

# Ready to Receive Our Savior

**December 24,  
2023**



**Fourth Sunday of  
Advent**

**WELCOME, GUESTS!!!** We are so glad you came! If you have any questions or would like more information about our church, any member of Grace would be happy to speak with you. Please take the time to fill out a guest register at the church's entrance. Restrooms are located to the left as you exit the sanctuary. Congregational responses are indicated by indent and boldened letters.

**THEME FOR TODAY'S READINGS** – What's the best way to prepare for his coming? It's not with frantic doing. It's not with a focus on what we have done or promise to do. It's not with how we will pay back what he comes to bring. The best preparation for Christmas is a readiness to receive.

**MORNING PRAYER** - 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.

**ADVENT SEASON** –Jesus came to accomplish our redemption. He comes today in the means of grace to distribute salvation, and he will come again on the last day with our resurrection. The candle lighting focuses our attention on Jesus, our brother, and the light of the world.

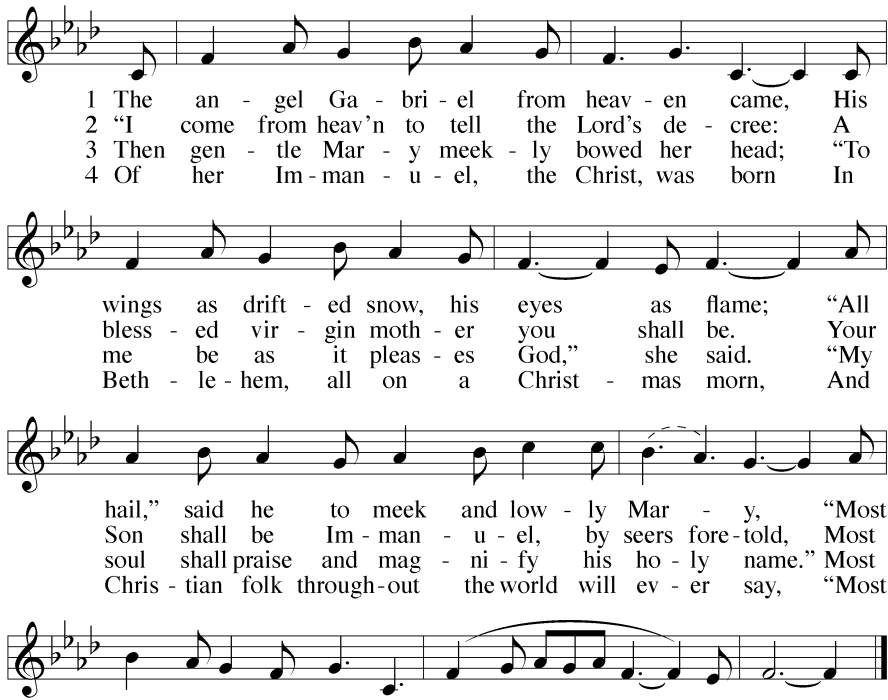
The advent candles are set on an octagon, the eighth day when Christ arose. Each of the four candles represents a thousand years from the promise to the fulfillment of the prophecy. The fourth candle is the "Angels Candle," embodying the peace of the message brought by the angels. We remember Isaiah's words, "though our sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow."

**ORDER FOR TODAY'S SERVICE: COMMON WORSHIP WITH COMMUNION– CW, p.15**

## OPENING HYMN:

#24

HARK THE GLAD SOUND! THE SAVIOR COMES\*\*Please Stand for The Last Verse\*\*



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came, His  
2 "I come from heav'n to tell the Lord's de - cree: A  
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head; "To  
4 Of her Im - man - u - el, the Christ, was born In

wings as drift - ed snow, his eyes as flame; "All  
bless - ed vir - gin moth - er you shall be. Your  
me be as it pleas - es God," she said. "My  
Beth - le - hem, all on a Christ - mas morn, And

hail," said he to meek and low - ly Mar - y, "Most  
Son shall be Im - man - u - el, by seers fore - told, Most  
soul shall praise and mag - ni - fy his ho - ly name." Most  
Chris - tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say, "Most

high - ly fa-vored maid-en." Glo - ri - a!  
high - ly fa-vored maid-en." Glo - ri - a!  
high - ly fa-vored maid-en." Glo - ri - a!  
high - ly fa-vored maid-en." Glo - ri - a!

Text: Basque carol, paraphrase Sabine Baring-Gould, 1834–1924, alt.  
Tune: GABRIEL'S MESSAGE (10 10 12 10) Basque carol.



In the name of the Father and of the Son (†) and of the Holy Spirit.

### CONFESSION OF SINS

Beloved in the Lord: let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God our Father, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

**Holy and merciful Father, I confess that I am by nature sinful and that I have disobeyed you in my thoughts, words, and actions. I have done what is evil and failed to do what is good. For this, I deserve your punishment both now and in eternity. But I am truly sorry for my sins, and trusting in my Savior Jesus Christ, I pray: Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner. Amen.**

## LORD, HAVE MERCY

KYRIE

C: Lord, have mer - cy on us. Christ, have mer - cy  
on us. Lord, have mer - cy on us.

The musical notation is in C major, 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes.

God, our heavenly Father, has been merciful to us and has given his only Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, as a called servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son (†) and of the Holy Spirit.

C: A - men.

The musical notation is in C major, 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes.

## PRAYER AND PRAISE

In the peace of forgiveness, let us praise the Lord.

## GLORY BE TO GOD

GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

C: Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good will toward men.  
We praise you, we bless you, we wor-ship you, we glorify you,  
we give thanks to you, for your great glory, O Lord God, heav'n-ly King,  
God the Fa-ther al - mighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Je-sus Christ;  
O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the  
sin of the world; have mercy on us. You take away the  
sin of the world; re - ceive our prayer. You sit at the right hand of

The musical notation is in C major, 4/4 time. The melody is simple and repetitive, with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes.



### PRAYER OF THE DAY



The Lord be with you.

Let us pray.

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.



**\*\*Please Be Seated\*\***

### FIRST LESSON:

### 2 Samuel 7: 8 – 16

*Both the coming in grace and the coming in judgment are prefigured in the promise to David. In the gospel lesson their fulfillment is about to be made perfect. The Son of God and Mary's Son will create a home for God's people.*

***You are also to say the following to my servant David. This is what the Lord of Armies says. I took you from the pasture, from following sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel. I have been with you wherever you went. I have cut off all your enemies from before you. I will make your reputation great, like that of the great ones on the earth. I will set up a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them there. They will dwell there, and they will not be disturbed again. Violent men will not afflict them again as they did at the beginning and ever since the day I appointed judges over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies.***

***The Lord also declares to you that the Lord himself will make a house for you. When your days are complete and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your seed, who will come from your own body. I will establish his kingdom. He will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When***

*he sins, I will discipline him with a rod used by men and with blows of the sons of men. My faithful mercy will not depart from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed to make room for you. Your house will stand firm, and your kingdom will endure forever before you. Your throne will be established forever.*

PSALM OF THE DAY:

PSALM 89

*Refrain*



*Psalm tone*



*Refrain*

I will sing of the LORD'S great love forever;<sup>\*</sup>  
I will make your faithfulness known through all generations.  
I will declare that your love stands firm forever,<sup>\*</sup>  
that you established your faithfulness in heaven itself.  
The heavens praise your wonders, O LORD,<sup>\*</sup>  
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.

*Refrain*

O LORD God Almighty, who is like you?<sup>\*</sup>  
You are mighty, O LORD, and your faithfulness surrounds you.  
Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you,<sup>\*</sup>  
who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD.  
They rejoice in your name all day long;<sup>\*</sup>  
they exult in your righteousness.  
**Glory be to the Father and to the Son<sup>\*</sup>**  
**and to the Holy Spirit,**  
**as it was in the beginning,<sup>\*</sup>**  
**is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*Refrain*

## SECOND LESSON

## ROMANS 16: 25 - 27

*In the midst of all the hustle and bustle of these last moments before Christmas, find time to be quiet, to be alone, to shed tears of joy and gladness: He, the sum of all that God has to say to us, is about to descend once more to the lowly manger of our hearts! Come Lord Jesus!*

***Now to him who is able to strengthen you—according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was veiled in silence for long ages past, but now has been revealed through the prophetic Scriptures and made known to all the Gentiles, in keeping with the command of the eternal God, resulting in the obedience of faith—to God, who alone is wise, be glory forever through Jesus Christ. Amen.***

### VERSE OF THE DAY

Alleluia. The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel. Alleluia. (Matthew 1:23)

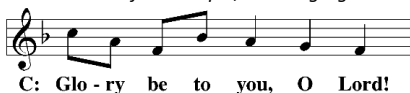


## GOSPEL

## LUKE 1: 26 – 38

*Luther notes that the Virgin Mother of God received the message of the Incarnation with a simple, Yes! She did not shave her head and enter a convent. She did not set herself up on a throne to be worshiped. She did nothing but receive.*

*After the announcement of the Gospel, the congregation sings:*



***In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin pledged in marriage to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women." But she was greatly troubled by the statement and was wondering what kind of greeting this could be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favor with God. Listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end."***

***Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"***

***The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Listen, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age even though she was called barren, and this is her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible for God.”***

***Then Mary said, “See, I am the Lord’s servant. May it happen to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.***



### **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 fully 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.**

***\*\*Please Be Seated\*\****

**HYMN OF THE DAY:**  
**ARISE, O CHRISTIAN PEOPLE**

**#23**



1 Oh, come, oh, come, Em - man - u - el, And ran - som cap - tive  
 2 Oh, come, O Root of Jes - se, free Your own from Sa - tan's  
 3 Oh, come, O Day-spring from on high, And cheer us by your  
 4 Oh, come, O Key of Da - vid, come, And o - pen wide our

Is - ra - el That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here  
 tyr - an - ny; From depths of hell your peo - ple save,  
 draw - ing nigh; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night,  
 heav'n - ly home. Make safe the way that leads on high,

*Refrain*  
 Un - til the Son of God ap - pear.  
 And bring them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!  
 And death's dark shad - ows put to flight.  
 And close the path to mis - er - y.

Em - man - u - el Shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

Text: Latin hymn, c. 12th century, abr.; tr. John M. Neale, 1818–66, alt.  
 Tune: VENI, EMMANUEL (LM with Refrain) Plainsong melody, 15th century, alt.

**SERMON TEXT**

**LUKE 1: 26 – 38**

**SERMON:**

**BEING FOUND IN GOD'S FAVOR**

**CREATE IN ME**



C: Cre - ate in me a clean heart, O God, and re -  
 new a right spir - it with - in me. Cast me not a -





*\*\*Please Be Seated\*\**

**OFFERING** – Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 9: 7: “Each one should give as he has determined in his heart, not reluctantly or under pressure, for God loves a cheerful giver.” This service is our gift to our guests; should you feel obliged to give, we thank you for your generosity.

### ADVENT PRAYER

Eternal Father, throughout the centuries you repeated and affirmed your promise to send the offspring of the woman to crush the serpent’s head. Through your prophets of old, you continually directed the eyes of your people to the advent of their Savior.

**We praise you, O Lord, for keeping your promise and sending your Son to destroy the works of the devil.**

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of our King, use your mighty Word to shatter our pride and to rouse us from spiritual slumber and apathy.

**Move us to take to heart the words of John: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.”**

You sent your Son to redeem us from sin. Let this good news be our joy and strength. Use it to cheer the lonely, encourage the fearful, and give hope to the despairing. In these days before Christmas, spare us from the stress of deadlines and the frenzy of commercialism.

**Fill our lives with the message of your peace and the music of your grace.**

Direct our eyes not only to the manger but also to the skies, where we will see your Son coming again, not as a lowly child but as the Lord of lords.

**Lift up our hearts in joyful anticipation of that day.**

*Special prayers and intercessions may follow.*

Hear us, Lord, as we bring you our private petitions.

*Silent prayer.*

Come quickly, Lord Jesus, in your grace, in your power, and in your glory.

**Come, Lord Jesus! 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.**

**\*\*Please Be Seated\*\***

### DISTRIBUTION HYMN

HOW SWEET THE NAME OF JESUS SOUNDS

**#358**

**Vs 1 - 5**



1 How sweet the name of Je - sus sounds In  
2 It makes the wound - ed spir - it whole And  
3 Dear name! The rock on which I build, My  
4 By you my prayers ac - cept - ance gain Al -  
5 O Je - sus, Shep - herd, Guard - ian, Friend, My



a be - liev - er's ear! It soothes our sor - rows,  
calms the heart's un - rest; 'Tis man - na to the  
shield and hid - ing place, My nev - er - fail - ing  
though with sin de - filed; Sa - tan ac - cus - es  
Proph - et, Priest, and King, My Lord, my Life, my



heals our wounds, And drives a - way all fear.  
hun - gry soul And to the wea - ry, rest.  
treasure filled With bound - less stores of grace.  
me in vain For God calls me his child.  
Way, my End, Ac - cept the praise I bring.

Text: John Newton, 1725–1807, alt.

Tune: ST. PETER (CM) Alexander R. Reinagle, 1799–1877.

**\*\*Please Stand\*\***

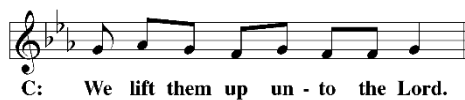
### THE SACRAMENT



C: And al - so with you.

The Lord be with you.

Lift up your hearts.

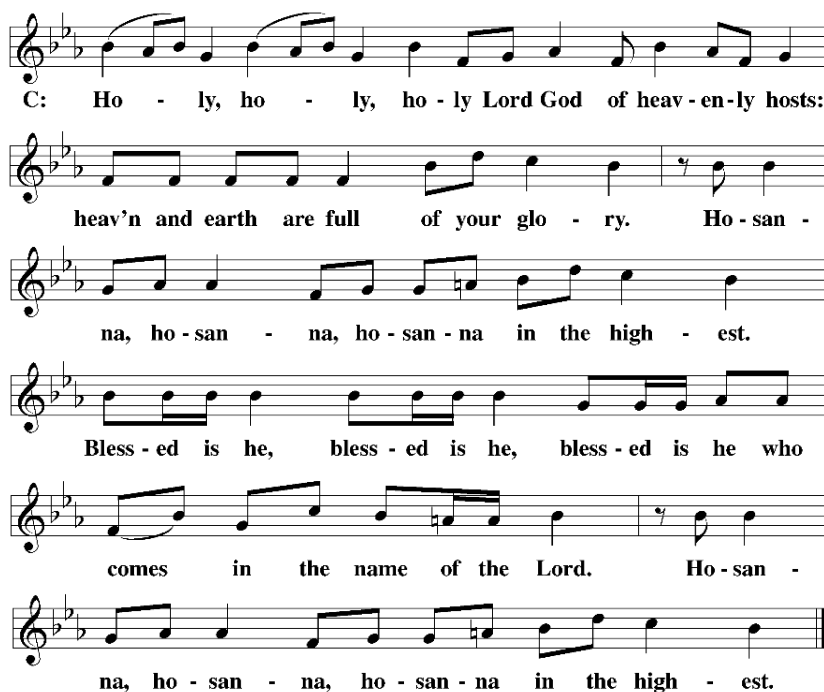


Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.



It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared when he called people to repentance and pointed to Jesus as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and host in heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

### HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



## WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my (†) body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

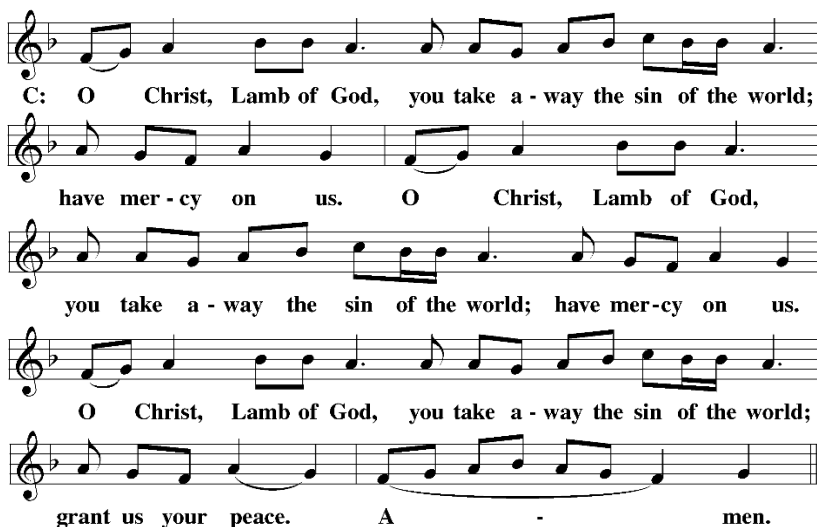
Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my (†) blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."



The peace of the Lord be with you always.

## O CHRIST, LAMB OF GOD

AGNUS DEI



**\*\*Please Be Seated\*\***

## DISTRIBUTION

**DISTRIBUTION** – Please come forward at the direction of our usher. We do practice close communion according to Paul's guidance in 1 Corinthians 11:27: "For if anyone eats and drinks in an unworthy manner because he does not recognize the Lord's body, he eats and drinks judgment upon himself." Therefore, if you are not a member of the ELS or WELS, please talk to Pastor Emmons before communing. Thank you for respecting our practices.

**\*\*Please Stand\*\***

## SONG OF SIMEON



C: Lord, now you let your servant de - part in peace ac-cord-ing  
to your word. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have pre-  
pared be - fore the face of all people, a light to light - en the  
Gen-tiles and the glo - ry of your peo-ple Is - ra - el.

O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

C: And his mercy endures for - ev - er.

## CLOSING PRAYER

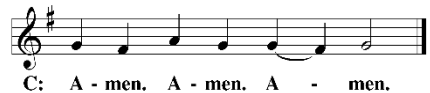
We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this holy supper. We pray that through it, you will strengthen our faith in you and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.



C: A - men.

## 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 (†) give you peace.



C: A - men. A - men. A - men.

**\*\*Please Be Seated\*\***

# CLOSING HYMN:

#76

## JESUS! NAME OF WONDROUS LOVE



1 Je - sus! Name of won - drous love, Name all  
 2 Je - sus! Name de - creed of old, To the  
 3 Je - sus! Name of price - less worth To the  
 4 Je - sus! On - ly name that's giv'n Un - der  
 5 Je - sus! Name of won - drous love, Hu - man



oth - er names a - bove, Un - to which must  
 maid - en moth - er told— Kneel - ing in her  
 fall - en here on earth For the prom - ise  
 all the might - y heav'n Where - by all, to  
 name of God a - bove; Plead - ing on - ly



ev - 'ry knee Bow in deep hu - mil - i - ty.  
 low - ly cell— By the an - gel Ga - bri - el.  
 that it gave, "Je - sus shall his peo - ple save."  
 sin en - slaved, Burst their fet - ters and are saved.  
 this, we, too, Flee, O God, in faith to you.

Text: William W. How, 1823–97, abr., alt.

Tune: GOTT SEI DANK DURCH ALLE WELT (77 77) Freylinghausen, *Geist-reiches Gesang-Buch*, Halle, 1704, alt.

## WHAT WE BELIEVE:

- Every word of the Bible is inspired, inerrant, and the only source of absolute truth.
- The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit form the triune God and is the only true God.
- All humans are born dead in sin and deserve eternal condemnation.
- Jesus Christ is the true God; he was conceived in Mary's womb by the Holy Spirit, adding a human nature to His divine nature.
- Only through His perfect work of redemption, which includes His perfect life, and innocent death, are all sins for all people forgiven and given credit for His perfect life.
- Only those whom the Holy Spirit, through Word and Baptism, blesses with faith in Jesus' redemptive work receive the benefit of it.
- The day is drawing near when Jesus will return to take all believers to heaven, condemn all unbelievers to eternal torment and destroy this present world.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Christmas Service Schedule** – We will have our Christmas Eve Service this evening at 7:00 pm. Our Christmas day service will be 10:30 am with no Bible study or Sunday School on Christmas day.

**Sunday Morning Bible Study** –For the Month of January we will continue our in the book of Acts. Email any questions or topics to Pastor Emmons. Please feel free to come and go as you like; all reading is voluntary.

**Adopt a Seminarian** – Please keep our adopted Seminarian, Peter Estrem, in your prayers; you can also mail him cards and letters of encouragement to 6 Browns Court, Mankato, MN 56001. We hope to connect this student with our congregation. Thank you everyone who has sent him cards and letters, it means a lot to him as he comes back for the second half of his Midler year.

**Council Members needed** – In May you have an opportunity to serve our congregation. We will be holding elections for the Vice-president and Treasurer. These are 3-year terms currently held by Mike Hanson and Greg Port (respectively.) Mike is eligible to serve one more term and Greg has asked to step down from his position. Please consider serving, your church needs you.

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