

Vasa Lutheran Church

Joel: God's Promised Spirit

Pastor Maureen Hagen

Accompanist-Nicholas Kees

Sunday, December 8, 2024

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

In the darkest times we cannot see to make our way...
our eyes adjust, but still everything is shadowed and grey.

We reach out, desperate

for comfort

for balance

for the familiar

for hope

In the darkest times,
even a faltering light can be just enough:
the flame flickers, twinkles, dances—and it is dazzling!
For in its light, we see light: God in our midst.

~Candles are lit~

However impossible it seems,
hope is alive, even in the midst of this world,
and blessed is the one whose living hope reveals God's good news.

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.**

Come, O come, Emmanuel, God with us, and we will rejoice.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
alive in the world,
reviving creation,
arriving soon.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of mercy,
we confess that we have sinned.
We trust earthly powers and human authority alone.
We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.

God of might,
we confess that we have sinned.
We have turned away from our neighbors.
We have trusted false promises.

God in our midst,
we confess that we have sinned.
We plead: come to us.
Bring your mercy to birth in us.

A righteous branch springs forth:
it is Christ the Lord, our Savior,
in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy.
By the power of the Holy Spirit,
receive the grace and forgiveness of God
through † Christ Jesus,
whose day draws near.
Amen.

GATHERING HYMN: LOST IN THE NIGHT ELW 243

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



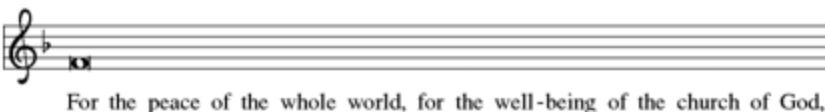
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



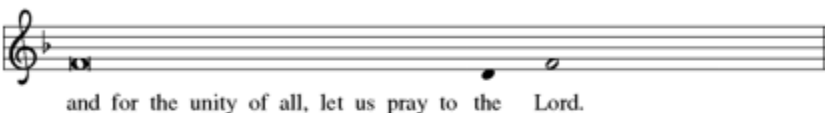
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



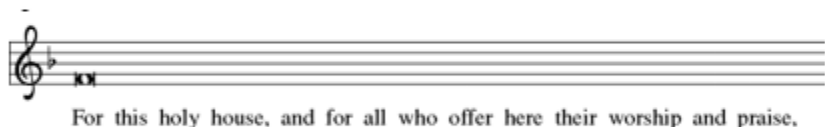
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. A - - men.

HYMN OF PRAISE

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

PRAYERS OF THE CONGREGATION

Each petition will end with the words: Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

LORD'S PRAYER

Give us the courage to follow in the foot steps of Christ,
who taught us to pray, saying...

**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.**

SHARING OF THE PEACE

L: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: And also with you.

L: Let us share God's peace with one another.

GENEROSITY MOMENT

SENDING HYMN:

O COME, ALL YE FAITHFUL

ELW 283

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING

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.

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

C: Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE



Paul Mikaelsen, Jay
Mikaelsen, Scott Sorenson,
Max Tilderquist, Anne
Rathman, Dale Anderson,
Lorrie Samuelson, Rosann
Pearson, Lynda Rosener Sack,
Arleen Stahnke, Connie Gillis,
Carolyn Lindstrom, Merle
Pearson, Amber Nelson,
Yvonne Belin, Sarah Jacobson
Parker, Chris Finne and the
family of Jim Hedeem.

Worship Assistants Today:

Usher: Tim Carlson

Reader: Sid Featherstone

Hospitality: Kent Volz

**Worship Assistants Next Week
(December 15)**

Usher: Barry Skog

Reader: (Children's Christmas Program)

Hospitality: Luncheon Following

Comm. Asst: Barry Skog



Dec. 8 9am

Christmas Program rehearsal

Dec. 8 3pm

Advent Celebration

Dec. 11 5:30-7pm

Vasa Family Fun Night

Dec. 15 9am (Final Christmas Program Rehearsal)

Dec. 15 10am

*Children's Christmas Program
(Lutheran Center) with Lunch to follow.*

Dec. 24 2 & 5pm

Christmas Eve worship

Parish Pulse:

December 1

Participating in Worship: 45

+ 20 Live Stream

Total Offerings:

\$847.00

**MUSIC FOR DECEMBER 8,
2024**

LOST IN THE NIGHT

Text © 1932 Augsburg Publishing House,

admin. Augsburg Fortress

Music: Finnish folk tune

**SPIRIT OF GOD DESCEND UPON MY
HEART**

Text: George Croly, 1780-1860

Music: Frederick C. Atkinson, 1841-1897

SPIRIT OF GENTLENESS

Text and music © 1978 James K. Manley

O COME ALL YE FAITHFUL

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr.

Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr.

unknown, st. 2 Music: attr. John Francis Wade

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We, the Vasa Congregation,

Called by God, commit to:

Worshipping together

Growing in faith

Serving others, and

Welcoming and loving all!



December 3, 2024

Some nights, when tucking in my youngest son, he struggles to sleep because some frightening reality has claimed a place in his consciousness. Before I can leave, he grabs my hand and whispers, “Mom, will you stay?”

He has never once asked me to do anything other than stay. Perhaps he knows, on some level, that staying is the best I can do.

We have entered the season of Advent. Last Advent was marked by the beginning of war in the Holy Land, by the ongoing invasion of Ukraine. Those miseries, and so many more, march on.

In the darkness of night, in a season when that darkness falls over us earlier and earlier each day, I am struck by the hope held in the hand of my six-year-old son as he whispers in the night, “Stay with me.”

A few weeks ago, someone asked me how we might continue to care for our neighbors at this particular time—local and global. What can we do, they wondered, to express God’s love?

As I considered the question, the words of Psalm 23 filled my head. “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, *for you are with me.*”¹

In this season of Advent, I am again overwhelmed by the fact that the greatest expression of God’s love is to enter in, put on flesh, and become human so that God might walk among us, be with us, and stay with us.

How can we express love in this season of hope and tumult? We can stay. Stay with our neighbors in their anxiety, joy, and fear. Stay in our striving for peace. Stay in the conversation that exposes us to ideas that are not our own. Stay in the neighborhoods and communities to which we have been called, refusing to walk away from those who have much to lose but instead proclaiming and pointing to God’s boundless love and grace in all we do.

My son has never asked me to magically make his fear go away. Instead, he simply asks me to stay. Being with him in those moments is enough. He may still be frightened, but he is not alone.

The promise of God, revealed in both Scripture and so fully in the person of Jesus Christ, is that God does not leave. God’s love is so deep that God is compelled to put on flesh and dwell among us. In all things, in all seasons, the presence of God remains.

“And remember,” Jesus said, “I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”²

¹ Emphasis added.

² Matthew 28:20.

That is the promise we cling to and the fulfillment we long for. Christ is with us, and Christ is coming soon.

In this season of Advent, I am inviting us, people who long for and know the presence of the incarnate God, to pay attention to those among us who might be whispering through the night, reaching out a hand, asking us, in the way of the incarnate Christ, to stay.

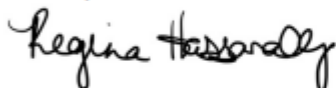
We cannot bear or fix all the problems of the world. But we can stay. We can stay with those whose walk in the valley is long and deep. In the way of Christ, we can walk alongside our neighbors and friends. In this way, we proclaim both the presence of God now and the presence of God to come. We, too, become the body of Christ, a body compelled by deep love to stay. We can ensure no one is left to journey this life alone.

In this way, in this Advent, we bear the light of Christ. The one who is with us even now. The one who is, to our great joy, here and coming soon.

In the name of Christ.

Amen.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Regina Hassanally". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bishop Regina Hassanally
Southeastern Minnesota Synod, ELCA