



Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service *December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.*

*We are grateful for the opportunity to live, work and worship on the
Traditional territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. Hay ch'qa.*

Call to Worship & Lighting of the Advent Candle

Fourth Sunday--Hope for Those Who Are Wounded¹

Advent turns us inward to our own woes and outward to others' pain.

Come to us, in old and new ways, and renew our spirits.

Remove from our souls the old hurts and hatreds that keep us from you.

Come to us, in old and new ways, and renew our spirits.

Transform life's bitterness into a fine wine of complex flavour.

Come to us, in old and new ways, and renew our spirits.

Rejuvenate important relationships in our lives that have withered.

Come to us, in old and new ways, and renew our spirits.

Inspire us to let go of old hurts and evolve in ways that mean we hurt others less.

For each of us as we heal from woundedness, come to us as we join together to wait for the Christ, to love with the Christ, and live in the eternity of the Christ.

On this last Sunday of Advent, we light four candles: the first for hope, the second for faith, the third for joy, and the last for peace and purity. Called the Angel's Candle, this last candle lights all the dark places we carry within from the wounds and wondering of living.

***Hymn* #240 Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah (verses 1-4)**

Light one candle to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

He shall bring salvation to Israel, God fulfills the promise.

Light two candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

He shall feed the flock like a shepherd, gently lead them homeward.

Light three candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

Lift your heads and lift high the gateway for the King of glory.

Light four candles to watch for Messiah: let the light banish darkness.

He is coming, tell the glad tidings. Let your lights be shining!

¹ Thanks to *Rebecca Garber*, the author of our Advent Calls to Worship.

***Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service
December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.***

Welcome & Announcements

Gathering Hymn #251 My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness

**My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord; I sing my Savior's praise!
You looked upon my lowliness, and I am full of grace.
Now every land and every age this blessing shall proclaim—
Great wonders you have done for me, and holy is your name.**

**To all who live in holy fear your mercy ever flows.
With mighty arm you dash the proud, their scheming hearts expose.
The ruthless you have cast aside, the lowly throned instead;
The hungry filled with all good things, the rich sent off unfed.**

**To Israel, your servant blest, your help is ever sure;
The promise to our parents made their children will secure.
Sing glory to the Holy One, give honor to the Word,
And praise the Power of the Most High, one God, by all adored.**

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

Glory to God (*Hymnal Setting Six, pages 167-68*)

(Refrain)

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory. (Refrain)

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer. (Refrain)

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.

(Final Refrain)

Glory to God in the highest. Amen, amen.

Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service
December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Prayer of the Day

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.**

Children's Corner

First Reading – 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the 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.’ Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you.’

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I 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. Wherever 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?’ Now 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; and 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. And 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, from 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. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

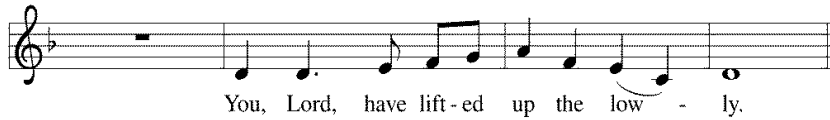
Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm LUKE 1:46B–55 (*chanted*)

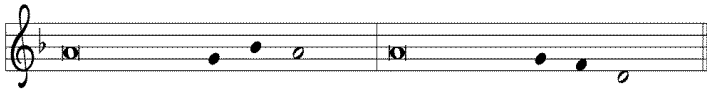
Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service
December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Fourth Sunday of Advent B



Luke 1:48
Psalm refrain reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year B* © 2008 Augsburg Fortress.
May be reproduced by permission for local use only.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship tone 9



Psalm tone reproduced from *Psalter for Worship Year C* © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.
May be reproduced by permission for local use only.

46^bMy soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,
47my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,
48**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.**
 From this day all generations will | call me blessed;
49you, the Almighty, have done great | things for me,
 and holy | is your name.
50**You have mercy on | those who fear you,**
 from generation to | generation. R
51You have shown strength | with your arm;
 and scattered the proud in | their conceit,
52**casting down the mighty | from their thrones**
 and lifting | up the lowly.
53You have filled the hungry | with good things,
 and sent the rich | away empty.
54**You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,**
 to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,
55the promise made | to our forebears,
 to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. R

Reprinted from *Psalter for Worship Year B* copyright 2008 Augsburg Fortress.
May be reproduced by permission for local use only.

Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service

December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Second Reading – Romans 16:25-27

Now 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 but 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—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever! Amen.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation (*Hymnal Setting Six, page 171*)

Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

Gospel – Luke 1:26-38

The Gospel according to Luke

Glory to you, O Lord

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' The 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. And 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. For nothing will be impossible with God.' Then 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.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service
December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

Sermon **Luke 1:26-38**



Today in the Gospel and again tonight at the Candle Light service we hear of Mary. She is most often a quiet figure in the background, this mother of our Lord, but today she is featured twice. So let's give her a little time and maybe this young woman can teach us something.

She has been an exalted, feminine inspiration for the church, and has brought comfort for millions over the centuries. Why has she become so important?

6th month...Nazareth... Mary

Our reading today opens at a certain time and place with a named person. God is interested in this sort of thing. If we consider God as vague, "out there somewhere," or uninterested in little people like us, this story will pose a challenge.

Maybe Gabriel approached other young women before Mary and was turned down by them all, or Mary might have been the only one. She was in her teens going about her normal life. Couples engaged early in those days and she probably thought a lot about her coming marriage. She had hopes and dreams. We don't know where her mother was or if she had siblings. There is a lot of information that we don't have because it is not important.

Stories are like that. Not everything is disclosed. Mary, her family and friends and Luke the writer had the privilege of deciding what to tell us. There is mystery in the story of Mary. Just like there is in your story as well.

In spite of what we know and don't know, Mary was perfectly equipped for the opportunity laid out before her. She didn't know much about anything but God saw something in her that she didn't see in herself.

You know about your own children. Personalities, talents, discipline, brilliance, charisma form and you try to fan the flame, encourage them to take steps, risk failure, and believe in themselves. You've also probably watched someone throw it all away because of low self-esteem, addictions or bad company.

Things could have gone either way for Mary. Sometimes, faith calls us to be more than we can understand or imagine. It may involve tiny steps, or maybe a great leap. Mary did not believe just anything. Emotions showed on her face, and she

Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service

December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

questioned and puzzled over what she was told. The appearance of an angel was strange all by itself. However, in the Bible angels are often simply people who pop in and out of life with comments that get our attention. Angels may have appeared to you... who knows?

Greetings, favoured one!

The first words to her were a message of grace. *“You are favoured. The Lord is with you.”* It’s like saying, *“Okay, before anything else, you need to know this: you are special in God’s eyes and are deeply loved in every moment of your life.”*

This is our life too. Whether we do this or that, risk or stay safe, win or lose – we are favoured. It’s the safety net for an acrobat, its family that gathers when someone hurts; it’s running into the arms of a waiting father after failing at everything, it’s forgiveness, it’s solidarity. It is grace up front before we do anything *for* God, *with* God or *about* God. That’s what Mary heard and it later became the message of her son.

Becoming a person of faith was very unsettling for me. At the time I slowly began to live by faith, I often prayed an awkward prayer, “Lord you have to show me if you are real, otherwise I can’t believe it.” Joining a church brought other people into my life. Seminary was totally engaging. Ordination was very ordinary. Being a pastor was a struggle. Being in prison was freeing. And being with you seems is family.

We are favoured and accompanied for whatever life puts before us. God knows that we have what we need. It begins with God’s care and works through our gifts, personality, aptitudes, life, history and faith. Like Mary, whatever is happening in your time, place and life... God knows that you can meet the challenges at hand and that others need what you have to offer.

... let it be with me... “if you say so”

Although there is so much that we don’t know about Mary, or how she could bear a child without a man, Mary was satisfied that she could meet all challenges because God loved her and was with her.

Our witness to one another is important. We have stories that carry questions about God. Sharing real stories helps us find our way. Mary had her story. It was mystery, not magic. She had a special role, but she was a person like us. God does some pretty amazing things through people in different roles: mothering children, encouraging hope, working with the poor, making food banks work, supplying re-

Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service

December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

sources, helping the broken, visiting the sick, walking with the grieving. You have a role to play. You have a gift of love to give.

Mary wondered, “*God for me? God with me? How can this be? The Spirit doing something through me for others? Okay, if you say so.*” Faith can work like that. We have questions and reservations. We have uncertainty like Mary. But faithful love always present can win a heart. The angel said God was like that.

And when angels are no more, and when strange otherworldly experiences fade, we move along together just like Mary did for the rest of her life. The spiritual and the human meet and here at Hope and we see the with faithful love God present.

Mary was the mom of faithful love, as we shall soon see in Bethlehem.
Amen.

Hymn of the Day #257 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vss 1,3,5,6,8)
**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.

**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***

**O come, O Key of David, come and open wide our heavenly home.
Make safe the way that leads on high and close the path to misery. *Refrain***

**O come, O Dayspring come and cheer; O Sun of justice now draw near
Dispel the gloomy clouds of night, and death's dark shadow put to flight.
*Refrain***

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

Prayers of Intercession

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

(brief silence)

Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service

December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

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. We pray for our **Bishop Kathy Martin**; for *Good Shepherd Lutheran* in Coquitlam & **Pastor Eric Krushel**; and *Trinity Lutheran* in Delta & **Pastor Jennifer Wilson**. Merciful God, **receive our prayer**.

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**.

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**.

We pray for peace between *Israel* and *Hamas*, as well as *Russia* and *Ukraine*. We pray for the respective leaders that their hearts would be changed and lead to a peaceful ending to these wars. God of comfort and strength, we pray for all those who have suffer – those who mourn, the injured, those who live in fear. We pray for those who try to provide aid and medical care – workers who risk their lives. Bring us all hope, bring us all strength, bring us all peace. Merciful God, **receive our prayer**.

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

... *Bill & Donna B; Richard B; Bill L; Ken D; Gary G; Alvina M; Charlotte M; Marjorie M; Janet O; Paddy O; Birgit S; Bonnie W; Alana; Bernie & Erna; Chittri; Colleen; Ezra; Gloria; Julie's family; Leah & the Nicholsons; Louise; Makai; Margaret; Tanu; ...*

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**.

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 *Canadian Lutheran World Relief* and other ministries that assist those needing new homes. Merciful God, **receive our prayer**.

Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service

December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

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.**

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

The Peace [*unmute*]

The peace of Christ is with you always!

And also with you!

*(We greet each other gently with a wave, a smile,
or some other gesture of peace)*

The Offering & Prayer

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

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord is with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them up to God.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise. (*Pastor continues...*)

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 Saviour 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 (*Hymnal, Setting 6, page 173*)

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Hosanna in the highest.

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.

Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service

December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.

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

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name

Your kingdom come, your will be done

On earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours

Now and forever. Amen.

Communion

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Happy are those who trust in the Lord.

(those on Zoom will be communed first, and then those in the sanctuary)

Bread: "Take and eat, this is the body of Christ, given for you."

Cup: "Take and drink, this is the blood of Christ, shed for you."

Lamb of God *(Hymnal, Setting 6, page 174)*

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace.

*Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service
December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.*

Communion Hymns:

#272 Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming

**Lo, how a rose e'er blooming from tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming as seers of old have sung,
It came, a flower so bright, amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.**

**Isaiah had foretold it, the rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, the virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, she bore to us a Savior,
When half-spent was the night.**

**This flow'r, whose fragrance tender with sweetness fills the air,
dispels with glorious splendor the darkness ev'rywhere.
True man, yet very God, from sin and death he saves us
and lightens every load.**

**O Savior, child of Mary, who felt our human woe;
O Savior, king of glory, who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length, we pray, to the bright courts of heaven
And into endless day.**

#276 Infant Holy, Infant Lowly

**Infant holy, infant lowly, for his bed a cattle stall;
oxen lowing, little knowing Christ the child is Lord of all.
Swiftly winging, angels singing, bells are ringing, tidings bringing:
Christ the child is Lord of all! Christ the child is Lord of all!**

**Flocks were sleeping, shepherds keeping vigil till the morning new
saw the glory, heard the story, tidings of a gospel true.
Thus rejoicing, free from sorrow, praises voicing, greet the morrow:
Christ the child was born for you; Christ the child was born for you.**

#296 What Child Is This

**What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet while shepherds watch are keeping?
This, this is Christ, the king, whom shepherds guard and angels sing:
haste, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary!**

*Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service
December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.*

**Why lies he in such mean estate where ox and ass are feeding?
Good Christian, fear; for sinners here the silent Word is pleading.
Nails spear shall pierce him through, the cross be borne for me, for you;
hail, hail the Word made flesh the babe, the son of Mary!**

**So bring him incense, gold, and myrrh; come, peasant, king to own him.
The King of kings salvation brings; let loving hearts enthrone him.
Raise, raise the song on high, the virgin sings her lullaby;
joy, joy, for Christ is born, the babe, the son of Mary!**

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 #290 Go Tell It On The Mountain

Refrain:

***Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere;
go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!***

**While shepherds kept their watching o'er silent flocks by night,
behold, throughout the heavens there shone a holy light. [*Refrain*]**

**The shepherds feared and trembled when, lo, above the earth
rang out the angel chorus that hailed our Savior's birth. [*Refrain*]**

**Down in a lonely manger the humble Christ was born;
and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn. [*Refrain*]**

Go in peace. Remember the poor.
Thanks be to God!

+

Worship Assistants Today

Hymnologist: (musician selecting hymns): *John Collett*

Reader: *Gerry Jacob*

Psalm Cantor: *Peter Clark*

Prayers: *Shirley Forwell*

Communion Assistants: *Flo Bender, Marilyn Gross*

***Hope Lutheran Church Worship Service
December 24, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.***

Zoom Hosts: *Gerry (Spotlighter); John (C1/PTZ); Steve (C2).*

Zoom Greeters: *Bill & Caroline Fehr, Dorothy Pagan*

Ushers: *Fred & Carol Wilke*

Musician: *John Collett*

Presiding: *Pastor Terry Richardson*

Readings for Sunday, December 31 - 1st Sunday of Christmas
Isaiah 61:10—62:3; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40

Announcements:

Christmas Eve, December 24, is tonight!

- ***6:30 p.m. - Christmas Eve Candlelight Service.***
- All our services are also available on Zoom.

Those wanting a **Christmas Day service** can find one at *St. Paul's Lutheran* in Harewood at *10:30 a.m.*; or *St. Paul's Anglican church*, downtown Nanaimo at *10:00 a.m.*

