



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 24, 2023
Fourth Sunday of Advent

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

+GATHERING+

The Holy Spirit calls us together as people of God.

WELCOME

PRELUDE *The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came* Arr. Paul Manz

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 Four - Love

Reader One: Because too many people are wandering in the wilderness, because too many people are sitting in the valley of the shadow of death, because too many of our conversations are laced with conflict and bitterness, we light candles...

Reader Two: Because people all over the world are suffering, and we’re often too distracted to notice, we light candles...

Reader One: One for hope, one for peace, one for joy, and one for love... *(Light the fourth candle in your Advent wreath.)*

Reader Two: May the light from these candles overcome the world.

Reader One: May the light from these candles illuminate the valley of the shadow of death.

Reader Two: And may the fire from these candles burn away whatever would prevent God's love from being born among us.

Reader One: Friends, be not afraid, even now — even now — God's love is overcoming the world, on earth as it already is in heaven!

GATHERING HYMN Awake, Awake, and Greet the New Morn ELW 242

- 1 Awake! Awake, and greet the new morn,
for angels herald its dawning.
Sing out your joy, for soon he is born,
behold! the Child of our longing.
Come as a baby weak and poor,
to bring all hearts together,
he opens wide the heav'nly door
and lives now inside us forever.

- 2 To us, to all in sorrow and fear,
Emmanuel comes a-singing,
his humble song is quiet and near,
yet fills the earth with its ringing;
music to heal the broken soul
and hymns of lovingkindness,
the thunder of his anthems roll
to shatter all hatred and blindness.

- 3 In darkest night his coming shall be,
when all the world is despairing,
as morning light so quiet and free,
so warm and gentle and caring.
Then shall the mute break forth in song,
the lame shall leap in wonder,
the weak be raised above the strong,
and weapons be broken asunder.
- 4 Rejoice, rejoice, take heart in the night,
though dark the winter and cheerless,
the rising sun shall crown you with light,
be strong and loving and fearless.
Love be our song and love our prayer
and love our endless story;
may God fill ev'ry day we share
and bring us at last into glory.

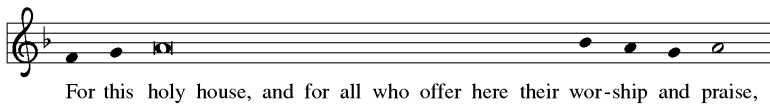
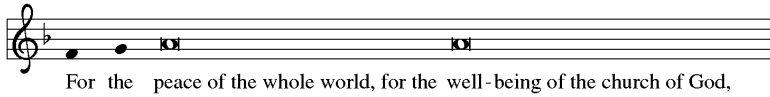
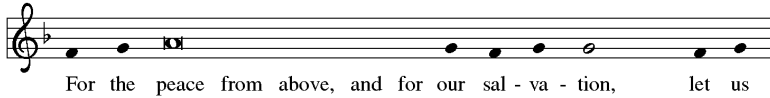
GREETING

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.

KYRIE

ELW P. 120



PRAYER OF THE DAY.

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

+WORD+

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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE**FIRST READING****2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16**

Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God's anointed.

A reading from Samuel

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall

say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

ANTHEM *The Psalmody*

The Annunciation

Duet

An angel went from God to a town called Nazareth to a woman whose name was Mary.

The angel said to her, "Rejoice, O highly favored, for God is with you.

You shall bear a child, and his name shall be Jesus, the Chosen One of God Most High."

And Mary said, "I am the servant of my God, I live to do your will."

The Magnificat

All

All:

1., 3. My soul pro - claims your
2. You have cast the might - y

great - ness, O God, and my spir - it re - joic - es in
down from their thrones, and up - lift - ed the hum - ble of

you, You have looked with love on your
heart, You have filled the hun - gry with

ser - vant here, and blessed me all my life through.
won - drous things, and left the wealth - y no part.

Great and might - y are you, O Ho - ly One,
Great and might - y are you, O Faith - ful One,

strong is your kind - ness ev - er - more.
strong is your jus - tice strong your love,

How you fa - vor the weak — and low - ly one,
As you prom - ised to Sar - ah and A - bra - ham,

hum - bling the proud of heart.
kind - ness for - ev - er - more.

SECOND READING Romans 16:25-27

Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.

A reading from Romans

²⁵Now to God 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 kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen. Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Come Now, O Prince of Peace ELW 247

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

Ososö, Ososö



O - so - sö o - so - sö, pyong - hwa - ũi - im - gŭm
 1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
 2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
 3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
 4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.



u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sö.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, b. 1947; tr. Marion Pope

Music: OSOSÖ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947

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GOSPEL

Luke 1:26-38

In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came ELW 265

- 1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary,
most highly favored lady." Gloria!
- 2 "For know a blessed mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honor thee;
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold,
most highly favored lady." Gloria!
- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;

"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
 "My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name."
 Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

- 4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
 in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
 and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:
 "Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

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 You promise mercy to Abraham and Sarah and their descendants forever. Bring your church into thoughtful, caring, and collaborative relationship with those of other faiths. Strengthen our shared values, that we work together in caring for our world.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A As fields and crops lie dormant, bless them with holy rest. Prepare them to thrive, that they provide abundant food in due season. Protect animals who hibernate and provide for all who scavenge for food in the lean season.

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A You raise up the lowly and cast down the arrogant. Teach humility to all in positions of authority. Break down systems of oppression, especially

systems that perpetuate inequity and exclusion. Do not allow wealth, power, or pride to become idols that obscure your call to justice.
Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A Look with favor upon all who cry out to you. Accompany with tenderness all who are afraid or ill, 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).

Rescue all who experience abuse or who live under threat of violence, especially refugees, immigrants, and asylum-seekers in search of a safe and stable home.
Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A You are pleased to make your home among us. Make our homecomings joyful as we gather with friends, families, and chosen families in celebration. Grant safety to all who travel. Sustain the work of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and other ministries that assist in setting up new homes.
Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

A Blessed are you for Mary and all your servants in every generation who lived according to your promise of mercy. Strengthen us by their example until the revelation of your glory is made known.
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.*

ANTHEM *Maria Walked amid the Thorn* German folk hymn
arr. D. Busarow

Maria walked amid the thorn, Kyrie eleison!
Maria walked amid the thorn, that seven years no flower had borne,
Jesus and Maria.

What carried Mary under her heart? Kyrie eleison!
A tiny child beneath her heart, a little babe of sin no part.
Jesus and Maria.

Then roses bloomed among the thorn, Kyrie eleison!
Then roses bloomed among the thorn, when she the child through the
wood had borne,
Jesus and Maria.

OFFERTORY HYMN

In This Feast of Love

ACS 962

In This Feast of Love



Täs - sä pöy - däs - sä, täs - sä
 1 In this feast of love, in this
 2 In this bread and wine, in this
 3 Grant us peace, O Lord, grant us



pöy - däs - sä syn - ti - sil - le
 feast of love, Lord, you share your
 bread and wine, you have prom - ised,
 peace, O Lord; fill us with the



it - se - si an - nat, Ju - ma - lan Ka - rit - sa!
 blood and your bod - y, Je - sus, Lamb of God,
 Lord, to be with us, Lamb . . of God div - ine.
 joy of your Spir - it, ev - er - liv - ing Word.

Text: Jarkko Maukonen; tr. Mark Sedio, b. 1954

Music: TÄSSÄ PÖYDÄSSÄ, Jarkko Maukonen; arr. Mark Sedio

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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**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er and might,
 heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the
 high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho -
 san - na in the high - est. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

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

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

*You are invited to come forward down the center aisle to the altar railing receive
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

COMMUNION HYMN “Lamb of God” ELW p. 135



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.

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.

+SENDING+

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 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

ELW 257

st. 1, 3, 5, 7

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

- 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe. *Refrain*
- 5 O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. *Refrain*
- 7 O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*

DISMISSAL

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

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE**WORSHIP LEADERS for Sunday, December 24, 2023**

Rev. Les Swenson

Deacon, Minister of Music Gwynne Hopko

Assistant Minister: Arlene Creswell

Lector: Jill Little

Tech Team: Abigail Griffin, Ken Griffin, Noah Galvin, Connor Pratt

Ushers: Keith Hintz, Amanda Hintz, Michael Beaudoin

Altar Guild: Denise Martin

Soloists: Leana Gleicher, Robert Herold

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THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Tonight! Christmas Eve Worship, 4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, December 26, 2023

No Voice or Handbell Choir

Wednesday, December 27, 2023

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

Thursday, December 28, 2023

7:00 p.m. AA (Fellowship Hall)

7:00 p.m. Al Anon (Youth Room)

Sunday, December 31, 2023; First Sunday of Christmas

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.

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

Nicole Gergler, Church Administrator