



Joy

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OPENING REFLECTION

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God,
whose home is heaven and earth,
whose salvation is sure.

Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

Long-expected God,

we confess that we look to ourselves

for the peace and security only you can provide.

We reach for swords and spears,

reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war.

We become impatient while waiting

and weary of keeping awake.

Free us from self-reliance,

and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors.

**Increase our trust in God's timing,
and awaken us to your advent among us,
that we may abound in the hope you have promised.
Amen.**

God judges us not as we deserve,
but according to God's own righteousness.

✝ You are freed and forgiven,
saved by grace,
and ready to welcome the Savior.
Amen.

OPENING HYMN

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus ELW #254
(Vs. 1 & 2)

One License #08295 & Public Domain

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.

ADVENT CANDLE LIGHTING

P: We light the third candle, a sign of joy. Our joy is in the Lord who draws near to us in grace and mercy.

C: Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I say rejoice.

P: Lord Jesus, light of joy, brighten our hearts with your presence.

C: Come, Lord Jesus, fill us with your joy. Amen.

KYRIE

ELW page 138

CANTICLE OF PRAISE—*Glory be to God in heaven*

**ELW page 204
(Vs. 1)**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray

Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching and song.

FIRST READING—Isaiah 35:1-10

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly
and rejoice with joy and shouting.
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it,
the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.
They shall see the glory of the LORD,
the majesty of our God.]]

³ Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.

⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart,
"Be strong, do not fear!
Here is your God.
He will come with vengeance,
with terrible recompense.
He will come and save you."

⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool
and the thirsty ground springs of water;
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp;
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.

⁸ A highway shall be there,
and it shall be called the Holy Way;
the unclean shall not travel on it,
but it shall be for God's people;
no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray.

⁹ No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.

¹⁰ And the ransomed of the LORD shall return
and come to Zion with singing;
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;
they shall obtain joy and gladness,
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God!

PSALM—Luke 1:46b-55

^{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.

SECOND READING—James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Word of God. Word of Life.
Thanks be to God!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION—Alleluia

ELW page #151

The Holy Gospel according to the eleventh chapter of Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL—Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

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.”

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

MESSAGE

Rev. Sam Mailleue

HYMN OF THE DAY

***Blessed Be the God of Israel* ELW #250
(Vs. 1 & 3)**

One License #01300 & Public Domain

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen

THE PRAYERS

In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

God of power and mercy, we praise you for Jesus and his acts of healing and liberation. Lead us to proclaim the good news from generation to generation, that all may place their hope in you.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When lands are parched and dry, bring rain and snow; where wilderness is barren, sow seeds of life. Fill the lands with trees that grow, plants that flower, and creatures that thrive, as nature proclaims the wonder of your works.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When there is injustice or corruption among nations and leaders, root it out. Turn their attention to inequity and the cries of the poor. Instill a deeper sense of compassion and care in all who govern.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When bodies weaken and hearts grow fearful, speak your blessing. We pray especially for those in our hearts and on our prayer list. In uncertain times, remind us of the promise spoken to our ancestors in faith.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

When people are imprisoned or held captive, break the chains and offer release. Strengthen the work of the church in restorative justice, breaking cycles of poverty, and welcoming the immigrant especially we pray for Global Refuge and Lutheran Social Services.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As we await your coming, we give thanks for the faithful who have lived and died in faith. May their boldness of faith inspire our witness and work.

God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel.

Amen.

SHARING OF THE PEACE

OFFERING

Gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

WE OFFER OUR GIFTS AND TITHES

OFFERTORY HYMN

He Came Down ELW #253
(Vs. 4)

One License #00114 & CCLI #4679219

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Nourishing God,

you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

Through this meal, satisfy our parched places,

that we may rejoice and be for the world

signs of your kingdom come.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those

who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours,

now and forever. Amen.

SENDING

The God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

BLESSING

May God who comes among us,

Father, ✙ Son, and Holy Spirit,

grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness,

and good news to share today and always.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

The King Shall Come ELW #260
(Vs. 1, 3 & 4)

CCLI #3600818 & One License #59724

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Welcome to First Lutheran Church

*Whether you are looking for a place of worship
or are just passing through, we hope our service has blessed you
on your journey as your presence has been a blessing to us.*



Acknowledgements:

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2023 Augsburg Fortress.

All rights reserved.

Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SAS103321—5/31/2026

One License—#A-716694—2/12/2026

Annual License with Podcast/Streaming

All rights reserved

CCLI—ccli.com

Copyright License #2540397—Expires 6/30/2026

Streaming License #20643840—Expires 6/30/2026

Songselect Advanced—Expires 6/30/2026

Shift Worship—Membership

Expires 12/25/2025

Sharefaith—Membership

Expires 6/2026

Church ArtPro—Account #74057560

Expires 12/15/2025

WEEKLY ANNOUNCEMENTS

December Ministry Focus: Love Baskets

As we enter this holy season of hope and anticipation, we are reminded that Christ calls us into community—both within our congregation and out in the world. One meaningful way we live out this calling is through our ministry of visitation. By spending time with those who are homebound, living alone, or experiencing seasons of loneliness, we interrupt the weight of social isolation with compassion and presence. A simple visit, a shared prayer, or even a warm conversation can be a profound expression of God's love. Thank you to Sue Michaelis for organizing this year's love basket visits.

The Love Baskets were distributed the week of December 7—thanks to everyone who helped!

The New Banner

In this Advent Season, we will see a new banner in our sanctuary. Inspired by First Lutheran's stained-glass windows, it features a beautiful center panel depicting the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus. Vibrant colors of blue, yellow, green and red surround the nativity scene.

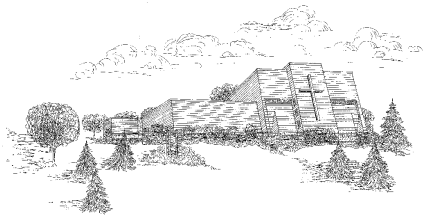
Four words are also featured on this banner. Each Sunday in Advent, as we anticipate Christ's birth, we light the Advent candles. To serve as a visual reminder of this spiritual preparation for Christmas, the banner displays the words associated with each of the candles: hope, peace, joy, and love.

The banner was designed and sewn by the creative team of Brenda Tews, Rita Patrias, Edrie Barton and Sue Nelson. Their hope is that the meaningful imagery in the banner will help all of us celebrate the true meaning of Christmas!

December 21st Featuring First Choir at Worship

Each year the choir members of First Choir give the gift of music to our church family. The 2025 theme is The Memories of Christmas: God With Us. Along with music of the season by the choir you can sing carols and hear reflections on the meaning of Christmas from First members. Choir members give of their time and talents throughout the church year and would appreciate your attendance to show your support and celebrate the birth of Jesus in song.

Financial Update		
Week of	Amount Received	Amount Needed
12-7-2025	\$2,945	\$4,542
YTD	\$202,346	\$227,080



Weekly Schedule

Sunday, December 14	9:00a 10:15a	Worship First Choir Rehearsal
Monday, December 15	9:00a 6:00p	First Quilting Church Council
Wednesday, December 17	9:00a	Staff Meeting
Sunday, December 21	9:00a	Worship First Choir Cantata

Worship Assistants

December 14, 2025

Organist/Pianist:	Virginia Miller
First Choir Director:	Jennifer Weick
Acolytes:	Everett Greisen
Reader:	Ian Mailleue
Usher:	John Miller
Greeters:	
Council Member:	Megan Schwarz
Fellowship:	Miller's
Projection:	Tech Team
Audio:	Tech Team
Videographer:	Becky Pollack
Offering Counters:	Bob Patrias John Miller
Altar Guild:	Nick & Becky Pollack

December 21, 2025

Organist/Pianist:	Virginia Miller
First Choir Director:	Jennifer Weick
Acolytes:	Ezra Carlen
Reader:	
Usher:	Steve Olson
Greeters:	Melissa Schwartz
Council Member:	Callie Greisen
Fellowship:	Diane Genelin
Projection:	Tech Team
Audio:	Tech Team
Videographer:	Becky Pollack
Offering Counters:	Bob Bartle Dave Johnson
Altar Guild:	Nick & Becky Pollack