

EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH
2nd Sunday of Advent, December 7, 2025

Traditional Worship

Austin Campus 9:00 AM, Far Hills Campus 10:30 AM* (*Livestreamed)

“When We’re Running Out of Hope, God Is at Work”

Gather

ADVENT VIDEO: *GOOD NEWS IS LOUDER THAN FEAR*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE: *FANTASY ON “LO, HOW A ROSE E’ER BLOOMING” (arr. Paul McKlveen)*
Jubilate Bells, Jill Byers, director

CALL TO WORSHIP

P: Family of faith, God is at work

C: God is healing and creating

P: Redeeming and dreaming

C: Calling and sending

P: Listening and loving

C: God is at work

P: May we worship our God who never gives up

C: May we worship our God who holds onto hope, Amen

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Near the end of his ministry, John the Baptist reached out to Jesus with a heart full of anxiety. John was in jail. He knew he might not get out, so he asked Jesus, “Did I make a mistake? Am I making a difference here? Or did I get it all wrong?”

Like John, let us be fully honest with Jesus about our innermost thoughts. We can pour our heart out to God because God always meets us with grace, tenderness, and mercy.

Let us go to God in prayer.

P: On-the-move God

C: We have every reason to hold onto hope

We have every reason to believe that spring will come

That flowers will bloom, that the sun will rise

And yet, too often hope slips through our fingers

With anxious hearts we cry out to you

Will change ever come? Will things ever get better?

Will I ever make a difference?

**Soothe our wandering hearts and show us the places where
the sun is shining.**

Show us the places where you are on the move.

With open hearts we pray, Amen

P: Family of faith, in our honesty

C: We are heard

P: In our worries

C: We are held

P: In our failings

C: We are forgiven

P: In our fear

C: We are not alone.

P: This is the good news of the gospel

C: When we're running out of hope, God is still at work

Thanks be to God, Amen

SHARING THE PEACE

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

C: And also with you.

OPENING HYMN: PREPARE THE ROYAL HIGHWAY

#264



1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!
Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!
Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.
His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:
God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!
All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:
So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*
Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.
Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress

PRAYER OF THE DAY

LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH – PEACE

P: In a world full of fear, where do you see glimmers of peace?

C: We see glimmers of peace in the quiet of early morning

When people shake hands

When loved ones say they're sorry

When the church sings together

P: Even in a fearful world, peace is all around us.

Today we light the candle of peace as a reminder of this good news.

(light two candles)

P: May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, peace is present. We only have to look for it.

C: Thanks be to God, Amen

Word

WELCOMING THE CHILDREN

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 43:19-21

¹⁹ *I am about to do a new thing;*

now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?

I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

²⁰ *The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches,*

for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert,

*to give drink to my chosen people, ²¹ the people whom I formed for myself
so that they might declare my praise.*

A: The word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

P: The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 11:1-11

¹ *Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples,
he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities.*

² *When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing,
he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him,*

“Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?”

⁴ *Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see:*

⁵ *the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are
cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news
brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”*

⁷ *As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John:*

“What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind?

⁸ *What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes?*

*Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go
out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.*

¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written,

‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.’

¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: LOOKING OUT A PRISON WINDOW (vv. 1,2,4)

Words by Anna Strickland, 2025

Music by Henry Gauntlett, 1849

Look - ing out a pri - son win - dow, who can see the flow - ers bloom?
All the things that keep us cap - tive shrink our op - ti - mis - tic faith
To our sib - lings still im - pris - oned be - hind bars of steel or fear
We are called to li - ber - a - tion, to be freed and to set free

6
Hope dis - solves like dreams at day - break leav - ing us an emp - ty room
We must prac - tice hope on pur - pose e - ven when our spi - rits break
Bring the mes - sage from our Sav - ior: hope is real and dawn - ing near
Break - ing chains of world - ly pow - ers who would claim our li - ber - ty

10
Still be - yond what we can see God is al - ways plant - ing seeds
'Til at last our free - dom comes And we fin - ally see the sun
Tell the gos - pel all a - round New life springs up from the ground
Bo - dy, spi - rit, mind and heart Li - ber - ate each cap - tive part

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AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

A: Insisting on hope this Advent, let us confess our faith.

C: We have seen the valley

We have seen a sky without stars

We have seen the longest night

And still we believe

We believe in a with-us God

We believe in the hope of tomorrow

We believe that good news is louder than fear

We believe this good news is for all people

So even when our knees shake

Even when our voice trembles

Even when fear is all around us

We will hold on to that good news

We will reach for each other

We will look for God in our midst

We will sing songs of joy

We will proclaim: Unto us, love is born

We have seen the longest night

And we have seen unimaginable love

So still we believe, Amen

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH *(after each petition...)*

A: God of hope,

C: hear our prayer.

M e a l

OFFERING: *FLING WIDE THE DOOR* (arr. John Yarrington)

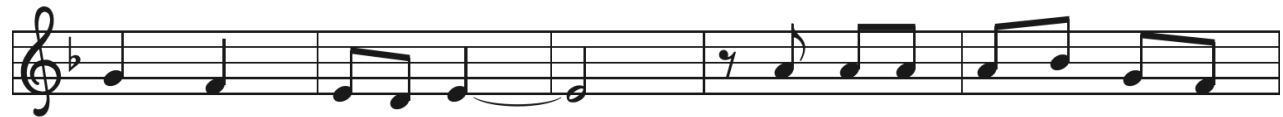
Epiphany Chorale
Ben Richter, drum

OFFERTORY: *THERE IS A LONGING IN OUR HEARTS*

(Refrain: All, Verse 1: Choir, Refrain: All)



There is a long-ing in our hearts, O Lord, for you to re -



veal your - self to us. There is a long-ing in our



hearts for love we on - ly find in you, our God.



1 For jus - tice,	for free - dom,	for mer - cy:
2 For wis - dom,	for cour - age,	for com - fort:
3 For heal - ing,	for whole - ness,	for new life:
4 Lord, save us,	take pit - y,	light in our



hear our prayer.	In sor - row,	in grief:
hear our prayer.	In weak - ness,	in fear:
hear our prayer.	In sick - ness,	in death:
deep - est night.	We call you;	we wait:



be near; hear our prayer, O God.

Text: Anne Quigley, b. 1955

Music: LONGING, Anne Quigley

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INVITATION TO THE TABLE

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

If you are unable to attend worship due to health concerns, please contact the church office to be included on the homebound list.

Christ welcomes you to the meal of grace! All who desire to receive Christ's nourishment and grace may join us at the Lord's Table. (9:00) Please come to the table by the center aisle and return to your seat by the front or side aisle. Communion is by intinction; dip the bread in the red wine or white grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available upon request. (10:30) Please come to the table by the diagonal aisle and return to your seat by the center or a front aisle. Communion is by intinction; dip the wafer in the red wine or white grape juice. Gluten free wafers are available at the front of the center aisle.

COMMUNION MUSIC: *O COME, O COME EMMANUEL* (arr. McDonald & Nelson)
Sarah Juhasz, bells & organ

COMMUNION HYMN: LORD, YOUR HANDS HAVE FORMED

#554



1 Lord, your hands have formed this world, ev - 'ry part is shaped by
2 Yours the soil that holds the seed, you give warmth and mois - ture,
3 Like a mat you roll out land, space to build for us and



you— wa - ter tum - bling o - ver rocks, air, and sun - light:
too. Sprout-ing blos - soms, crops and buds, trees and plants: the
you earth - ly homes and, bet - ter still, homes for Christ: the



each day's signs that you make all things new.
sea - son's signs that you make all things new.
tru - est sign that you make all things new.

Text: Ramon and Sario Oliano; para. James Minchin, b. 1942; tr. Delbert Rice
Music: GAYOM NI HIGAMI, Ikalahan (Philippines) traditional
Text © James Minchin, admin. Asian Institute for Liturgy & Music., admin. Augsburg Fortress.

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

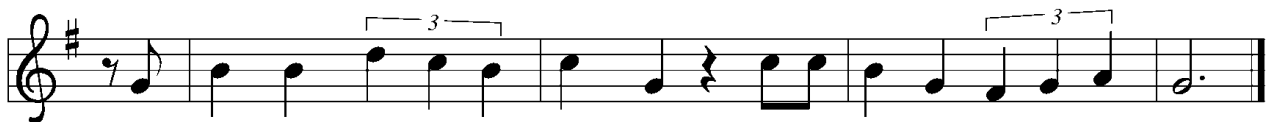
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CLOSING HYMN: HE CAME DOWN

#253



1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;
3 He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace;
4 He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy;



he came down that we may have love;
he came down that we may have light; hal - le - lu - jah for - ev - er - more.
he came down that we may have peace;
he came down that we may have joy;

BENEDICTION

P: In a fearful world, may we look for God's spirit.
May we reach for each other's hands.
May we choose courage whenever we can.
And in all things, may we remember that good news is louder than fear.
In the name of the one who calls, † the one who sends,
and the one who journeys with— go in peace and be not afraid.
C: Thanks be to God.

Serving in Worship

Austin Campus 9:00 AM

Presiding Minister: Pastor Julie Reuning-Scherer
Pianist: John Benjamin
Lay Reader: Jim Petteys

Far Hills Campus 10:30 AM

Presiding Minister: Pastor Corey Wagonfield
Assisting Minister: Judith Clark
Organist: John Benjamin
Sound: Melonie June Warren
Stream Team: Ryan Pearson, Jerry Slaughter
Ushers: Lon & Therese Molnar
Communion: Wendy Beavers, Mary Moenter, Sam Richard,
RoseAnn Venis