



Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
www.trinitylutheran.ca

CHURCH AT HOME

Announcements:

Welcome to Trinity's worship resource for December 18, 2022, celebrating the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

Pastor Jack Dressler (519-250-7210) is our interim Pastor. Please contact him for any pastoral needs.

Upcoming Services:

Date	Comment	Pastor / Lay Leader	Reader
December 24	Christmas Eve – Communion – 7pm	Pastor Jack	Kathy
December 25	NO SERVICE	NO SERVICE	NO SERVICE
January 1, 2023	NO SERVICE	NO SERVICE	NO SERVICE
January 8	Communion	Pastor Jack	
January 15		Father Brian	
January 22		TBD	
January 29		Father Brian	
February 5			
February 12	Communion	Pastor Jack	
February 19			
February 26	Communion	Father Brian	
March 5			
March 12			
March 19			
March 22	Ash Wednesday – 10am	Pastor Jack	
March 26	Communion	Pastor Jack	

Introduction

Today Isaiah prophesies that a young woman will bear a son and name him Emmanuel. The gospel is Matthew's account of the annunciation and birth of the one named Emmanuel, God-with-us. During these final days of Advent we pray, "O come, O come, Emmanuel," a beloved hymn based on the O Antiphons, ancient prayers appointed for

the seven days preceding Christmas. On this final Sunday of Advent we prepare to celebrate the birth of the one born to save us from the power of sin and death.

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be God's name forever. Amen.

Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep. Let us confront our sins, and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.

God of new beginnings,

we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign. We have strayed from your paths. We prepare for war instead of peace. We dishonor one another and your creation. Purify us with your refining fire and set us again on your way of love, that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance, and welcome your coming among us. Amen.

People of God, a new thing is growing in our midst, a tender branch, a living sign. By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder. You have put on \mp Christ, and your sins have been washed away. Rejoice in the way of the Lord. **Amen.**

Worship

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all! **And also with you!**

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel. *Alleluia.*

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

An Israelite and Aramean military coalition presented a serious threat to King Ahaz of Judah. In response, Ahaz decided to secure his throne and kingdom by seeking Assyrian help. Isaiah reminds Ahaz that human attempts to establish security will fail. The prophet gives the sign that is the only source of true safety: Immanuel, God is with us!

¹⁰The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven. ¹²But Ahaz said, I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test. ¹³Then Isaiah said: "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted."

Psalm: 80:1-7, 17-19

Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

²**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁴**O LORD God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

⁶**You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

¹⁷**Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand,
the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

¹⁸And so will we never turn away from you;
give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹**Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7

Most of the Christians in Rome do not know Paul. In this letter's opening he introduces himself as an apostle divinely appointed to spread God's gospel. The gospel's content is the promised coming of Christ, and Paul's mission is to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations, including his Roman audience.

¹Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ²which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³the

gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,

⁷To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew's story of Jesus' birth focuses on the role of Joseph, who adopts the divinely-begotten child into the family of David and obediently gives him the name Jesus, which means "God saves."

¹⁸Now 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 with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But 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. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us."²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

The gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ.

The Sermon: God With Us (preached by Father Brian Wearne at Trinity on December 18, 2022)

In the name of the true and living God: † Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

At the time of Christ's conception, a betrothal or wedding engagement involved the same commitment of Holy' Marriage in many ways. A man and a woman would appear before their Jewish Priest during worship of God. Their hands would be publicly joined together by this Priest who would proclaim those words we now delay until the Wed-

ding Proper: "Those whom God has joined together let no one separate". Thus we hear Joseph and Mary referred to as husband and wife, for their engagement was spiritually and legally binding, and only a divorce could break it. A couple would not engage in sexual relations until their Wedding Ceremony, and infidelity at this stage was considered the grievous sin of adultery! Bear this in mind, as Joseph discovers his wife is pregnant. St. Matthew describes Joseph as a just man, meaning he is a Godly man — upright and righteous. Such a man would take God's law seriously. The law God gave through Moses shows us how grievous adultery is in God's eyes, as well as the extent of Joseph's spiritual dilemma.

A betrothed woman who committed adultery was to be stoned to death (Deuteronomy 22:20-21). The problem for Joseph was that if he didn't obey God's law, he would be guilty of sin, just as an adulteress is guilty of sin, and we could imagine how Joseph was feeling toward Mary at that time. But apparently, Joseph was also a compassionate man, and not wanting to make this ultimate "public example of Mary", he decided to "put Mary away secretly", meaning that he decided he could remain faithful to God in following another commandment. For it is also written that "when a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favour in his eyes because he has found some *indecent* in her, he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of the house..." (Deuteronomy 24:1).

Only then did God send Joseph an angel — and this should grab our attention — because God was watching Joseph to see how he would respond. Joseph responded by being just toward God and compassionate toward Mary. Joseph took the time God gave him to do both, and only then does the angel inform Joseph why he shouldn't be afraid to take Mary as his wife. "That which is conceived in her is of The Holy Spirit". We hear this twice in our passage, and it's significant because The Holy Spirit is the cause of human life.

God told Prophet Ezekiel "I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live" (Ezekiel 37:14). As The Holy Spirit is often referred to as "the breath of God", Job said "As long as my breath is in me, and the breath of God in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness" (Job 27:3-4). The cause of human life was also active in Creation. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:1-2). Here, The Holy Spirit is active in making a New Creation! For while Mary is physically the Child's mother, and Joseph will legally be the Child's father, we're beginning to see that at a more fundamental level, He is God's Son! The his-

torical significance of the miraculous birth is that God was thoroughly involved in the event of bringing His Son into the world through the activity of The Holy Spirit.

The theological significance of the miraculous birth is that Mary's virginity is thoroughly consistent with the pre-existence of Jesus Christ. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (John 1: 1-2). If it's hard to see how a virgin could become pregnant, it's harder to see how a Divine Being could become genuinely human, without a birth of extraordinary means.

Thus as the angel addresses Joseph as "son of David", we know King Jesus is human. But as the angel indicates Mary isn't an adulteress because she was found with child of The Holy Spirit, we know Jesus is God. Joseph didn't know Mary was visited by an angel, and that she cooperated with God's messenger before the miraculous conception (Luke 1:26-38). But now as we see the angel visit Joseph with this message from God, we see Joseph's cooperation after the conception, as he's drawn into the Holy Mystery of The Incarnation.

The angel tells Joseph the Child is a Son whom he shall name "JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins". In those days, either a mother (Genesis 4:25) or a father (Genesis 4:26; 5:3) could name a child. According to St. Luke (1 :3 1), Mary was told the name of Jesus; while St. Matthew informs us that Joseph was told both His name as well as the reason for His name. The name JESUS literally means "Saviour". In The Holy Bible, the verb "save" can refer to God's deliverance from physical danger, disease, or even death (Matthew 8:25; 9:21-22; 24:22); but the verb focuses here on the most central salvation which God has to offer us: salvation from our sins. Since sin inevitably causes our separation from God, Jesus will achieve His salvation through His preaching on God's Kingdom and His death (Matthew 4: 1 7; 26:28).

God was bringing this to pass to fulfil what God spoke through Prophet Isaiah, which only underscores the intervention of God in history, but also vindicates that God is beginning His New Creation. "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name **Immanuel**, which is translated God with us". The Church recognizes a covenant formulary behind this prophecy of Isaiah that states in its classical form: "I will be your God and you will be My people". Today we hear this formula in a shorter form: "God with us". And it powerfully recurs at the conclusion of St. Matthew's Gospel, as Jesus is ascending into heaven, and He says: "I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). As we put what we've heard so far together, it be-

comes crystal clear that this Child conceived in The Blessed Virgin Mary is not a new Person coming into existence, but the eternal Son of God.

When St. Joseph awoke from his sleep, he did precisely what the angel of God told him to. St. Joseph took Mother Mary as his wife, and when she brought forth her Son St. Joseph named Him JESUS, just as the angel of the Lord told him to. And for those of us paying close attention, this raises an interesting question. If this Child fulfils the prophecy then why did Joseph name Him JESUS rather than Immanuel? We must consider this matter to dispel any lingering doubt.

The fact is that the name "Immanuel" is not a name in the sense that "JESUS" is a name. In 2nd Samuel, we read that when King David and Bathsheba had a son, God "sent word by the hand of Prophet Nathan: So he called his name Jedidiah, because of the LORD" (12:25). Most of us don't remember David's son by that name because he wasn't called Jedidiah; he was called Solomon. And as with Jedidiah, Immanuel is a "name" in the sense of a title or description, whereas "JESUS" is the Child's name in the usual sense. In this sense, Jesus fulfils Isaiah's prophecy. As Advent nears its end we recall that Advent means "Coming", and we live in The End Times between Christ's 1st and 2nd Comings. We hear St. Joseph's obedience and submission to God under such difficult circumstances are scarcely less remarkable than Mother Mary's were (Luke 1:38). This should serve to inspire us to celebrate Christ's 1st Coming at Christmas, as well as to prepare us to be ready for His Return. We may also prepare by praying to God The Holy Spirit to help us to find the same degrees of obedience and submission to God and compassion towards others that St. Joseph had, so that when JESUS Returns we may experience in our lives what St. Joseph experienced in his, whenever he spent time with his Son: **Face to Face — God With Us.**

And now to † God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, be all might, majesty, dominion and honour, this day and forevermore. Amen.

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

The Prayers of Intercession

As we prepare for the fullness of Christ's presence, let us pray for a world that yearns for new hope.

God our shepherd, let your Spirit move with power throughout the church. Give discernment and wisdom to our bishops, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders. Take away our

fear, so that we serve and love, confident that you are guiding us. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our source, awaken us to the beauty of the earth and the marvelous variety of life. Unite humankind in repairing and caring for your creation. Protect creatures and habitats in peril due to rising seas and warming temperatures. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our vision, raise up leaders in every nation who dream of freedom and justice for all people. We pray for the work of international organizations that promote peace and human rights, especially Amnesty International. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our helper, come to the aid of all who cry out to you. Shelter migrants, refugees, and those fleeing war and famine. Bring relief to individuals and families experiencing hunger, homelessness, or impoverishment. Comfort any who are isolated or lonely. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our Emmanuel, you are with us in our life together. We give you thanks for gathering us in worship and fellowship, and we remember those who cannot be present. Watch over those who travel. Heal the sick and speed their recovery. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of presence, bless those of this community who cannot be with us this morning, and those who walk with them, especially:

In Residence: Margaret; Maria; Stan; Katie; Katherine; Cordelle; Dorothy

Needing our prayers: Ed; Pastor Mike & Patti, Donna; Sharon B; Jeffrey; Art; Joan

Friends of our Members Needing our prayers: Audrey; Greg; Hilda; Mary; Anna

...and all members who may have needs unknown to us

And all those we name in our hearts...

God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our hope, you bring life out of death, and you promise to be our God forever. Shine upon the faithful who now rest in the fulfillment of your promise and bring us also into your blessed reign of peace. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God of our longing, you know our deepest needs. By your Spirit, gather our prayers and join them with the prayers of all your children. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

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.

Blessing

God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, ✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is near. **Thanks be to God.**