



## **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2024**

### *Theme: The End is the Beginning*

The end isn't so bad after all. It was never about destruction. It is about a thrilling culmination, recreation, and completion. The forces that seek to destroy are history. The barriers that divide are gone. What remains is not a burnt-out post-apocalyptic landscape, but something entirely new. God has come to dwell with God's people forever—to dwell among us.

Bulletin Donated By: Rodney & Ginger Utecht in Memory of Jesse Utecht

## **Call to Worship**

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, + one God, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved.

**C: Amen**

## **CANDLE-LIGHTING (Joan & Kenwood Peterson Family)**

Leader: God of grace: Return us to one another. To the broken, give wholeness. To the mourning, give strength for dancing. To the grieving, give solace.

**All: Fill us with your hope and be near us now.**

L: May your eternal love spring forth from the pain and uncertainty of the world.

**All: Fill us with your peace and release our grip of control and fear.**

L: Lighten our hearts, clear our minds, burn away all that does not bring life to your people and your whole creation.

**All: Fill us with your joy and nourish us to bear good fruit in the world.**

L: Renew our hearts in you, and help us look again to the day of restoration.

**All: Fill us with your love and prepare us to welcome you.**

L: O Christ who was and is and ever shall be:

**All: Light the fire of hope in our hearts, open us to your call to peace, ground us in your love. Amen**

## Just The Start

*Advent Candle Song*

Crary

Light of Life, show us the way. Burn-ing fire turns night to day.  
Make a home in chill-y hearts. Your thrill of hope is  
just the start. Give us hope when you are near. — Bring us  
peace, re-lease the fear. — Spring up joy through - out the earth.  
Your qui-et love gives us new birth.

## **CALL TO CONFESSION**

Fear can be a good thing. It can help us be attentive while driving down the highway. It can alert us to possible accidents. It can motivate us to do our best. However, fear can also be harmful. For so many of us, fear of the other, fear of failure, or fear of the unknown has led us to make sinful choices in our lives—choices such as building walls or tearing others down. Today, in confession, we ask for mercy and pray for guidance. As we confess, we come before an entirely merciful and loving God who says to us, “Do not be afraid.” Let us pray:

## **PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

**Patient God, you know just how often we make decisions from a place of fear rather than love. You know just how often we allow fear to take the place of logic, fanning unhealthy fires in our lives. You know just how often we tuck your words, “Do not be afraid” on dusty shelves and in the back of closets, stubbornly holding onto our own point of view. Forgive us for giving fear the microphone. Silence the voices of scarcity, shame, and rejection, which spark and feed so much of our fear, to recenter us in love. With hope we pray, amen.**

## **WORDS OF FORGIVENESS**

P: Family of faith, even when we forget God’s words, God does not forget us. Even when we lose our way, God does not lose us. Even when we fall short or make mistakes, God forgives and holds onto us. We are known, forgiven, and loved. **C: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

## **GATHERING HYMN**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

ELW #257 vs 1&2

## **GREETING**

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

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

L: Stir up our hearts in love, O God.

**All: Give us voices to sing your praise as you make beginnings out of our endings. Deepen the imagination of our hearts, that we may live in justice, restoration, and peace. Through Jesus Christ, our love and salvation. Amen.**

## **READING:**

**Revelation 21:1-6**

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. <sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and be their God; <sup>4</sup> he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” <sup>5</sup> And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” <sup>6</sup> Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. P: The word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

## MESSAGE

**HYMN OF THE DAY**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

ELW #257 vs 3&4

## APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead.\* On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

## PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Response: **Receive Our Prayer.**

## OFFERING

**Ways To Give Offering: In Person, Venmo and Online [www.galutheranchurch.org](http://www.galutheranchurch.org)**



*Because you give...  
we worship, fellowship, learn, serve and grow.  
**Thank you for your generosity!***

## OFFERING SONG – Sung During Collection:

*What Child is this*

ELW #296

## OFFERING PRAYER

L: God of hope,

**All: you fill the hungry with good things. Give us hopeful hearts and open hands to receive your love and share our abundance, that all may be fed. In the name of the one who sustains all life, Jesus Christ, our love. Amen.**

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

L: Holy God, the one who was and is and is to come,

**All: we praise you, we bless you, we thank you for your presence among us in your Son Jesus, the bringer of peace.**

L: Holy God, the one who was and is and is to come,

**All: Hear us when we cry. Make all things new. Heal the nations. Widen and deepen the imagination of our hearts. Give us rest in you.**

L: 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:

**All: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.**

L: Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying:

**All: 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.**

L: Place in our hearts the thrill of hope, O God, you who are Alpha and Omega, beginning and end,

**All: that we may all know your restoration and love in this world and the next, now and forever. Amen.**

### **LORD'S PRAYER**

### **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God, who has come to save you.

### **COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION**

(All Are Welcome to Receive Communion Here at GA Church)

### **POST COMMUNION BLESSING**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

L: Holy one,

**All: you have blessed us with your very self. Make us one body in you, living into the mystery of your goodness and mercy, now and forever. Amen.**

### **BLESSING**

May the God of hope guide you, May the way of peace sustain you, May the warmth of joy gather you, In the name of the one who creates, redeems, and sustains us. Amen.

### **SENDING HYMN**

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

ELW #257 vs 7&8

### **DISMISSAL**

L: Go in peace, live in hope

**All: and share the Good News of God's Word and serve the community and the world. Thanks be to God.**

Mission Statement of Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church (Adopted in 2022)

**To share the Good News of God's Word and to serve the community and the world.**

*Matthew 22:39* 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

*Matthew 28:19* Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

+++++

We celebrate weekly Holy Communion. We welcome all who believe in the Risen Christ and who find in the sacrament our Lord's real presence for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of life. If you receive communion in your home congregation, you are invited to receive it here at G.A. Red wine and white grape juice will be offered to you in Christ's name. You may choose your preference. If you are unable to receive wheat bread, or wine, be sure that in a single element you receive the Presence and all the gifts of the sacrament.

*From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2024 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted and live streamed by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #35904. CCLI# 3138595 and #21256999*

-----

A Thrill of Hope: Advent in a Box Volume 2 Written by: Nate Crary & Rev. Miriam Samuelson Roberts  
"© Church Anew. Used with Permission."

*Liturgy adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org*