

**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World
and
St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church
13564 St. Andrews Drive
Seal Beach, CA 90740
(562) 598-8697**

**e-mail: redeemer_lutheran@verizon.net
website: www.redeemerlutheransealbeach.com**



***Holy Communion Service
Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 22, 2024***

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

CHOIR INTROIT

OPENING HYMN **[Green Book] LBW # 30**
“Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”

GREETING

P Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,
and the promised gifts of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
C **And also with you.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✠ one God, alive in the world,
reviving creation, arriving soon.
C **Amen.**

P Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
Silence is kept for reflection.

C **God of mercy, we confess that we have sinned when we trust
earthly powers and human authority more than you. We
confess that we become fearful and cling to false comforts
and promises. Merciful God, we confess we have not always
loved you with our whole heart, soul, and mind; and we have
failed to love and care for our neighbors as you ask of us. We
seek your forgiveness. Come near to us. Bring us the
assurance of your mercy and grace.**

P Emanuel, God with us, 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.

C **Amen.**

Prayer of the Day

C Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come to be with us.
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. Amen.

Fourth Sunday of Advent

P We praise you, O God, for this wreath marks our days of
preparation for Christ's advent. As we light four candles, open
our eyes to see your presence in the lowly ones of this earth.
Enlighten us with your grace, that we may sing of your advent
among us in the Word made flesh. Grant this through Christ our
Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

C Amen.

Light four candles.

Congregation sings verse 1-4 [as the candles are lit]
“Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah”

WE HEAR GOD’S HOLY WORD PROCLAIMED

Introduction

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary’s magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ’s advent is for “the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion — with high delight — “we proclaim the Lord’s death.”

The First Lesson is from Micah chapter 5 verses 2-5a

The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.

² 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.

³ 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.

⁴ 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,

^{5a} and he shall be the one of peace.

The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Psalm: Luke 1:46b-55

You, Lord, have lifted up the lowly. (Lk. 1:52)

^{46b} My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
⁴⁷ my 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:
⁴⁹ you, 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.
⁵¹ You 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.
⁵³ You 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 promise of mercy,
⁵⁵ the promise made to our forebears,
to Abraham and his children forever.

The Second Lesson is from Hebrews chapter 10 verses 5-10

The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.

⁵ Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,
“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;

⁶ in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

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

⁸ 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), ⁹ then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

(Congregation stands and sings “Thy Word” before the Gospel.)

The Gospel Lesson is from Luke chapter 1 verses 39-45

Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

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

A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke.

C Praise to you, O Christ

SERMON

The Rev. Murray Finck

*"What Shall We Do While We **Want?**"*

CHOIR ANTHEM

"Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly"

THE 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; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man.

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. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He 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.

*the word "*catholic*" in the creed means "*universal*." It is the original word used as this profession of faith was adopted by the early Christian Church.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

L ... Lord, in your mercy,

C let there be light!

OFFERTORY

“My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness”

Offering Prayer

P Creator God, you made this world, and the incomprehensible universe, and now you draw near to us to offer us this spiritual food. Receive our gifts, that they may support your mission. We praise you for the gift of your great sacrifice, in, with, and under the bread and wine. Strengthen us with this heavenly meal that we may live each day in hope and expectation of the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

THE LORD’S PRAYER

LBW [Green Book] Page 71

Invitation to Communion

P God feeds us with love and mercy. This is the table of our Lord Jesus. All are always welcome.

Holy Communion Distribution (The Congregation is invited by the ushers to come forward to receive Holy Communion or a blessing. If you are unable to come to the altar, Holy Communion will be brought to you in the pew. We believe Christ is truly present in, with, and under the bread and wine/juice. Those who are baptized and share that belief are always welcome at this table. Please speak to the Pastor if you have any questions. The inside circle of glasses contains white grape juice.)

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

C Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread and the cup of salvation. We thank you for being God among us, for loving us and leading us to your peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy and light, then sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and be with us as we care for those in need and love one another in your name. Amen.

Blessing

P God of endings and beginnings, God in the darkness and bringer of light, God, our hope for the journey, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, ✠ bless us and keep us now and forever.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

[Green Book] LBW # 39

“Joy to the World”

Dismissal

P Go in peace. Wait, watch, and want, and prepare the way for Emmanuel. Let there be light.

C Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

played by organist

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Interim Pastor: The Rev. Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus

Organist and Choir Director: Sharon Heck

Flowers are given by: *Poinsettias. Dale, Wendy, Linda, Nancy, Annie, Ellen, and Emiko.*

THOSE WHO SERVE TODAY

Presider: The Rev. Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus

Organist: Sharon Heck

Holy Communion Assistant: Carmen Leslie

Acolyte Sylvia Makus

Reader: Rhoda Finck

Prayer Leader: Nancy Anderson

Financial Team: Sylvia Makus and Kay Pushman

THIS WEEK

Tuesday: 10:30 a.m. Christmas Eve Service
Brunch Following; Cookie Exchange

Next Sunday: 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion Service

Redeemer Finance: December Offering through December 15

Budgeted Monthly Expense	\$7,308.00
Offering	<u>\$4,006.00</u>
Needed for Budget	\$3,302.00

CHURCH COUNCIL

President Kay Pushman, **Vice-President** Wendy Alfageme,
Secretary Nancy Anderson, **Treasurer** Phyllis Mackey, **Finance**
Chair Doris Weinert

Members at Large, Sandy Langdale, Carmen Leslie, Betty Lucero,
Sylvia Makus, and Michael Vanvales

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Barry, Jean, Kathy, Wendy, Beverly, Nancy, Evelyn, Shirlene, Carol, Mickey, Evelyn, Gloria, Christa, Alice, Barbara, Cedric, Lucy, Karen, Kelly, Raymond, Dick, Marilyn, Brian, Carl, Jessica, Carol, Rose, Sandra, Elaine, Carmen, Barbara, Betty, Nancy, Phyllis, Sylvia, Flo, Eileen, Erich, Leslie, Linda, Ronnie, Kay, Violet, Linda, Ron, Collette, Lisa, Patty, Barbara, Joan, Dee, Susan, Kathy, Juanita, Clarence, Debbie, Joan, Doris, Linda, Bruce, Alma, Martha, Marianne, Robert, Laura, Jim, Loretta, Ray, Patty, Delrie, Bill, Betty, Lorna, M. Teresa, Joan, Mike, Frankie, Donna, Ernie, Eileen, Darleen, Sharon, Danuta, Lynne, Ethan, Kurt, Brinly, McCall, Kathy, Nayleen, Nicole, Donald, Maria, Andy, Owen, Tom, Anastasia, Claire, Fran, Chris, Kyle, Michele, Wes, Sam, Kolt, Brigid, Joanna, Dale, Karla, Sands, Gloria, Tom, Rosalia, Wendy, Elaine, Rachel, Mike, Jesus, Richard, Kelsey, Ginny, Christina, Margaret, Steven, Dian EK Song, and Ruben. Please contact the church to add people to the prayer list.

Please pray for our Bishop David Nagler, (ELCA) and Bishop John Taylor (ECUSA), the victims of the Ukrainian/Russian, Israel/Hamas conflicts, the civil strife in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and victims and families of all violence and natural disasters.

Gracious God, none who trust in your Son can be separated from your love. Give to those who live alone peace and contentment in their solitude, hope and fulfillment in their love of you, and joy and companionship in their relations with others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Announcements

- † Welcome to everyone this morning, and especially to our guests and visitors.
- † Please take a moment and fill out the attendance slip found in the rack in the pews. Please place it in the offertory plate. Visitors, especially, are invited to fill out a card found in the pew rack and place it in the offering plate. Thank you!
- † Everyone is invited downstairs to the Fellowship Hall for coffee, treats, and fellowship (we have tea, too!). You are encouraged to continue to wear your name tags at fellowship so we can greet one another by name. The basket will be available downstairs so your name tag can be collected and ready to wear next week.
- † Please join us on Tuesday for our Christmas Eve Service and Brunch with a Cookie Exchange on December 24 at 10:30 a.m.! The Bible Study will **NOT** meet on Wednesdays, until January 8.
- † Once again, this year St. Hedwig Church, at 11482 Los Alamitos Blvd, Los Alamitos 90720, is offering a free event of Christmas Dinner on December 25th. Doors open at 12:00 noon.
Reservations are required so please call: (562) 296-9029. Flyers are on the bulletin board in the entryway. *Note: The website does not seem to have a reservation form, so, please call if you intend to participate.*
- † Forms for the Memorial Cross Wall are in the Narthex if you wish to honor a friend or family member in this way.
- † Please let us know if you are having medical issues, so we can offer pastoral care and our prayers during your difficult times. Speak to a member of the Church Council or call the office number: (562) 598-8697.
- † The elevator is working. Please see Kay Pushman, Wendy Alfageme, or Sylvia Makus to use the elevator, even if you have used it before.

- † Call on Tuesdays, after 5:00 pm, for the Leisure World Bus if you are having issues with it in regard to getting to Church on Sundays. (562) 431-6586 extension 2379.
- † If you are having a little problem with hearing on Sundays, please remember that there are speakers in the ceiling light fixtures so sitting closer to one of those may help. We are looking into improving the sound system for the Church Sanctuary.
- † The NEW 2025 Flower Chart is available for sign-ups in the entryway. One bouquet is \$15.00. Both are \$30.00. Please include any dedication for your flower request when signing up or include a note beforehand if there is a dedication. If you take the flowers in the plastic holders, please return the holders. We try to reuse them and are currently out of them.
- † Printed copies of our current newsletter are available in the entryway. It is online on our website at: www.redeemersealbeach.com. It is sent out via email, if we have your email address. If you are not receiving the newsletter by email, or the midweek communiqué from the pastor, please put your email address on the attendance sheet in the pew pocket and put it in the collection plate, so we can add you or correct the address we have.