**

#### *AWAY IN A MANGER*

*... “A request for the honor of your presence” from the King of all,  
how can we refuse?*

**And so we come**

*In answer to your bidding*

**We come**

*With uplifted hearts and outstretched arms.*

**We come**

*“...they sing praise to you; they sing praise to your name”*

**“come and see the works of God;**

how awesome are God's deeds toward humankind."

*O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL*

*...He breaks the power of fear and sin, and he frees us, giving us his peace.*

**Jesus invited "come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."**

*These are the tidings of comfort! These are the tidings of joy!*

**~~~ RESPONDING TO GOD'S CALL ~~~**

OFFERING

Pastor Murray

*GOD REST YE MERRY, GENTLEMEN*

*...Lord, remind us that throughout history, you have chosen the underdog, the unassuming to show your greatest power.*

**Remind us that you can be found in the most unlikely of places, God. Remind us that your miracles and blessings cannot be summoned by wealth, power, or presentation. In times when we lack confidence in your calling.**

*Remind us that you chose Mary, an unwed teen, to raise the Savior of the world.*

**In times when our current situation seems to disqualify us from your blessings, remind us of Bethlehem, a tiny city with heavenly fame.**

*...is an honor almost more than we can comprehend, but we are grateful.*

**Let us be your hands and feet, bringing miracles of hope and deliverance to people in darkness. Amen.**

*O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM*

*THE FIRST NOEL*

*SILENT NIGHT*

*...Christmas lights blinking on trees and on houses, we will rejoice!*

**For you are the Light!**

*... we will give thanks!*

**For you are the Bread of Life.**

*As we leave with these carols in our hearts and on our lips*

**We will sing with the angels,**

*... "Joy to the World! Our Lord has come!"*

**We receive you as our King!**

*JOY TO THE WORLD (REPRISE)*

BENEDICTION

Pastor Murray

POSTLUDE

Mary Dailey

**Today's Service**

Director of Music

Mary Dailey

Accompanist

Marsha T

Liturgist

Rick W

Readers

Bill F, Margaret A and Rick W

Trustee

Paul P

Ushers

Connie S, Karen E and Sheri W

Advent Candle Lighting

Paul P and Linda D

Cover Image

*Ar.inspiredpencil.com*

*Where did you see God's tender mercy — or feel called to offer mercy  
— this past week?*

The flowers are given in memory of Tim G, with love  
from Deb, Tim, John and Tommy.

*Worship Plans*

Sermon Series *Caroling the Christmas Story*

December 24: *Joy To The World* --- Luke 2:1-20

1pm - Baroque

4pm - Interactive Children & Family Service with Bells

7pm - Communion, Candlelight and Choir

Christmas Eve is the culmination of joy of preparation through Advent for God's breaking into this world, again. Arrive by 6:40p (for the 7p Christmas Eve service) for a joy-filled hymn sing!

December 28: *First Nowell* --- Isaiah 63:7-9; Matthew 2:1-12

January 4: *We Three Kings* --- Isaiah 60:1-6; Matthew 2:1-12 Epiphany & Communion

**Office Hours 9am-2pm Tuesday-Thursday**

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**Staff Members**

**Pastor Jonathan Murray**, Minister of Word and Sacrament

**Pastor Blakeley Winslow**, Pastor of Christian Discipleship

**Lydia Cooper**, Office Manager

**Mary Dailey**, Director of Worship Arts

**Karen A. Meersman**, Director of Handbells & Children/Youth Music

**Joan Lund**, Financial Secretary

**Tracy Eidson**, Child Care

**CHANCEL CHOIR & GUESTS**

**Mission Statement:**

**We Believe the Good News that all of Littleton is called Beloved by Jesus**

**Christ and together we Belong to God's Kingdom.**



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