



**Community of Christ Lutheran Church**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
**December 22, 2024, 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.**  
**Pastor Stephen C. Bond**



**THE GATHERING**

**Welcome**

Pastor Steve Bond

Musical Prelude

“Nigh Bethlehem” by Alfred Burt

Eric Dickey

**WE REMEMBER OUR BAPTISM**

“Confession and Forgiveness”

*All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.*

Blessed be the living God, who has kept the promises to our ancestors, who meets us here in our expectations, and who pulls us into the future for good. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

**O God, our truest hope, Have mercy on us. We confess the crookedness inside our hearts that leads us astray. We are fearful when the world is shaken, and we are weighed down with the worries of this life. We are complacent in the face of others’ needs. Afraid of change, we stay stuck in old ruts of sin when you tell us you are doing something new. In your compassion, forgive us. Turn us back to you. Free us from our fear. Awaken us from apathy. And draw us into your promised future, made known to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen**

Beloved, God forgives us and enables us to begin again. God’s messengers tell us we do not have to be afraid. In the name of Jesus Christ, who is with us and for whom we wait, your sins are forgiven, and we are free to follow in his way. **Amen.**

**Gathering Hymn**

“The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came”

**ELW 265**

## Greeting

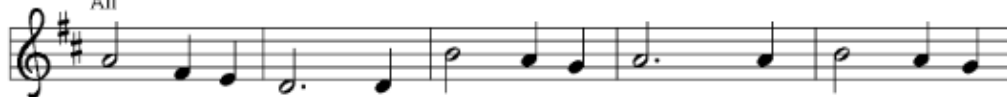
**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C** **And also with you.**

*Refrain*  
Assisting minister

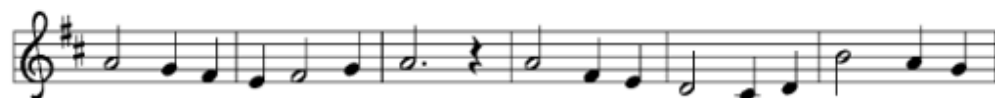


This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor-thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.

*Refrain*



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al-le - lu - ia.



2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the



hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless-ing and hon - or and glo - ry and



might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

*Final refrain*

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain  
has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

### Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, 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. **P Amen.**

### Lighting of the Advent Wreath

(8 a.m. Teresa Loga, 10 a.m. Andrew, Autumn, Andrew & Addison Carman)

**Lead by** Pastor Steve Bond 8:00 a.m. and Choir 10:00 a.m.

### Week Four – Joy

by Lisa Alleman

Light one can - dle of joy in the dark - ness, light one can - dle for me  
Joy for a babe - that - has set the world free. - Joy for a God - who will not - give up on  
me. Joy to il - lu - mine my life. Light - one can - dle of joy!

### Childrens Sermon

**Anthem (10:00 a.m.)**

“Where the Light Begins”

Choir

### THE READINGS

#### **The First Reading: Micah 5:2-5a**

<sup>2</sup>But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
from ancient days.

<sup>3</sup>Therefore he shall give them up until the time

when she who is in labor has brought forth;  
then the rest of his kindred shall return  
to the people of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,  
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.

And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great  
to the ends of the earth;

<sup>5a</sup>and he shall be the one of peace.

**L The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God!**

### **The Second Reading: Hebrews 10:5-10**

<sup>5</sup>Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body you have prepared for me;

<sup>6</sup>in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup>Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’  
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

<sup>8</sup>When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup>then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup>And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

**L The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God!**



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

**10:00 a.m. Service** “Mary’s Story: As Told by St. Luke”, by John Ferguson

Vince Krolak, Trumpet

## **The Holy Gospel: Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)**

**P** The Holy Gospel according to.... **C Glory to you, O Lord!**

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

<sup>46</sup>And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

<sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup>for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

<sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

<sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;

<sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,

<sup>55</sup>according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

**P** The Gospel of the Lord! **C Praise to you, O Christ!**

**Sermon**

*"The Opening Number"*

*Pastor Stephen Bond*

**Hymn**

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

**ELW 257**

*VS 1-4*

## Nicene Creed

**C** 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

## WE DEDICATE OUR HEARTS IN PRAYER

**P** As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

*A brief silence.*

**AM** God our uniter, increase communication and cooperation in our relationships with those of other traditions and religions. Root your church in the radical message of your incarnation and enable us to pursue your justice in the world. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

**AM** God our creator, we praise you for the beauty that surrounds us. Awaken in us a renewed sense of care for wildlife in our communities. Form us into faithful stewards of what you have made. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

**AM** God our sovereign, Mary proclaims a new way of life that lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. Nurture in local governments and municipalities a desire to care for all who are overlooked and ignored. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

**AM** God our beacon, as the northern hemisphere begins its slow turn toward more daylight, remind us that even in the deepest nights, you are there. Comfort the lonely and bereaved. Hold closely the frightened, anxious, depressed, and ill; **Tom Jennings, Sue & Jim Enk, Christal & Chad Pritchard, Frank O’Konski, Larry Geer, Luke Holtz, Susie Donnal, Ron Hetherwick, Martina Benton, Janet Dellinger, Jake Cope, Debbie Carman, Cory Kaczor, Eric Lewis, Phillip Hart, Harold Shoupe Jr., Jacki Sutter, Jacquelyn Krohn, Eli & Alexis Bibler and baby to be, Jeff Baden, Natalie Ditulo, Lauren Bradford, Jerry Reed, Nancy Meyer, LuAnn Alleman....** and all that we remember in silence. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

**AM** God our guide, shepherd the leadership of this congregation. Bless the council and staff in discerning future ministry and open their hearts to the voices of the community. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

**AM** God our life, you remember the promises you have made to your people. In gratitude for those who have died, especially Tordis Brosten, we praise you for your faithfulness throughout history. Lord, in your mercy, **receive our prayer.**

**P** Savior of the nations, come and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

### **THE MEAL**

*All Christians are welcome to commune at our Altar. You do not have to be a member of this congregation to receive Communion. Grape juice is available in the inner ring of glasses for those desiring it. A “gluten-free” host option is available upon request as well.*

### **Sharing of the Peace**

**P** The Peace of the Lord be with you all! **C** And also with you!  
*Share an expression of peace with your neighbor, please.*

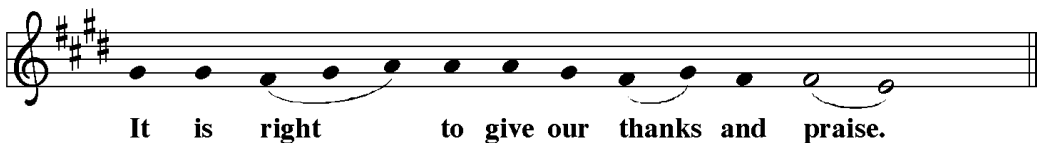
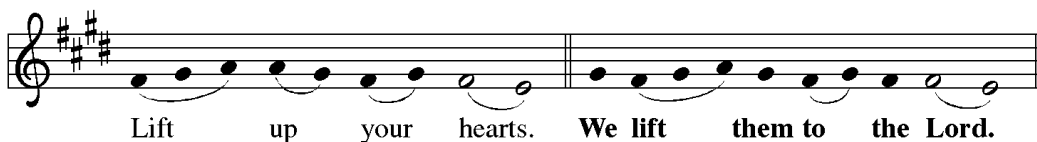
*The congregation continues to stand during Tithes and Offerings if you are able.*

**Our Tithes and Offerings** *Bring your gifts to the Altar or you may offer gifts in the tray located at the rear of the sanctuary. Thank you.*

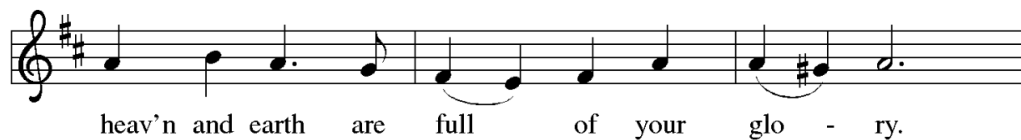
## Offering Prayer

AM Lord Jesus, our portion and our cup, you offered yourself in love for the world, and in this meal you nourish us with your life. Fill us with your abundance, that we may feed the hungry and welcome the stranger, trusting in your name. **Amen.**

## The Great Thanksgiving



## \*\*The Eucharistic Prayer Continues.....







in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

### The Words of Institution

*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. Jesus said, 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. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me.*

### The Lord's Prayer

**P** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray... **C** **O**ur 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.

### Communion Hymns

“Lamb of God”



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, grant us peace.

**Hymn**

“Away in a Manager”

**ELW 277**

“Come to the Table”

**ELW 481****Post Communion Blessing****Prayer after Communion**

**AM** Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name. **Amen.**

**THE SENDING*****Milestones & Announcements:******Blessing of the Quilts*****The Blessing**

**P** God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and the light, God, our hope for the journey, ✝ bless and keep you now and forever. **Amen.**

**Sending Hymn**

“Canticle of the Turning”

**ELW 723****Dismissal**

**AM** Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel. **Thanks be to God.**

**AM** And next week, **C Bring a friend!**

**Making Jesus Known”**

**Welcome to Community of Christ!** Our family welcomes you to the house of the Lord today! We ask God to bless His Holy Word and Sacrament today so that his people might receive strength for living out our days! If you are looking for a church home, we hope you will consider Community of Christ!

**We WELCOME YOU** to worship with us at one of our TWO worship services. Join us at 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. in person or on Facebook Live. We look forward to seeing you and as always **BRING A FRIEND!!!!**

**Altar Flowers are given by Dale & Debbie Grimes. Wishing you peace, love, and joy in your hearts & home as we celebrate our Savior's birth. Special prayers to those in need and prayers to those who are no longer with us. ♥**

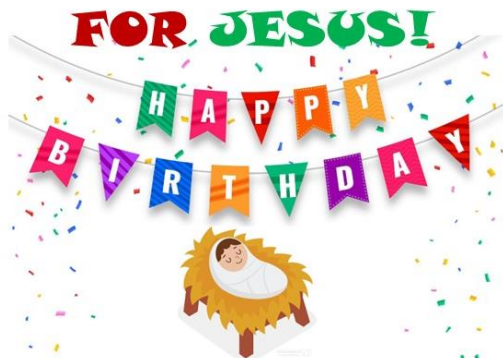
**“More Than Wishful Thinking: An Exploration of Christian Hope” Advent Adult Sunday School Series:** Hope is a funny word. Sometimes we use it with bold confidence in spite of impossible odds: “Even though he was wrongfully imprisoned, he held onto hope that he would be vindicated and set free.” Sometimes we use it as a polite way of expressing doubt, like when you say, “I hope it doesn’t rain today,” while the sky darkens with threatening clouds from the west. Emily Dickinson famously said that hope was “the thing with feathers that perches in the soul—and sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all…” And of course, as one hero in the Star Wars movies says about fighting against the Galactic Empire, “Rebellions are built on hope.” That’s a lot of range for one word to have to cover—and maybe it can be confusing for us as Christians to know what we are talking about when we say we are people of *hope*. This Advent season especially is one marked by both waiting and hope (which, fun fact, use the same word in Spanish!), as we hear the centuries-long hopes of prophets and exiles who waited and hoped for homecoming, for restoration, and for the arrival of the promised Anointed One (Messiah/Christ) of God. We also hear in these weeks the hope we have for God’s new creation when all things are made new. So, what does it mean for us to be people of hope, and how is it different from just “wishful thinking” or mere optimism? That’s what we want to explore in this December’s Adult Sunday School series, running on December 1, 8, 15, and 22 between services. On all of those dates except the 22<sup>nd</sup>, we’ll be in the fellowship hall, and on Dec. 22 we’ll move to the Council Room to allow the kids to have the larger space for the Birthday Party for Jesus! We *hope* you’ll join us around the table for good conversation and learning together this Advent in the Adult Class!

**Thursday Bible Study Series: “Things Seen and Unseen”**

Starting this December, we’ll begin a new series in our Thursday Afternoon Bible Study, co-led between Pastor Steve and Vicar Natalie, exploring angels and other spiritual beings in the Bible, what we do (and don’t!) know about them, and what

difference their existence makes in our lives. Have you ever been curious about what angels look like, or where some people get the idea of “guardian” angels from? Don’t know your “cherubim” from your “seraphim”? Wonder why the first words out of the angels’ mouths in the Bible are so often, “Do not be afraid!”? Join us on Thursdays as we explore Things Seen and Unseen: An Introduction to Angels in our Thursday Afternoon Bible Study, at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Room. We’d love to have you around the table!

## A BIRTHDAY PARTY



**Sunday School “Birthday Party for Jesus” TODAY, Dec. 22 at 9:00 a.m.!** While our Sunday School classes for kids have been meeting every Sunday throughout the fall, we’re doing something special on the Sunday before Christmas—our annual “Birthday Party for Jesus” event at 9:00 a.m. (between services) on Sunday, Dec. 22 in the fellowship hall! (Grown-ups, you’ll find the Adult Sunday

School class in the Council room on that day!) Join us and kids of all ages for songs, fun, food, and a chance to celebrate together as we say, “Happy birthday, Jesus!”



**Blue Christmas Service Offers Comfort and Hope — Today, Dec. 22 at 3:00 p.m.** The holidays can be a difficult time for people, especially if they’re dealing with grief and loss. Whether still working through a recent death, feeling renewed sadness over a long-time loss, or just struggling while others seem full of Christmas-time cheer, this can

be a heavy season of the year. So, we’ll continue a tradition we’ve done for the last several years here at Community of Christ by hosting a Blue Christmas service—a time of worship that offers comfort for those who need it, particularly at this time of year, and that connects our faith in God-with-Us who came among us in Bethlehem with our lived experience of loss and grief. This year’s service will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 22, and is open to any and all who would find it helpful. You

are welcome to invite friends, relatives, neighbors, or community members who might need a moment this season for grief to be named and comfort to be given, here at Community of Christ.

**This is the LAST Sunday for The Annual Covenant Renewal: Community of Christ** from the very beginning, the founding pastor and leaders of our congregation established a tradition of annually affirming our commitment to the work God is doing through this community. All who gather in worship, whether in person or online, will have the opportunity to renew this covenant. We encourage you to reflect on this covenant and recommit to your participation in the life and ministry of Community of Christ.



## Christmas Eve Services

Community of Christ will host three worship services on Christmas Eve: 4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., & 11:00 p.m. Each worship service will include Christmas carols, candlelight (and glow sticks for the kids), and Holy Communion. Invite a friend to worship with you this season!

Fellowship invites you to join us for a **Toledo Walleye Hockey** game on January 5th, 2025 @ 5:15 p.m.! Tickets are just \$17 per person. (No online sign-up this time.) To reserve your spot, please sign up at the kiosk and submit your payment **TODAY, December 22nd**. Cash is the easiest option, but if you need alternatives, see Chad Ackerman. You can also drop the exact amount in a marked envelope with Michelle in the office. Don't miss out—sign up today!

**Thank you!** Ken & I want to thank everyone for their amazing generosity as we were able to provide over 60 Christmas gifts for the children at Salem Lutheran Church this past Sunday. It is always so much fun to pack up our vehicles with all of the Christmas treasures and deliver them to Pastor Mike where we know how much the children will appreciate them! Please know that your thoughtfulness will make Christmas a little brighter this year for Salem's children and their families.

Also, a big thank you to Pastor Steve for helping us load up! In gratitude, Shelly & Ken Hayes

**The 2025 offering envelopes** are now available on the table in the hallway! These envelopes cover weekly offerings as well as special services like Lenten Wednesdays, Holy Week, Easter, Thanksgiving, Advent, and more. If you have any questions about how to complete your weekly offering or are unable to locate your envelopes, please feel free to reach out to the church office. For those who prefer to give electronically, we offer the Simply Giving option, which allows for automatic withdrawals from your account. For more details, please contact Michelle at [secretary@commofchrist.org](mailto:secretary@commofchrist.org).

Thank you for your generous support of the Lord's work at Community of Christ and beyond!



**Worship Services**

Available on the net  
at [www.commofchrist.org](http://www.commofchrist.org)

OR you can use your cell phone camera to access our website with our QR code!

**What's Happening  
This Week?**



|  |
|--|
| <b>Church Office Closed</b>                                  |
| December 24, 25<br>December 31 and January 1                 |
| <b>Christmas Eve Services</b>                                |
| Tuesday, December 24<br>4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., and 11:00 p.m. |



# HELP FILL THE NEED

*Donate blood!*



American  
Red Cross

## **Blood Drive** **Community of Christ Lutheran Church**

Community Center  
6517 Finzel  
Whitehouse, OH 43571

**Friday, January 10, 2025**  
**12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

For an appointment, please visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) Sponsor Code:  
COMMUNITYCHRIST Or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).



Scan to be directed to  
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Scan to schedule  
an appointment

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | [RedCrossBlood.org](https://RedCrossBlood.org) | Download the Blood Donor App

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Did one of our Bible readings capture your attention today? Was there a story you could picture in your mind? Did a phrase from a hymn or a thought from the sermon start some new ideas or inspire some reflection? Did a Scripture passage spark a question for you to think about? Use this space here as an open canvas for your faithful imagination: you can draw a picture of something you pictured, write a question, take

notes from the message or scriptures, or doodle your faith into a visible form here. Then, either take it with you or leave your thoughts and images here to be shared in an ongoing collection here at Community of Christ!