



St. Andrew Church's "Why" Statement... To come together as a worshipping community, nourished by God's love so that we may reflect God's love to others. Adopted April 2023

December 10, 2023 Second Sunday of Advent

John calls people to repent, to clear the decks, to completely reorder their lives so that nothing gets in the way of the Lord's coming. The reading from Isaiah gives the context for this radical call: the assurance of forgiveness that encourages us to repent; the promise that the coming one will be gentle with the little ones. Isaiah calls us all to be heralds with John, to lift up our voices fearlessly and say, "See, your God is coming!" We say it to one another in worship, in order to say it with our lives in a world in need of justice and peace.

+GATHERING+

The Holy Spirit calls us together as people of God.

WELCOME

PRELUDE O Come, O Come, Emmanuel 13th-c.plainsong arr. M.Hayes

Lighting of Advent Wreath

Advent means "coming." It is a time of longing, watching, and praying for God's healing, transformative presence to be ever more vibrantly present in the world. In this sense, Advent is a season in which we focus on that key phrase in the Lord's Prayer, "thy kingdom come." As Christians, the good news we strive to live by and declare is that love is stronger than hate, peace more enduring than war, hope more powerful than despair — and the light of God's love will dispel forever the shadows of shame cast by violence, suffering, sorrow, and contempt. Each weekly candle lighting litany begins by telling the truth about a world that is all too barren of hope, peace, joy, and love. And then, after the candle has been lit, we cry out with all people of faith — past, present, and future — that God is, even now, coming into the world! (The Litanies for the Lighting of the Advent Wreath are provided by SALT, and used by permission.)

Week Two - Peace

Reader One: Because of war, because of violence in our communities, because there is still so much unrest in our hearts, we light a candle of peace...

Reader Two: Because hatred is still so strong, because so many swords have not yet been remade into ploughshares, we light a candle of peace... (Light the second candle in your Advent wreath.)

Reader One: May the light from this candle overcome the world.

Reader Two: May the light from this candle say to all that God's peace is coming, on earth as it already is in heaven.

Reader One: Friends, be not afraid, God's peace is at hand!

GATHERING HYMN Comfort, Comfort Now My People ELW 256

- "Comfort, comfort now my people; tell of peace!" So says our God. Comfort those who sit in darkness mourning under sorrow's load. To God's people now proclaim that God's pardon waits for them! Tell them that their war is over; God will reign in peace forever.
- 2 For the herald's voice is crying in the desert far and near, calling us to true repentance, since the reign of God is here. Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way. Valleys, rise to greet the Savior; hills, bow down in humble favor.
- 3 Straight shall be what long was crooked, and the rougher places plain.
 Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits God's holy reign.
 For the glory of the Lord now on earth is shed abroad, and all flesh shall see the token that God's word is never broken.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**



ELW P. 120



PRAYER OF THE DAY.

Let us pray.

Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

+WORD+

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

CHILDREN'S BIBLE STORY TIME

Children may leave worship with the teachers for Bible Story Time. They will return during the Hymn of the Day.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:1-11

In grand, flowing, poetic lines, the prophet announces that the exile of God's people in Babylon is over. God will deliver Israel and will care for her as a shepherd cares for the sheep. This word can be trusted, because the only enduring reality in life is the word of God.

A reading from Isaiah

¹Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.
²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her
that she has served her term, that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

³A voice cries out:

"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,

make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴Every valley shall be lifted up,

and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. ⁷The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. ⁸The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹Get you up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good tidings; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good tidings, lift it up, do not fear; say to the cities of Judah, "Here is your God!" ¹⁰See, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him: his reward is with him. and his recompense before him. ¹¹He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and aently lead the mother sheep. The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

¹You have been gracious to your land, O LORD;

you have restored the good fortune of Jacob.

²You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins.

⁸I will listen to what the LORD God is saying;

for you speak peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you.

⁹Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you, that your glory may dwell in our land.

¹⁰Steadfast love and faithfulness have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

¹¹Faithfulness shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.

¹²The LORD will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase.

¹³Righteousness shall go before the LORD and shall prepare for God a pathway.

SECOND READING 2 Peter 3:8-15a

This short letter deals with pressing concerns regarding the final advent of Jesus, especially concerns that could arise over its apparent delay. The author of the letter calls on Christians to anticipate the promised coming of the Lord through conduct dedicated to God.

A reading from Peter

⁸Do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. ⁹The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. ¹⁰But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and

everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

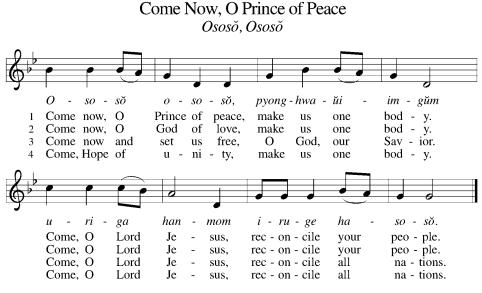
¹¹Since all these things are to be dissolved in this way, what sort of persons ought you to be in leading lives of holiness and godliness, ¹²waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be set ablaze and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire? ¹³But, in accordance with his promise, we wait for new heavens and a new earth, where righteousness is at home.

¹⁴Therefore, beloved, while you are waiting for these things, strive to be found by him at peace, without spot or blemish; ^{15a}and regard the patience of our Lord as salvation.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Come Now, O Prince of Peace ELW 247



Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope Music: OSOSŎ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947 Text and music © Geonyong Lee

Duplication in any form prohibited without permission or valid license from copyright administrator.

GOSPEL Mark 1:1-8

The Gospel of Mark does not begin with a story of Jesus' birth but with the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord.

The holy gospel according to Mark. Glory to you, O Lord.

¹The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

²As it is written in the prophet Isaiah,

"See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,

who will prepare your way;

³the voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight,' "

⁴John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁵And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins. ⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. ⁸I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

The gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY There's A Voice in the Wilderness ELW 255

 There's a voice in the wilderness crying, a call from the ways untrod: Prepare in the desert a highway, a highway for our God! The valleys shall be exalted, the lofty hills brought low; make straight all the crooked places where God, our God, may go!

- 2 O Jerusalem, herald good tidings, ascend to the heights and sing!
 Proclaim to a desolate people the coming of their king.
 Like flow'rs of the field we perish, like grass our works decay; the pow'r and the pomp of nations shall pass like a dream away.
- 3 But the word of our Savior is faithful, the arm of our God is strong, who stands in the midst of the nations and soon will right the wrong. Lord, feed your flock like a shepherd, the lambs so gently hold; in pastures of peace now lead them, and bring them to your fold.

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 with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic 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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

A With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

A Send forth your faithful people with words of promise and forgiveness. Teach your church to be bold in revealing your good news in word and in deed.

Merciful God, receive our prayer.

A Reveal your majesty in mountain peaks, flowing rivers, and blossoming wilderness roads. Heal the earth where it longs for renewal. Bring wholeness to the earth and all its creatures. Merciful God, **receive our prayer**.

A Turn the hearts of the nations toward righteousness and peace. Increase cooperation for justice between countries, commonwealths, political parties, and diplomatic leaders. In times of prosperity, direct leaders to be generous for the sake of all.

Merciful God, receive our prayer.

A Comfort your people with tender words of love and healing. Surround all who are grieving, all who know depression or anxiety, or all who feel lonely or forgotten. Be a steadfast presence when all else feels uncertain. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A Grant holy patience to all who are waiting this season, especially Bill, Marge, Arthur, Jim, Callum, Paul, Charles, Steven, Johanna, Carole, Anna, Nancy, Susan, Marie, Jean, Tracey, Donna, Michael, Pat, Robert, Karen, Roy, and those we name before you, on our lips or in the silence of our hearts.

(Pause for silence).

Give hope to those seeking employment. Bring reassurance to people awaiting new diagnoses or treatments. Protect expectant parents. Watch with those who keep bedside vigil. Merciful God, **receive our prayer**.

A With you a thousand years is like a day. Bless the memory of the saints from ages past and the anticipation of saints yet to be born. Inspire us to live with faith as we await your new heaven and new earth. Merciful God, **receive our prayer**.

A Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.**

SHARE THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always. And also with you.

+MEAL+

God feeds us in the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERING An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

CHOIR ANTHEM O Come, O Come, Immanuel N.Sleeth arr. J.Marshall

O come O come Immanuel, Come now to earth and with thy people dwell.

The world awaits from heaven a holy sign,

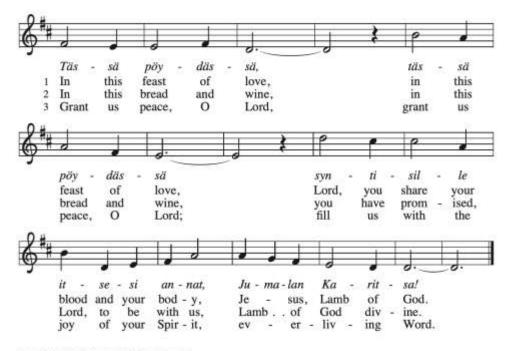
O come and show to us the light divine.

O come, O come, Immanuel, As age to age the prophets did foretell; Redeemer, come to save us one and all, Be born again in Bethlehem's manger stall.

For thy coming we prepare, wisdom from on high, Gracious Spirit, Lord most fair: now to us draw nigh.

O come, O come, Immanuel, and free they children, Israel, Be now our hope, our comfort from above, and bless us all with everlasting love.

In This Feast of Love



Text: Jarkko Maukonen; tr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954 Music: TÅSSÄ PÔYDÄSSÄ, Jarkko Maukonen; arr. Mark Sedio Text and music © 2017, 2020 Jarkko Maukonen, admin. Augsbarg Fortress

Duplication in any form prohibited without securing permission from copyright administrator or reporting usage under valid license.

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray: God our provider, by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

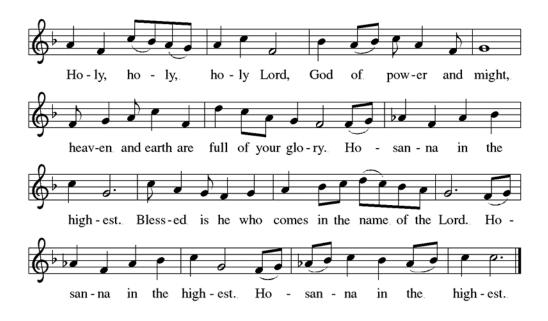
Amen. GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE The Lord be with you. And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn: HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW pg. 130



GREAT THANKSGIVING

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Let us proclaim the mystery of faith: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

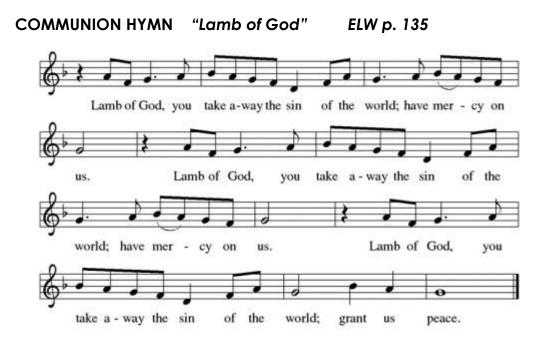


INVITATION TO COMMUNION

You are invited to come forward to the front of the nave to receive the Meal. The bread will be distributed by the Presiding Minister. Gluten free wafers are available. Please ask. The wine, served in small glasses, can be received on either side of the front. Also in each tray you will find glasses containing white grape juice as an alternative to the wine. Return to your seats via the side aisles, placing your empty glasses in the baskets provided along the way. In returning to your seats, pause to pray and give thanks for the life- giving graces you have received in this holy meal offered us by the crucified-risen Jesus.

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together. Come, take your place at the table.

COMMUNION



BLESSING AFTER COMMUNION

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

Amen

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Let us pray: Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together. Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release, brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior **Amen.**

+<u>SENDING+</u>

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit + remain upon you now and forever. Amen.

SENDING HYMN All Earth Is Hopeful ELW 266

 All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!
 Furrows lie open for God's creative task: this, the labor of people who struggle to see how God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free.

- 2 People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell: "A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel"; she conceived him, "God with us," our brother, whose birth restores hope and courage to children of this earth.
- 3 Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared; new highways opened, new protocols declared. Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace! All clear ev'ry gateway, in haste, come out in haste!
- 4 We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib. This same Lord Jesus today has come to live in our world; he is present, in neighbors we see our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.

DISMISSAL

Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

POSTLUDE

WORSHIP LEADERS for Sunday, December 10, 2023
Rev. Les Swenson, Deacon Gwynne Hopko
Assistant Minister: Arlene Creswell
Lector: Mike Beaudoin
Tech Team: Abigail Griffin, Ken Griffin, Noah Galvin, Connor Pratt
Ushers: Keith Hintz, Amanda Hintz, Michael Beaudoin
Altar Guild: Denise Martin

From Sundays and Seasons.com. **Copyright 2023** Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #26763.

Permission to reprint and stream the music in this service obtained from ONE LICENSE with license #A-724528. All rights reserved.

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Monday, December 11, 2023 6:00 p.m. Bristol Chorale 6:30 p.m. 4 Church Confirmation Kick-off Meeting at Gloria Dei. Tuesday, December 12, 2023 6:45 Handbell Choir 7:30 Voice Choir Wednesday, December 13, 2023 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m. Bible Study 7:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m. 4 – Church Bible Study via Zoom Thursday, December 14, 2023 7:00 p.m. AA (Fellowship Hall) 7:00 p.m. Al Anon (Youth Room) Sunday, December 17, 2023; Third Sunday of Advent 9:30 a.m. Service of Holy Communion (Sanctuary, You Tube, Facebook) 10:30 a.m. Coffee Hour ST. ANDREW LUTHERAN CHURCH, BRISTOL, CT 1125 Stafford Ave., Bristol, CT Church Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Church Phone: 860.583.5809 Email: churchoffice@standrewct.ora

The Rev. Les Swenson, Transition Pastor Gwynne Hopko, Deacon, Minister of Music

Nicole Gergler, Church Administrator

POINSETTIAS AND WREATHS

Those wishing to adorn our sanctuary this Christmas season may do so by completing this form and placing it in the offering plate or leaving it for Nicole in the church office.

Donations of \$20.00 are requested. All donations will be used for the purchase of poinsettias and wreaths.

Please make checks payable to

"St. Andrew Lutheran Church".

All gifts are given to the Glory of God. Is there someone you'd like to recognize additionally with this gift?

In loving memory of:_____

In thanksgiving for:_____

GIVEN BY:_____

Amount enclosed: \$_____

Please return by Sunday, December 17, 2023



SPECIAL GIFTS

I would like to make a special Christmas offering to the following St. Andrew fund:

Capital Improvement Fund	\$
General Fund:	\$
Mission Endowment Fund:	\$
TOTAL Offering	\$

All gifts are given to the Glory of God. Is there someone you'd like to recognize additionally with this gift?

In loving memory of:_____

In thanksgiving for:_____

GIVEN BY:_____

Amount enclosed: \$_____

Please make checks payable to

"St. Andrew Lutheran Church"

