

Sunday, November 29, 2026
Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA
Knowing Christ – Making Christ Known Through Faith, Hope & Love

Introduction:

Stir up your power, and come! The psalmist's plea in Psalm 80:2 has become familiar to us in the Advent prayers. Isaiah wants God to rip the heavens open. Both cry out for an apparently distant, angry God to show up, to save, to restore. When we hear Jesus describing the coming of the Son of Man with stars falling from heaven, it can sound dire and horrible, not like anything we would ever hope for. But when we really look at the suffering of people God loves, we can share the hope that God would tear open the heavens and come.

PRELUDE
BELL
ANNOUNCEMENTS
BEHOLD WEEKLY CHALLENGE QUESTION

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God

Please stand as you are able

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH ~ HOPE ~** *Congregation reads the* ***bold
Angela & William Osborn

L: Today we begin the season of Advent. Advent is a time of waiting, watching, and preparing. But Jesus reminds us that waiting doesn't mean sitting around doing nothing. He tells us to stay awake, to pay attention, and to recognize that God is at work, even when we cannot see what is coming next.

Sometimes life gets busy. We get caught up in our routines, our worries, and all the things that need to be done. We can become so focused on

what's right in front of us that we miss the ways God is showing up in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

C: Lord, awaken our hearts. Help us to see your presence, trust your promises, and live with hope as we wait for you.

L: We light the first Advent candle, the HOPE candle, as a reminder to stay awake to God's presence, to look for signs of HOPE, and to trust that Christ is coming among us.

The first candle is lit.

C: Christ is our HOPE. Come, Lord Jesus!

ADVENT SONG: *"Light One Candle"* (ELW 240)

1 Light one candle to watch for Messiah:
let the light banish darkness.
He shall bring salvation to Israel,
God fulfills the promise.

Text: Wayne L. Wold, b. 1954
Text © 1984 Fortress Press, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

***CALL TO WORSHIP:**

P: Let us worship the Lord, who is enthroned forever,
C: Whose name endures for all generations.
P: Nations fear the name of the Lord,
C: And all its leaders God's glory.
P: Praise the Lord, who answers prayer,
C: Whose love endures forever.

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✢ one God, who calls out to the weary, whose word endures forever.
C: Amen.

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS:**

P: A voice cries out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord!"

We are called to confess our sin and turn back toward God's love.

Pause for silence and reflection.

P: Comforting God,

C: We are your people, but we have neglected to call on your name. We are your people, but we have not remembered your ways. We are your people, but we have forgotten your hold on us. We are your people, but now we fade like a leaf, and our sins, like the wind, take us away. Restore us as your people. Cleanse us from our sin, and clothe us in your righteousness. Amen.

P: "Comfort, comfort my people!" says your God, who has clothed you with the garments of salvation and wrapped you in the robe of righteousness. God has given you a mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. In the name of ✝ Christ, your sins are forgiven: Rejoice in the Lord! Rejoice in the Lord!

C: Amen.

***GATHERING HYMN: *"My Lord, What a Morning"* (ELW 438)**

Refrain
My Lord, what a morning;
my Lord, what a morning;
oh, my Lord, what a morning,
when the stars begin to fall.

1 You will hear the trumpet sound,
to wake the nations underground,
looking to my God's right hand,
when the stars begin to fall.

Refrain
My Lord, what a morning;
my Lord, what a morning;
oh, my Lord, what a morning,

when the stars begin to fall.

2 You will hear the sinner cry,
to wake the nations underground,
looking to my God's right hand,
when the stars begin to fall.

Refrain
My Lord, what a morning;
my Lord, what a morning;
oh, my Lord, what a morning,
when the stars begin to fall.

3 You will hear the Christian shout,
to wake the nations underground,
looking to my God's right hand,
when the stars begin to fall.

Refrain
My Lord, what a morning;
my Lord, what a morning;
oh, my Lord, what a morning,
when the stars begin to fall.

Text: African American spiritual

***GREETING:**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

***KYRIE: *sung* (ELW pg. 213)**

Kyrie eleison: **Lord, have mercy.**
Christe eleison: **Christ, have mercy.**
Kyrie eleison: **Lord, have mercy.**

***CANTICLE OF PRAISE: *"Glory to God"* ELW pg. 213**

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you,
we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.

Lord Jesus Christ,
only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;
glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Glory to God, glory to God,
glory to God in the highest;

glory to God, glory to God,
and peace to God's people on earth,
and peace to God's people on earth.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

P: Holy Jesus,

C: No one on earth knows the hour of your return. Only keep us watchful and awake, that we might always be at work in your kingdom. In your holy name we pray. Amen.

Please be seated

WORD

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

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 64:1-9

This lament comes from a people who have had their hopes shattered. The visions of a rebuilt Jerusalem and a renewed people of God, spoken of in Isaiah 40–55, have not been realized. Instead, the people experience ruin, conflict, and famine. This lament calls God to account—to be the God who has brought deliverance in the past.

[1]O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— [2]as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! [3]When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence. [4]From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. [5]You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways. But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. [6]We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. [7]There is no one who calls on your name or attempts to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. [8]Yet, O Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand. [9]Do not be exceedingly angry, O Lord, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people. The word of the Lord…**Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 80:1-7, 7-19 *Congregation reads the* ***bold***

Let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved. (Ps. 80:7)

[1]Hear, 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.

[3]Restore 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?

[5]You 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.

[7]Restore 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.

[18]And 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: 1 CORINTHIANS 1:3-9

As the Christians in Corinth await the advent of Jesus, Paul reminds them how the Lord has already enriched them through spiritual gifts and will continue to strengthen them until the coming day of the Lord.

[3]Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. [4]I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given

you in Christ Jesus, [5]for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—[6]just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—[7]so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. [8]He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9]God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. The word of the Lord…. **Thanks be to God.**

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: (ELW pg. 216)

Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia. Alleluia

GOSPEL READING: MARK 13:24-37

Jesus encourages his followers to look forward to the day when he returns in power and glory to end all suffering.

[Jesus said:] [24]"In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, [25]and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. [26]"Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. [27]Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. [28]"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. [29]So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. [30]Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. [31] Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.[32]"But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father. [33]Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. [34]It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. [35]Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, [36]or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. [37]And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake." The Gospel of the Lord…**Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S TIME & SERMON

HYMN OF THE DAY: *"Now the Heavens Start to Whisper"* (All Creation Sings 901)

1 Now the heavens start to whisper,
as the veil is growing thin.
Earth from slumber wakes to listen
to the stirring, faint within:
seed of promise, deeply planted,
child to spring from Jesse's stem!
Like the soil beneath the frostline,
hearts grow soft to welcome him.

2 Heavy clouds that block the moonlight
now begin to drift away.
Diamond brilliance through the darkness
shines the hope of coming day.
Christ, the morning star of splendor,
gleams within a world grown dim.
Heaven's ember fans to fullness;
hearts grow warm to welcome him.

3 Christ, eternal Sun of justice,
Christ, the rose of wisdom's seed,
come to bless with fire and fragrance
hours of yearning, hurt, and need.
In the lonely, in the stranger,
in the outcast, hid from view;
Child who comes to grace the manger,
teach our hearts to welcome you.

Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953
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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE:

L: With humble anticipation of God's promises fulfilled in Jesus Christ, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

L: There are many who claim to have special knowledge of your plan to redeem the earth, O Lord. Do not allow us to be led astray, keeping us focused instead upon all the ways you are calling us to live out our discipleship here and now. God of hope,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We take our clues from nature to know what season it is. May we be as keenly aware of other people and when the time is right to share your word and mediate your grace and love to them. God of hope,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We pray for veterans who faced the distress of combat, the judgment of many, and subsequent injuries and traumas which impact them to this day. May we care for them to the best of our ability, and not allow them to be forgotten. God of hope,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We ask your healing power upon all those who are dealing with addictions and impulses difficult to control. Send your Spirit also to those whom we know are suffering, especially Jerry, Bruce, Kristy, Ricky, Larry, Joan, Dennis, Lois, Gary, Shirley, Joyce, Kim, Marg, Karen, Barb, Jeramie, Denny, Steph, Al, Dianne, and the MN Vikings. God of hope,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: We celebrate all saints who have renewed the church, promoted a living faith among its members, and advocated for working people's rights. Bless all who follow in their example. God of hope,

C: Hear our prayer.

L: Bless all for whom we pray this day, and keep us alert to the ways you are working in the world, in Jesus' name.

C: Amen.

Please stand as you are able

***APOSTLES' CREED: (ELW pg. 217)**

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.

***SHARING OF THE PEACE**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

Please be seated

OFFERING

We thank you for our gifts of time, talent, and treasure that help this congregation, to continue our ministry together, and to make Christ known in our communities and the world.

OFFERING HYMN: *"My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness"* vs. 1 (ELW 251)

1 My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord;
I sing my Savior's praise!
You looked upon my lowliness,

and I am full of grace.
Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age
this blessing shall proclaim—
great wonders you have done for me,
and holy is your name.

Text: *With One Voice*, 1995, based on the Magnificat
Text © 1995 Augsburg Fortress.

Please stand as you are able

***OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

P: The things which we value are rarely eternal ones, O God,

C: Teach us to let go of worldly temptations and to offer what resources we have: time, abilities, and wealth, to your service. Bless these gifts we bring before you, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

***THE LORD'S PRAYER: *sung* (CLH 632)**

Our Father, which 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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to our neighbor in need

***BLESSING:**

God our provider,
God our feast,
God our companion,
✢ bless you now and forever.

THREE FOLD AMEN

***SENDING HYMN: *"Soon and Very Soon"* (ELW 439)**

1 Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
we are goin' to see the King!

2 No more cryin' there we are goin' to see the King,
No more cryin' there we are goin' to see the King,
No more cryin' there we are goin' to see the King,
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
we are goin' to see the King!

3 No more dyin' there we are goin' to see the King,
No more dyin' there we are goin' to see the King,
No more dyin' there we are goin' to see the King,
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
we are goin' to see the King!

4 Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Soon and very soon we are goin' to see the King,
Hallelujah, Hallelujah,
we're are goin' to see the King!

Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah, Hallelujah.

***DISMISSAL:**

P: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God!

IN OUR PRAYERS

Jerry Anderson Kristy Kamphake

Larry Sather Joan Burquest
Dennis Rosenquist Lois Rosenquist
Ricky Hart Steph Stueve
Denny Hagen – uncle of Mark Ratajesak
Rev. Bruce Miller- father of Karin Wagner
Marg Peterson -friend of the Thoms
Gary Borst – friend of the Andersons
Shirley Nesges – friend of the Thoms
Joyce Muyres – friend of the Thoms
Bev Guse-Ohlrech – friend of the Pedersons
Kim Casavan – friend of Mandy Arvidson
Karen Schlosser – mother of Justin Schlosser
Barb Hoyhtya – friend of the Thoms
Jeramie Harris – friend of the Townsends
Al Ratajesak – uncle of Mark Ratajesak
Dianne Parnow – sister of Brian Arvidson
The Minnesota Vikings
Family and Friends of: Bruce Carter, Gary Willie, Connie Pesta,
Kathy Wilkins, Jim Schlosser, Leroy Olson, Dale Flemming, Wally Schlosser, Carter Stockert, Woodrow Peery, Wes Hoyhtya, and David Meidinger

THIS WEEK AT ESTHER

Sunday, November 29th - *First Sunday of Advent*
Sunday Fellowship Before and After Worship
NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
9:15 am – Behold Connect & Reflect: Coffee & Conversation
10 am – Worship led by Pastor Ken Bowman
2 pm – Worship at St. William's

Wednesday, December 2nd
Confirmation: 5:15 pm – Meal: St. William's Living Center – Help decorate for the holidays

Sunday, December 6th – *Second Sunday of Advent*
Sunday Fellowship Before and After Worship
9 am – Sunday School – Christmas Program Practice

9:15 am – Behold Connect & Reflect: Coffee & Conversation
10 am – Worship with Holy Communion led by Pastor Dennis Preston
11 am – 2 pm – Christmas Market
2 pm – Worship at St. William's

Check out the Esther Calendar on our website to stay up to date on everything happening! Go to estherlutheran.com and click on "Esther Calendar."

SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

Nov. 29- NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
Dec. 6 – 9 am – Christmas Program Practice
Dec. 13- 8:30 am - Christmas Program Practice and Program to follow in Worship at 10 am
Dec. 20 – All People Sunday School
Dec. 27- NO SUNDAY SCHOOL

NEWS AND NOTES

There are extra potatoes available in the church kitchen leftover from lefse making! If you could use a few pounds for Christmas Market soup or for meals at home, please help yourself. We'd love to see them put to good use rather than go to waste!

YOUTH FUNDRAISERS:

Youth are again selling 2027 calendars! Cost $10. There will be a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. **Orders due by November 29th.**

They are also selling gift cards. All proceeds will go towards their Ark Trip coming up next summer. Order forms are in the Narthex. **Orders are due by December 6th**. Make checks payable to Esther Lutheran Youth. Any questions please contact Joan at 218-640-7827.

Advent Readers: We are looking for individuals or families to read on each of the following weeks: December 6, December 13, and December 24th. Please contact Mandy in the church office if you are interested in helping.

December 6th is our Christmas Market! A sign-up sheet for soup & BBQ will be available soon. If you are unable to bring food, but would still like to contribute, monetary donations are also welcome. Please make checks payable to WELCA and give them to either Luella or Lana.

Council is looking to fill one position beginning January 2027. If you are interested or have questions, please contact any member of the Council.

There are Angel Tree Tags on the narthex table with needed gift items for children from our community this Christmas. If you would like to take a tag or two, please purchase the item and return the wrapped gift with the tag attached to Esther by **December 9th**. Monetary gifts are also accepted - please make your check out to "Immanuel Lutheran Church with "Angel Tree" in the memo line. Thank you for your generosity!

Applications for both campers and camp counselors at Luther Crest is open. Don't forget that financial assistance is available through our Camp Fund to help cover camp costs. We encourage everyone to apply and take advantage of this opportunity! If you need an application, you can find the Esther Lutheran Church Camp and Spiritual Growth Fund Application on our website at estherlutheran.com under "Faith Formation Resources."

Simply Flourish in Parkers Prairie is once again sponsoring its "Sponsor a Resident" program. This year, every resident at St. William's Living Center and McCornell Court will receive a 4.5-inch poinsettia and a handwritten holiday card. If you would like to help spread some Christmas cheer, please contact them at 218-338-3800 to sponsor a resident. Thank you for helping make the season brighter for our local seniors!



The Bell Tower is leaking and needs to be repaired. Because of the high reach and difficult area to work with, we do not have an exact idea of cost, but it could surpass $50,000. Please consider helping with this important and much needed repair. Help keep the bell ringing! Please

send your donation to the church: 11019 625th Ave Parkers Prairie, MN 56361 or scan the QR code.

Vanco online giving platform is a great way to set up a scheduled giving plan for even when you cannot make it to church. Scan the QR code, go online to estherlutheran.com, go to the tab "Give to Esther Lutheran Church" and click on the link https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZP4R or download the app
Vanco Mobile Faith Engagement. Any questions please ask Mandy Arvidson.

We welcome you to join in the weekly "Behold the New Has Come" devotions available on our website estherlutheran.com on the "Behold" tab. Devotions are posted to the website and emailed out each Monday. If you are not currently on the email list and want to be, please notify Mandy in the office. Each weekly devotion includes a challenge for the week:

This past week's challenge is:

Do you know the date when you were baptized? Do you do anything special to remember the day? If you aren't doing it already, perhaps you could light a candle, read a bible verse, say a prayer or sing a song that has particular meaning for your faith. This would also be a great way to practice remembering the promises of our baptism.

Just as we participate in Holy Communion "in remembrance" of Jesus, take a moment this week to remember your baptism. Who was present on that day? Parents, family, sponsors? Who was the Pastor or person who said the words of your baptism?

We hope these devotions and weekly challenges will inspire conversations and stories that we can share with one another as, together, we grow in faith through this initiative.

You belong here. We believe that each person has unique gifts, are created in God's image, and is a beloved child of God. We welcome you to join us each week to share in the community of faith at Esther -

“Knowing Christ - making Christ known through faith, hope and love”. If you would like to become a member of Esther, please contact Mandy in the church office at 218-338-2171 or secretary@estherlutheran.net or Jewel Townsend at 320-760-2503 or jewellht17@gmail.com.

Esther Lutheran Church, ELCA
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