



ADVENT

IMMINENT ARRIVAL

Imminent Arrival of Emmanuel

PEACE
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Houghton, Michigan
Sunday, December 21, 2025

Welcome to Worship

God's grace welcomes you, and so do we — the pastor and members of Peace! Jesus Christ is the only Savior of all people. By his perfect life, innocent death and triumphant resurrection, Jesus saves all sinners. We learn these truths from the Bible — God's complete plan for our salvation and his guidebook for our lives. Peace greets you with a warm welcome. We look forward to seeing you again soon!

About Our Service

The gospel (or good news) is not just information about what Jesus did to save sinners. It is also the power God uses to work faith in our hearts, transform our lives, and give us lasting peace. Therefore, Lutheran worship places the gospel in central focus in an order of service called the liturgy. In the message and meal (Holy Communion), in specially selected Scripture readings, and in carefully crafted songs, prayers, and creeds, the liturgy proclaims the good news about Jesus from start to finish. Lutheran worship is also designed to include the participation of the entire assembly (including children). For your ease and convenience, the order of service is printed out on the following pages. If a song is not found in this service folder, it can be found in the red or blue hymnals located on the chair in front of you.

Current Worship Series: Imminent Arrival

Do you remember the feeling when someone important is about to arrive at your place? It's a mixture of anticipation and excitement and nervousness. Did you make all the correct preparations? Will the person be happy to see you? When and how will the person arrive? Will there be any surprises?

During these weeks before Christmas, we anticipate the imminent arrival of Jesus. He's an important person! We are about to celebrate his birth. He could return on judgment day at any time. But in worship we realize that he impacts our lives when the Bible is read and when the sacraments are administered. Suddenly, we feel the excitement of an imminent arrival. reign in our hearts.

Our worship follows this path:

November 30th: Imminent Arrival of the King

December 7th: Imminent Arrival of the Judge

December 14th: Imminent Arrival of the Messiah

December 21st: Imminent Arrival of Emmanuel

December 24th, 5:00 P.M. –Heavenly Hosts Sing Alleluia

December 25th, 10:15 A.M. – Holy Infant So Tender and Mild

Today's Focus: Imminent Arrival of Emmanuel

Emmanuel is an important person. “Emmanuel” means “God with us.” It was a special name given to Jesus already 700 years before he was born. Who is with us when Jesus is with us? God himself. God became a human being in a special way, becoming truly human but remaining God.

God is still with us. We encounter him in a special way when we gather with two or three others in worship. He is so near to us that the thrill of anticipation is almost unbearable. Let it wash over you as you celebrate Christmas this week.

Advent Wreath

The Advent wreath is a combination of two Christian symbols: light and the fir tree. From the early centuries of Christianity it has been the practice to represent Christ with a burning candle. In the meantime, the symbolic use of the fir tree, and consequently also the Advent wreath, originated hundreds of years ago among the Lutherans of Germany. Four candles adorn the wreath. These represent hope, peace, joy, and love, all of which are found in the Christ, who is represented with the white candle at the center. Week by week we light one more candle on the Advent wreath, the amount of light increasing as we approach the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, the Light of the world.

Service Participants:

Computer Organ: Mary Ann Krug

Pastor of Peace: Pastor Welch



THE ORDER OF SERVICE

For Sunday, December 21, 2025

Please stand.

Invocation

The name of
the triune
God and the
sign of the
cross remind
worshippers of
their
baptisms.

In the name of the Father and of the T Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen

Advent Gathering Rite

The cantor/choir introduces the refrain. Then the congregation repeats the refrain and sings it again as indicated.

Lead us to your light, lead us out of dark-ness.

Lead us to your light. Come, Je - sus, come.

Lord, we await your coming to our world;
Bring us the gift of salvation.

Refrain

Come, O come, O come, Emmanuel;
Come with us on earth here to dwell.

Refrain

Confession and Absolution for Advent

Prepare the way for the Lord.

Make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Isaiah 40:3

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness.

**Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish,
but everyone to come to repentance.**

2 Peter 3:9

Dear friends, one day Christ will return to deliver his people.

Therefore, let us prepare our hearts to meet him by humbly seeking his forgiveness.

**Almighty and merciful Father, we have strayed from your ways like
lost sheep.**

**We have followed what we have devised and desired in our own
hearts.**

**We have done what you forbid,
and we have failed to do what you command.**

**Have mercy on us, Lord! Spare us, forgive us, and restore us,
according to your promises in Christ Jesus.**

What God promised long ago through his prophets he has fulfilled in his Son, Jesus Christ. Christ came in human flesh. He is Immanuel, God with us. By his holy life, he fulfilled God's law. By his innocent death, he paid sin's penalty. By rising from the grave, he opened heaven's door. Christ now comes to you through his words of light and life:

After his resurrection, Jesus promised that when Christians forgive each other's sins, their words are as valid and certain as his. (John 20:22-23)

Your sins are forgiven in the name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit

Amen.

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess;
for he who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23

All sing the refrain after a short introduction, the cantor/ choir sings the verse, and then all sing the refrain one final time.

It is customary to begin worship in Advent without an opening hymn or Gloria. This accentuates the solemn penitential and preparatory nature of the season. Christians then look forward to singing the Gloria with the angels at Christmas.



Lord, you are hope and healing for our world;
Come, now, and bring us your good news.

Refrain

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

We light four Advent candles remembering Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Mary. He came to share our humanity.

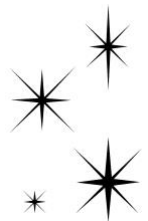
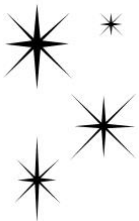
We remember Jesus, whose name means Savior. He came to save his people from their sins.

We hear his call to give him a place in our hearts.

We light four Advent candles as a sign of our joy and hope.

Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest.

Through your Word and Spirit may our souls be blessed.



The Word



Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the burden of our sins, and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Please be seated.

First Reading

Isaiah 7:10–14

¹⁰Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹“Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights.”

¹²But Ahaz said, “I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test.”

¹³Then Isaiah said, “Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also?

¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

Isaiah prophesies that a virgin would give birth to God in the flesh.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Lesson

After
thousands of
years of God's
promises, Paul
looks back
and sees
every one of
them
kept when
God became
man.

Second Reading

Romans 1:1–7

¹Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— ²the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, ⁴and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake. ⁶And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

⁷To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Please stand

Gospel Acclamation

Matthew 1:23



Alleluia. The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel. Alleluia.

Refrain

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Joseph knew full well that Mary would give birth to a son who would be Emmanuel, God with us.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise be to you, O Christ!

Please be seated.

Hymn of the Day

23 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel sts. 1, Ref, 2-4



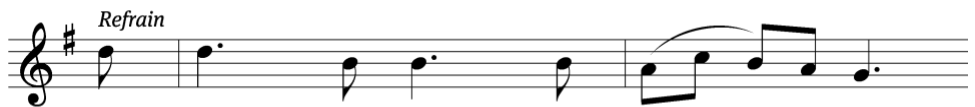
1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som
2 O come, O Root of Jes - se, free your own from
3 O come, O Day - spring from on high, and cheer us
4 O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen



cap - tive Is - ra - el that mourns in lone - ly
Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your
by your draw - ing nigh; dis - perse the gloom - y
wide our heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that



ex - ile here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
peo - ple save, and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.
clouds of night, and death's dark shad - ows put to flight.
leads on high, and close the path to mis - er - y.



Refrain
Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el



shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

Text: Latin, c. 12th cent., Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, Köln, 1710; tr. John Mason Neale, 1818–1866, alt.
Tune: French, 15th cent., alt
Text and tune: Public domain

Sermon

Isaiah 7:10-14

Please stand.

Nicene Creed

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one being with the Father.**

Through him all things were made.

**For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and became truly human.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate.

He suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who in unity with the Father and the Son
is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Public
confession is
faith's
response to
God's saving
Word.
Christians
composed the
Nicene Creed
in the fourth
century to
defend the
Bible's
teachings that
both Jesus
Christ and the
Holy Spirit are
true God,
equal to the
Father in one
eternal,
undivided
Trinity.

Offering

The members of Peace have joined together in the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7) to do the Lord's work of sharing the message of Jesus. Visitors need not feel obligated. You are our guests!

Kindly fill out one of our Connection Cards. You may leave it on the pew, place it in the offering plate, or hand it to an usher.

New Member Welcome

Friends in Christ,

After a review and instruction in the simple teachings of the Bible and our Lutheran church, you have requested to become members of this congregation. You have come to worship today to confess your unity with us and to take your place as a part of this faith community. I now ask you:

Do you believe in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior? If so, answer: I do.
I do.

Do you believe that the teachings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and this congregation, as you have come to know them, are faithful to the Word of God? If so, answer: I do.
I do.

Do you desire to remain faithful to the teachings of Christ, be diligent in the use of God's Word and sacraments, and lead a godly life as the Lord gives you strength? If so, answer: I do, and I ask God to help me.
I do, and I ask God to help me.

Is it your desire to join us in worship and mission and support this work with your prayers and gifts? If so, answer: It is, and I ask God to help me.
It is, and I ask God to help me.

With sincere joy we welcome you as members of Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Brothers and sisters,

As we welcome these new members to our Christian family, I encourage you in the name of Jesus to keep them in your minds, hold them in your hearts, and pray for them again and again. Show them the face of friendship and offer them a hand of support. Encourage them with your “works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.”

The peace of Christ be with us all. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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 Sacrament

We believe what God's Word says. God's Word clearly teaches that along with the bread and wine we receive Christ's body and blood for the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 26:26,28; Mk. 14:22,24; Lk. 22:19-22). God's Word also tells us that those who take Communion together are to:

- 1. Recognize that Christ's true body and blood are miraculously present in the Sacrament (1 Cor. 10:16; 11:29),*
- 2. Examine their hearts (1 Cor. 11:28), and*
- 3. Be united in faith with the congregation with which they commune (1 Cor. 10:17).*

Therefore we ask that those who have not had the opportunity to understand our Scriptural confession would speak with the pastor before participating in the Lord's Supper this morning. If you would like to come forward to receive a blessing, simply cross your arms as the pastor approaches. It is our sincere desire to share in the blessings of the Lord's Supper with you according to the pattern Jesus himself has given in his Word.



Introduction to the Lord's Supper

- 1 Cor. 11:28 Everyone ought to examine their hearts before partaking of the Lord's Supper.
- Psalms 32:5 **I confessed my transgressions to the Lord and he forgave the guilt of my sin.**
- 1 Cor. 11:29 Everyone ought to recognize the true body and blood of the Lord in this Supper.
- 1 Cor. 10:16 **The bread that we break and the cup that we bless are a participation in the body and blood of Christ.**
- Those partaking of the Lord's Supper are to be united in fellowship as one body.
- 1 Cor. 10:17 **Because there is one loaf, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.**

And Christ is Here

Sung to the tune of "In Christ Alone"

And Christ is here
In means divine
Found underneath the bread and wine!
In water poured There with the Word
The living voice of Christ is heard!
And when his Christians Fall to sin
Our Jesus calls us back again
For Christ is here
In means divine –
Blessing us through his design!

Words of Institution

The pastor speaks the words of institution according to the words of 1 Corinthians 11.

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us.

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

Distribution

Please be seated after the song. Communicants will come forward at the usher's direction after the song.

Closing Prayer

Hear the prayer of your people, O Lord, that the lips which have praised you here may glorify you in the world, that the eyes which have seen the coming of your Son may long for his coming again, and that all who have received in his true body and blood the pledge of your forgiveness may be restored to live a new and holy life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and T give you peace.

Amen.

Hymn

65 O Little Town of Bethlehem



- 1 O lit - tle town of Beth - le - hem, how still we see thee lie!
- 2 For Christ is born of Mar - y, and, gath - ered all a - bove
- 3 How si - lent - ly, how si - lent - ly the won - drous gift is giv'n!
- 4 O ho - ly Child of Beth - le - hem, de - scend to us, we pray;



A - bove thy deep and dream-less sleep the si - lent stars go by;
while mor - tals sleep, the an - gels keep their watch of won - d'ring love.
So God im - parts to hu - man hearts the bless - ings of his heav'n.
cast out our sin and en - ter in, be born in us to - day.



yet in thy dark streets shin - eth the ev - er - last - ing light.
O morn - ing stars, to - geth - er pro - claim the ho - ly birth,
No ear may hear his com - ing, but in this world of sin,
We hear the Christ - mas an - gels the great glad ti - dings tell;



The hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee to - night.
and prais - es sing to God the King and peace to all the earth.
where meek souls will re - ceive him, still the dear Christ en - ters in.
O come to us, a - bide with us, our Lord Im - man - u - el!

Text: Phillips Brooks, 1835–1893, abr., alt.

Tune: Lewis H. Redner, 1831–1908

Text and tune: Public domain

Announcements

Foundations of Faith

Foundations of Faith is an introductory class to the Christian faith. It's for anybody who wants to learn or review the fundamental teachings of the Bible, members and non-members alike!

If you or someone you know are interested in joining, contact Pastor for more information.



Online Offering Option

If you would like to give an online offering today, please scan the QR code. All online donations are safe and go directly to Peace.

Sermon Discussion Guide

On the table by the entryway, you will find a stack of sermon discussion guides. These are intended for you and your family to take home as weekly devotional materials, allowing you to meditate on the sermon throughout the week. Take one with you as you exit today.

Sunday Volunteer Schedule

| Date | Usher | Counter | Computer | Piano | Snacks | Children's Ministry |
|---------------|-------|---------|----------|-------|--------------|---------------------|
| December 21 | Steve | Steve | Mary Ann | x | Amy Spahn | Grace |
| Christmas Eve | Steve | Cody | Mary Ann | x | x | x |
| Christmas Day | Steve | Scott | Mary Ann | x | x | x |
| December 28 | Cody | Craig | Mary Ann | x | Sarah Robb | NA |
| January 4 | Steve | Steve | Mary Ann | x | Lesley/Janet | help needed |
| January 11 | Cesar | Cody | Zack | x | Gabriela | help needed |

No Bible Study on December 28

New Member Potluck on January 4

About two times a year, Peace hosts a special meal to welcome our newest members to the Peace family. The next new member Potluck will be on **January 4th**. Please see the sign-up sheet on the blue table in the entryway if you would like to bring food or beverages. Thank you!



PEACE

LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Peacehoughton.org

Our mission is to spread the gospel of Christ, to gather college students and the local community into a family of believers, and to share the message of hope and the promise of salvation through grace.