

**EPIPHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, December 21, 2025**  
Traditional Worship  
Austin Campus 9:00 AM, Far Hills Campus 10:30 AM\* (\*Livestreamed)

**“When You’re Afraid, Give Me Your Hand”**

**Gather**

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**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**PRELUDE**

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

P: Here in worship we pray together

**C: We stand together**

P: We sing together

**C: We listen together**

P: Here in worship

**C: We are not alone**

P: So when life gives you reason to grieve, to fear, or to worry  
remember this moment

**C: We are not alone**

P: Let us worship our with-us God

**CONFESSiON AND FORGIVENESS**

P: When you were afraid, did I stay by your side?  
Did I offer my hand, or did I leave you alone?  
When you were afraid, did I choose solidarity?  
Did I see your fear, or did I only see mine?

**C: None of us is perfect. We all make mistakes.  
Fortunately, God offers grace, and we do too.  
So take a deep breath, and let's start again.**

P: Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.

**C: Now we must ask—**

**When you were afraid, did we stay by your side?  
Did we offer our hands, or did we leave you alone?  
When you were afraid, did we choose solidarity?  
Did we see your fear? Or did we only see ours?**

P: None of us is perfect. We all make mistakes.  
Fortunately, God offers grace, and I do too.  
So take a deep breath, and let's start again.

**C: Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.**

**We accept your grace and would love to start again.**

P: May it be so, with God's help

**C: Alleluia, amen**

## **SHARING THE PEACE**

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

**C: And also with you.**

## **OPENING HYMN: *COME, THOU LONG-EXPECTED JESUS***

1 Come, thou long-expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us;  
let us find our rest in thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art,  
dear desire of ev'ry nation,  
joy of ev'ry longing heart.

2 Born thy people to deliver,  
born a child, and yet a king;  
born to reign in us forever,  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By thine own eternal Spirit  
rule in all our hearts alone;  
by thine all-sufficient merit  
raise us to thy glorious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

### LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH – LOVE

P: In a world full of fear, where do you see the presence of love?

**C: We see love all around us**

**We see love when people hold open the door**

**We see love in a warm embrace, a homemade casserole and  
a phone call after a long day**

**We see love in random acts of kindness and  
intentional acts of empathy**

**We see love all around us**

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

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

*(light all 4 candles)*

P: May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, love is here. Love is world-changing. Love is shining bright.

We only have to look for it.

**C: Thanks be to God, Amen**

## Word

### WELCOMING THE CHILDREN

### FIRST READING: ISAIAH 41:5-10

*5 The coastlands have seen and are afraid;  
the ends of the earth tremble; they have drawn near and come.*

*6 Each one helps the other, saying to one another, “Take courage!”*

*7 The artisan encourages the goldsmith,  
and the one who smooths with the hammer encourages the one  
who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, “It is good,”  
and they fasten it with nails so that it cannot be moved.*

<sup>8</sup> *But you, Israel, my servant,  
Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend;  
9 you whom I took from the ends of the earth and called from its farthest corners,  
saying to you, “You are my servant; I have chosen you and not cast you off”;  
10 do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid, for I am your God;  
I will strengthen you; I will help you;  
I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.*

**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 1:18-25**

<sup>18</sup> *Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup> But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:*

<sup>23</sup> *“Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  
and they shall name him Emmanuel,”*

*which means, “God is with us.”*

<sup>24</sup> *When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife <sup>25</sup> but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.*

**P: The gospel of the Lord.**

**C: Praise to you, O Christ.**

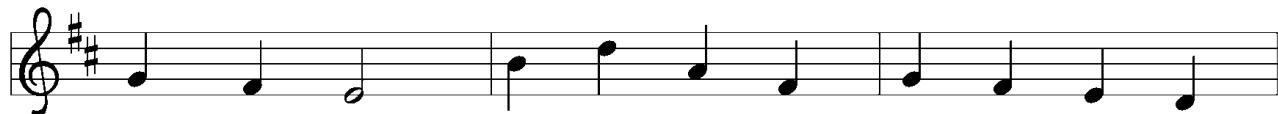
#### **SERMON**

## HYMN OF THE DAY: WILL YOU LET ME BE YOUR SERVANT (vv. 1-3)

#659



1 Will you let me be your servant, let me be as  
2 We are pilgrims on a journey, we are trav'lers  
3 I will hold the Christ-light for you in the night-time  
4 I will weep when you are weep-ing; when you laugh I'll  
5 Will you let me be your servant, let me be as



Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to  
on the road; we are here to help each other  
of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you,  
laugh with you. I will share your joy and sor-row  
Christ to you? Pray that I may have the grace to



let you be my ser - - vant, too.  
walk the mile and bear the load.  
speak the peace you long to hear.  
till we've seen this jour - - ney through.  
let you be my ser - - vant, too.

Text: Richard Gillard, b. 1953

Music: THE SERVANT SONG, Richard Gillard

Text and music © 1977 Scripture In Song (c/o Integrity's Hosanna Music)/ASCAP,  
c/o Integrity Media, Inc., 1000 Coady Road, Mobile AL 36695.

## 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.**

**Meal** 

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**OFFERING: WHO BUT THE LORD (Craig Courtney)**

*Epiphany Chorale*

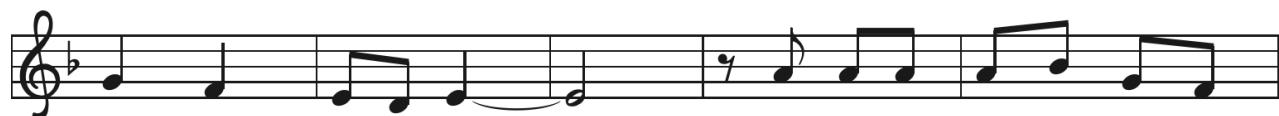
## OFFERTORY: THERE IS A LONGING IN OUR HEARTS

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

*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.

*Leader or All*



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.

*Refrain*

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 HYMN: ALL EARTH IS HOPEFUL

#266



To - da la tie - rra  
 1 All earth is hope - ful,  
 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael,  
 3 Moun - tains and val - leys  
 4 We first saw Je - sus

es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor

the Sav - ior comes at last!

you heard the proph - et tell:

will have to be pre - pared;

a ba - by in a crib.



y el sur - co a - bier - to,  
 Fur - rows lie o - pen  
 "A vir - gin moth - er  
 new high - ways o - pened,  
 This same Lord Je - sus

la ob - ra del Se - ñor;

for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the

will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -

new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most

to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha  
 la - bor of peo - ple  
 ceived him, "God with us,"  
 here! God is near - ing,  
 world; he is pres - ent,

por la li - ber - tad,

who strug - gle to see how

our broth - er, whose birth re -

in beau - ty and grace! All

in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver-dad. dar-nos li - ber-tad.  
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.  
 stores hope and cour-age to chil - dren of this earth.  
 clear ev - 'ry gate-way, in haste, come out in haste!  
 Je - sus is with us, and

ev - er sets us free.

1-3

4

2 *Dice el profeta al pueblo de Israel: "De madre virgen ya viene Emmanuel," será "Dios con nosotros," hermano será, con él la esperanza al mundo volverá.* 3 *Montes y valles habrá que preparar; nuevos caminos tenemos que trazar. Él está ya muy cerca, venidlo a encontrar, y todas las puertas abrid de par en par.*

4 *En una cueva Jesús apareció, pero en el mundo está presente hoy. Vive en nuestros hermanos, con ellos está; y vuelve de nuevo a darnos libertad.*

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

Music: TODA LA TIERRA, Alberto Taulé

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## POST-COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

Send

### CLOSING HYMN: AWAKE! AWAKE AND GREET THE NEW MORN (vv. 1,2,4) #242



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for  
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -  
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when  
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for  
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is  
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so  
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.  
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;  
qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.  
crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -  
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -  
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in  
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and  
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to  
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and  
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - - er.  
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - - ness.  
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - - der.  
bring us at last in - to glo - - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen

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## 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 Lehman

#### Far Hills Campus 10:30 AM

Presiding Minister: Pastor Corey Wagonfield  
Assisting Minister: Sandy Houpt  
Organist: John Benjamin  
Sound: Ed Wasser  
Stream Team: Ryan Pearson, Melonie June Warren  
Ushers: Ron Armstrong, John Venis  
Communion: Kathy Hibbs, Kim Knechly, Ann Painter,  
Dorothy Sisken