



Immanuel
Lutheran
of Evanston

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2017

10:30 A.M.

616 Lake St., Evanston, IL 60201 • 847-864-4464 • www.immanuelevanston.org
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• Parish Administrator: parish-admin@immanuelevanston.org

Welcome!

Immanuel Lutheran Church is a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

We welcome people of every age and size, color and culture, every sexual orientation and gender identity, socio-economic status and marital status, every ability and challenge.

We welcome believers and questioners, and questioning believers.

We're glad God has called you here today! If you're a guest, please feel free to introduce yourself to our pastor or assisting minister. If you would, sign the guest book in the Gathering Area or fill in a guest card from the pew, and we'll be happy to send information on how you can get involved at Immanuel.

Facilities

- Our parking lot is located on the south side of the church off Sherman Avenue. You may park in the lot at any time, whether for church events or for shopping or other errands in downtown Evanston; weekdays, see the church office at the Lake St. entrance to get a parking pass. On Sundays, additional parking is available across the street at the Holiday Inn or in Lot 6 on Lake St. across from the Police and Fire Headquarters. Parking meters are free on Sunday!
- The parking lot entrance is an accessible entrance. An elevator is located just inside that door.
- Restrooms are downstairs near the meeting of the two hallways. Accessible restrooms are located near the elevator on both upper and lower levels. A gender-neutral restroom is located on the lower level by the elevator.
- We love having children in worship! There is a nursery and changing/crying room for parents to use, if needed, located downstairs. There are also changing tables in both restrooms on this level, by the elevator. An usher will be happy to direct you.
- Hearing assistance is available. Ask an usher for equipment.
- Wi-Fi is available throughout most of the building. The network is "Immanuel," password "allarewelcome". Please use the Internet responsibly!

About Our Worship

Our Sunday worship is organized around the proclamation of the Word of God and the celebration of the Lord's Supper. It has a familiar form each week, but the content changes for each service according to a calendar shared with many other Christians. Our hymnal, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, is organized so that page numbers for the liturgy are in the front part of the book, while hymn numbers are in the second part. The liturgy and hymns are printed in this bulletin, but page numbers are provided for those who wish to follow along in the hymnal.

Receiving Holy Communion

We invite you to share with us in the sacramental meal, because Christ himself invites you! At the direction of the usher, come forward and kneel at the altar rail, if you are able, beginning at the ends of the rail closest to the front wall, filling in toward the center. (If you cannot kneel, standing is fine!) Receive the bread in the palm of your hand. You may eat it immediately, then take the silver chalice and drink from it or, if you prefer, hold the bread and dip it in the ceramic chalice and then eat the moistened bread. Gluten-free wafers are available. Please indicate to the pastor if you need that. Return to your place via the side aisles after you have communed. If you need to have Communion brought to you, please sit on the aisle, and let either the pastor or an usher know before the service that you would like to commune at your seat. If you desire a blessing but not the sacrament, you are invited to come forward with everyone else and fold your arms over your chest to indicate this.

Gathering: *The Holy Spirit assembles us as the People of God ...*

God keeps the promise made to David, to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called "king" only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and we also say, "Count us in."

P: Presiding Minister **L:** Leader/Assisting Minister **R:** Reader **A:** Assembly
 + All may make the sign of the cross.

Pre-Service Music

Pastorals by J.S. Bach and Franck

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

As the candles are lighted, the Assembly sings v.4 of "Light A Candle."

1. Light a can - dle bright and tall For the Hope with - in our world.
 2. Light a can - dle bright and tall For the Peace we wish to know.
 3. Light a can - dle bright and tall For the Joy this sea - son brings.
 4. Light a can - dle bright and tall For a Love which knows no end.
 5. Light a can - dle bright and tall For the Christ we greet to - day.

5
 Hope that heard the a - gea' call As the Good News and pla - nets whirled.
 Peace on Earth for great and small God's Good News to us be - stows.
 Joy like foun - tains brim - ming full. Through our world now let it ring!
 Love that comes to one and all. Fear and ha - tred to us - end.
 Christ has come, our all in all. With the an - gels, let us say:

9
 Shine with - in our hearts to - day Come, O Hope, to us, we pray.
 Shine with - in our hearts to - day Come, O Peace, to us, we pray.
 Shine with - in our hearts to - day Come, O Joy, to us, we pray.
 Shine with - in our hearts to - day Come, O Love, to us, we pray.
 Shine with - in our hearts to - day Come, O Christ, to us, we pray.

Prayer

L Let us pray. Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.
In your Son, Emmanuel,
you have shown us your light
and saved us from the power of sin.
Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.
Increase our longing for your presence,
that at the celebration of your Son's birth
his Spirit might dwell anew in our midst,
for he is our light and our salvation.
Blessed be God forever.

A Amen.

The Assembly stands and faces the font.

Confession and Forgiveness

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God, who comes to wake us from sleep,
who leads us into the light of grace.

A Amen.

P Let us prepare the way of the Lord by confessing our sin against God and neighbor.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of all time,

**A we confess that we have not prepared for your merciful reign among us.
We ignore our neighbors in need and fail in the labor of justice and peace.
In your mercy forgive us.
Grant us wisdom to welcome your light
and to seek the things that will endure
until Christ comes again in glory. Amen.**

P Comfort, O comfort my people, says your God.
In + Jesus Christ your sins are forgiven
and all things are made new.
Rejoice in this good news!

A Amen.

Gathering Song

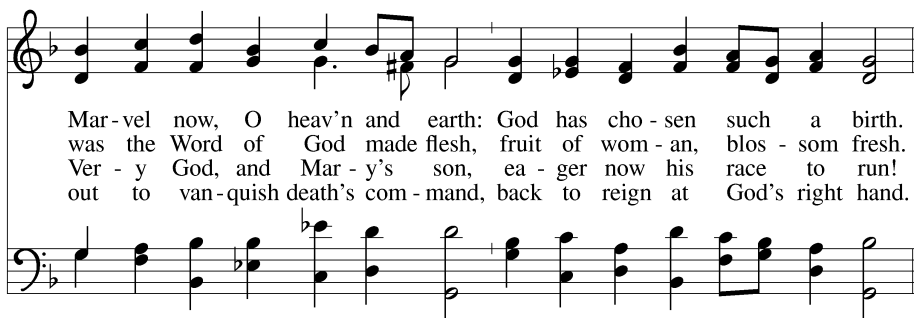
"Savior of the Nations, Come!"

Hymnal 263

Please turn to face the doors. You may reverence the cross as it passes you.



1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.
2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, but the mys - tic Breath of God,
3 Won - drous birth—oh, won - drous child— from his throne, a vir - gin mild!
4 From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, back to God his path - way leads;



Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth: God has cho - sen such a birth.
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of wom - an, blos - som fresh.
Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
out to van - quish death's com - mand, back to reign at God's right hand.

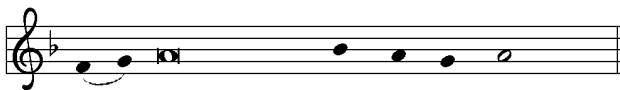
5 Now your manger, shining bright,
hallows night with newborn light.
Night cannot this light subdue;
let our faith shine ever new.

6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity
praise we sing eternally!

Greeting

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

A **And also with you!**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from a - bove, and for our sal - va - tion, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well - being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.

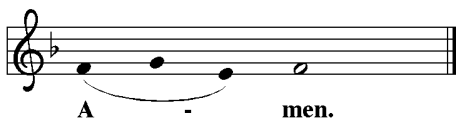
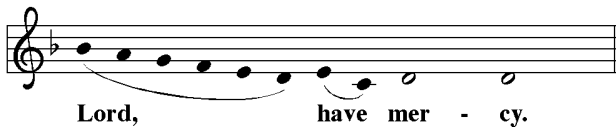


For this ho - ly house, and for all who of - fer here their wor - ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.

[cont.]



Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

A Amen.

The Assembly is seated.

Welcome and Announcements

Reading from the Hebrew Scriptures

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

R A reading from Second Samuel.

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

R Word of God, word of life.

A Thanks be to God!

Magnificat: Luke 1:46b-55

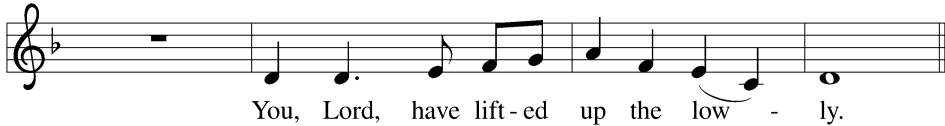
Psalm Tone 9

*The organ will play the tone, and then the refrain, and then the Assembly will sing the refrain through.
The right side of the Assembly sings lightface verses to the tone, and the left sings boldfaced verses.
All sing the refrain where indicated by "R."*

Tone:



Refrain:



^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,

⁴⁷my 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:

⁴⁹you, 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. R**

⁵¹You 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.**

⁵³You 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 prom- | ise of mercy,**

⁵⁵the promise made | to our forebears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. R

R A reading from the Letter to the Romans.

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

R Word of God, word of life.

A Thanks be to God!

The Assembly stands to greet the Good News of Jesus.

Gospel Acclamation

Hymnal, p. 160

Al-le-lu - ia, al - le-lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Repeat alleluia

Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

Gospel

Luke 1:26-28

P This is the Good News of Jesus Christ according to Luke.

A Glory to you, O Lord!

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

P The Gospel of the Lord.

A Praise to you, O Christ!

The Alleluia of the Gospel Acclamation is sung once again.
The Assembly is then seated.

Sermon

A bell will chime to begin a time of silence for reflection.
When the bell sounds a second time, the Assembly stands to respond to the Word.

Hymn of the Day

"Unexpected and Mysterious" Hymnal 258



1 Un - ex - pect - ed and mys - te - rious is the gen - tle
2 In a mo - men - tar - y meet - ing of e - ter - ni -
3 We are called to pon - der mys - t'ry and a - wait the



word of grace. Ev - er - lov - ing and sus - tain -
ty and time, Mar - y learned that she would car -
com - ing Christ, to em - bod - y God's com - pas -



ing is the peace of God's em - brace. If we fal - ter
ry both the mor - tal and di - vine. Then she learned of
sion for each frag - ile hu - man life. God is with us



in our cour - age and we doubt what we have known, God is
God's com - pas - sion, of E - liz - a - beth's great joy, and she
in our long - ing to bring heal - ing to the earth, while we



faith - ful to con - sole us as a moth - er tends her own.
ran to greet the wom - an who would rec - og - nize her boy.
watch with joy and won - der for the prom - ised Sav - ior's birth.

The Apostles' Creed

L Let us profess the faith of the Church.

**A I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

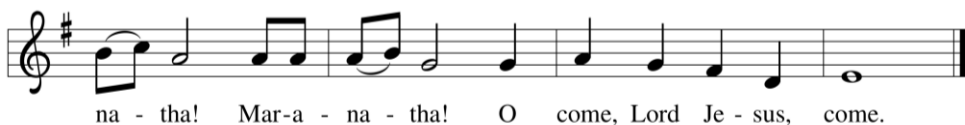
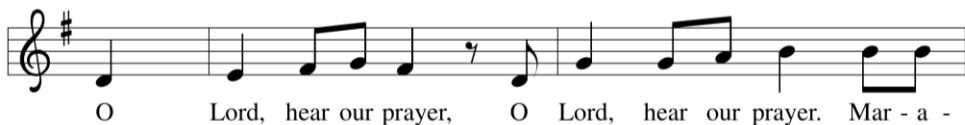
**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of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

Prayers of the People

L Guided by the light of Christ, let us pray for the coming dawn of joy, healing, and comfort for all God's people.

The Assembly sings this response now and after each petition. "Maranatha" means "Come, O Lord!" in Aramaic.



L Your eternal reign has come into the world. Give us ears to hear your call to serve your kingdom. We pray for our bishops, Elizabeth and Wayne, our pastor, Keith, our president, Kevin, for our council, and for all those you have called together here. Send us out to those who are hurting and in need of good news. O Lord, hear our prayer!

A "O Lord, hear our prayer..."

L You created the mystery and beauty of the earth. Replenish rivers, lakes, seas, and all bodies of water, so that plants, animals, and humans can have life and be refreshed. O Lord, hear our prayer!

A "O Lord, hear our prayer..."

L You bring down the powerful and raise up the lowly. Where war rages, shatter hatred with forgiveness and peace. Where fear rules, make your all-powerful and eternal presence known. O Lord, hear our prayer!

A "O Lord, hear our prayer..."

L You remember us with mercy, Lord, as you have done for all generations. Fill us, comfort us, strengthen us, and enlighten us. Make your goodness known to all in need. Today we pray especially for Serena Bernstein, Mid Carlson, Margaret Carlson, Lynn Carson, Barb Engelsen, Bob Fried, Jennifer Grethe, Dick Heisler, Judy Hokenson, Arda Hovnanian, the Larson and Shearer families, Ron Laudert, Carol Rakowsky, George Shiff, Joe Skelton, John and Doris Strom, and those we name now aloud or in our hearts [...]. Bring relief to caregivers and surround those who are lonely with your powerful presence. O Lord, hear our prayer!

A "O Lord, hear our prayer..."

L You called Mary to bear your Son. We pray for pregnant women, for mothers and fathers of infants and small children, and especially for couples who bear the pain of infertility, miscarriage, or stillbirth. O Lord, hear our prayer!

A "O Lord, hear our prayer..."

L And now, sisters and brothers, for what else shall we pray?

The petitions and thanksgivings of the Assembly, silent or spoken aloud, are invited.

L O Lord, hear our prayer!

A "O Lord, hear our prayer..."

P Your kingdom has no end. With your servants throughout time, women and men, old and young, unite us forever in your reign of peace and joy. O Lord, hear our prayer!

A "O Lord, hear our prayer..."

P We raise our prayers to you, O God, in the name of the one who is, who was, and who is to come, Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Amen.

Peace

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

A And also with you.

Greet one another in the peace of the Risen Christ, saying "Peace be with you," "The peace of the Lord," or similar words. If you prefer not to shake hands, you might raise your hand in a gesture of blessing as you speak peace to your neighbors. After the Peace, all return to their seats.

Meal: God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ ...

Offering *An offering is gathered for doing God's mission, including the care of those in need.*

Offering Music "The White Dove" *Johannes Brahms*

Presentation of the Gifts "We Are Awaiting the Coming of Jesus"



1 We are a - wait - ing the com - ing of Je - sus,
2 We are the vine you have plant - ed and tend - ed;
3 We bring these signs of our lives whol - ly giv - en;



yearn - ing in dark - ness for light and for peace,
we are the wheat you have wa - tered and sown.
let them for us be Christ's wine and Christ's bread



long - ing at last to re - jice on that
Take our first - fruits, take our bowed heads of
poured out in love for the heal - ing of



day when all peo - ple join in this feast.
grain, in - crease them and make them your own.
all and bro - ken that all may be fed.

Offering Prayer

L Let us pray.

A Savior of the nations, come.

Make your home here in us.

Feed us with your love, that our faith might shine ever new,

and our lives reveal your light. Amen.

The Great Thanksgiving

Dialogue

The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

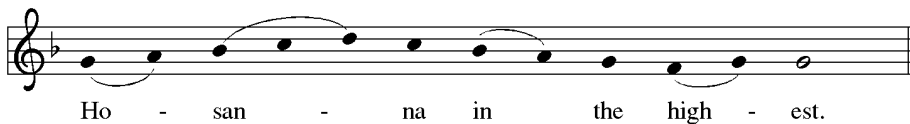
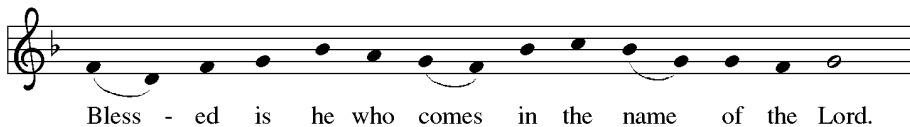
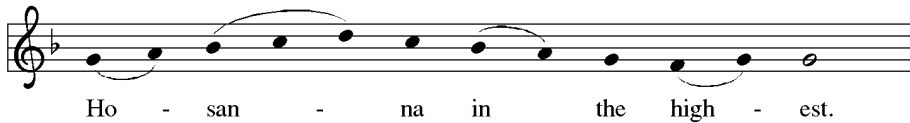
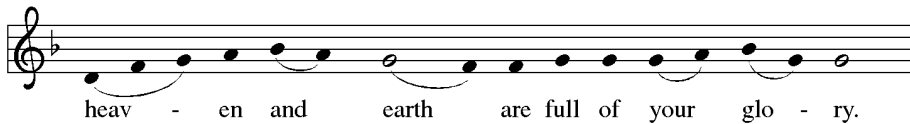
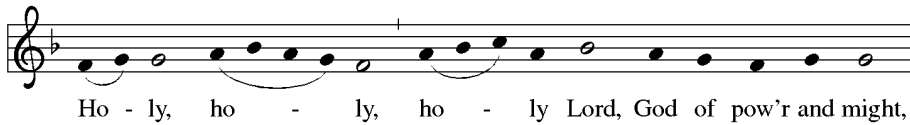
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Preface

P It is indeed right to give you our thanks and praise, O God, for your mercy embraces the faithful, one generation to the next, and your fidelity, for all ages. You created the heavens and earth, and chose for yourself a covenant people, bringing them from slavery to a land of their own. In your servant, David, you established your rule and promised his throne to the one who would save your people and reign forever.

And now, the mystery kept secret for long ages has been revealed to all the earth: Your own Son, Jesus Christ, is conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary and emerges to claim the throne of his ancestor David. Though he was killed by the proud and powerful, you have raised him up, and with him, the humble of all the earth, and of his reign there will be no end.

Therefore, with hearts full of gratitude, we sing joyfully, giving thanks to you, our Father, at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We join our voices with the blessed martyr Stephen, the Blessed Apostle John, the Holy Innocents of Bethlehem, and with all your holy ones of all times and places. With earth and all its creatures, with sun, moon, and stars, with angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, we praise your Name, and join their unending hymn:



Thanksgiving at the Table

- P Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:
Blessed are you for the birth of creation.
Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.
Blessed are you for your promise to your people.
Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.
Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.
Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.
- In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.
- Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

P Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:



Christ has died. Christ is ris - en. Christ will come a - gain.

P With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

A Come, Lord Jesus.

P Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

A Come, Holy Spirit.

P All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.



A - men, a - men. A - men, a - men.

The Lord's Prayer

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray.



Our Fa - ther in heav - en, hal - lowed be your name,
your king - dom come, your will be done, on earth as in heav - en.
Give us to - day our dai - ly bread. For - give us our sins as we
for - give those who sin a - gainst us. Save us from the time of tri - al
and de - liv - er us from e - vil. For the king - dom, the pow'r,
and the glo - ry are yours, now and for - ev - er. A - men.

The Breaking of the Bread and Invitation

L Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you.
Share in the feast of salvation.

A Thanks be to God!

Distribution of Holy Communion

*The Assembly is seated. Please come forward as the ushers direct, and as you are able.
Please kneel around the altar rail, as you are able, beginning at the wall and coming toward the center.
See the inside front cover for instructions concerning Holy Communion.*

Communion Song

"Lamb of God" Hymnal p. 164

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy
on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

The image shows a musical score for the hymn "Lamb of God". It consists of five staves of music in a single system, written in a treble clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are printed below the notes, with some words hyphenated across lines. The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, with various rests and phrasing slurs.

This Week's Commemorations

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Tuesday, Dec. 26, 2017

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

John, Apostle and Evangelist

Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2017

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, as well as the three New Testament letters bearing his name.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Thursday, December 28, 2017

This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

Communion Hymn

"The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came" Hymnal 265

Harmonized version appears in hymnal.



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
2 "For know a bless - ed moth - er thou shalt be,
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
4 Of her, Em - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



with wings as drift - ed snow, with eyes as flame:
all gen - er - a - tions laud and hon - or thee;
"To me be as it pleas - eth God," she said.
in Beth - le - hem all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail to thee, O low - ly maid - en Mar - y,
thy son shall be Em - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
"My soul shall laud and mag - ni - fy God's ho - ly name."
and Chris - tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say:



most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."
most high - ly fa - vored la - dy." Glo - ri - a!
Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy,
"Most high - ly fa - vored la - dy."

The Assembly stands when directed by the Presiding Minister.

Blessing after Communion

P The body and blood of our + Lord and Savior Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

A Amen.

Post-Communion Song

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

O come, O come, Emmanuel
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

Prayer after Communion

L Let us pray. God for whom we wait, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. Make us ready always to welcome Christ into our hearts, and send us forth to be your people in the world, announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Amen.

Sending: *God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world ...*

Sending of Communion

P Gracious God, loving all your family with a mother's tender care: As you sent the angel to feed Elijah with heavenly bread, assist those who set forth to share your word and sacrament with those who are sick or homebound. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those who will receive this sacrament, and give us all the comfort of your abiding presence through the body and blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

A Amen.

Sending Song

"Blessed Be the God of Israel" *(printed on next page)* **Hymnal 250**

Please turn as the cross passes you to face the doors through which you will be sent out in mission.

Blessing

P Go now, and celebrate God's love all your days. Give to Christ Jesus the obedience of faith, offering yourself as the servant of the Lord and allowing God's Word to be fulfilled in you.

And may the only wise God establish you forever.

May the mysteries of + Christ be conceived within you.

And may the Holy Spirit strengthen you and encircle you.

A Amen.

Dismissal

L Go in peace. Share the Good News!

A Thanks be to God!

Postlude

Please stay for a time of fellowship immediately following the service in Fellowship Hall.

Refreshments today are provided by the Linda Edlund.

Come enjoy one another's company, and hear about all the opportunities for service and community!

Blessed Be the God of Israel

1 Blessed be the God of Is - ra - el who comes to set us free
2 With prom-ised mer - cy will God still the cov - e - nant re - call,
3 My child, as proph-et of the Lord you will pre-pare the way,

and rais - es up new hope for us: a Branch from Da-vid's tree.
the oath once sworn to A - bra-ham, from foes to save us all;
to tell God's peo - ple they are saved from sin's e - ter - nal sway.

So have the proph-ets long de-clared that with a might-y arm
that we might wor - ship with-out fear and of - fer lives of praise,
Then shall God's mer - cy from on high shine forth and nev - er cease

God would turn back our en - e - mies and all who wish us harm.
in ho - li - ness and righ - teous-ness to serve God all our days.
to drive a - way the gloom of death and lead us in - to peace.

Serving in worship today...

Presiding Minister	Pr. Keith Fry
Assisting Minister	Anne Heider
Acolyte	Kit McCarthy
Lector	Scott Romans
Communion Minister	Kim Miller
Advent Wreath Lighters	The Jeffrey Larson Family
Organist	Greg Hummel
Table Preparation	Kim Miller
Communion Bread	Anne Heider
Ushers	Terri and Joe Simchak

Fastest. Pregnancy. Ever.

Usually a human pregnancy lasts nine months—and it’s a few days, not a few hours, between our gospels announcing Mary’s pregnancy on the fourth Sunday of Advent and the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve. But nothing will be impossible with the church calendar! Today, annunciation and delivery touch like folded segments of an accordion, or a wrinkle in time.

Once a child was reading a book about where babies come from. It explained that a human egg was smaller “than the dot at the end of this sentence.” The child stopped reading, caught up in wonder, staring at the dot. How could something invisible be transformed into . . . me? You? Every one of us?

One thing we can say with confidence about each pregnancy, whether it originates the old-fashioned way, is helped along by modern science, or follows from a young woman’s perplexing conversation with an angel: we don’t know exactly when it starts. After a baby is born we can count backwards and make some guesses, but in the moment we cannot feel precisely when that new life blossoms.

In the darkness, where we can’t perceive them, everyday miracles take shape. In Advent night as we long for peace on earth, and in our midwinters of the spirit when hope is far away, we are reminded that new life develops within us before we’re consciously aware of it. Even now. Today. For nothing will be impossible with God.

Pondering, we move with Mary from “How can this be?” to “Let it be.” Time wrinkles, a dot expands, and the Word becomes flesh to pitch a tent among us. For the power of the Most High, whisking away the offer of a cedar palace, loves to travel light and takes joy in surprising those who were said to be barren. The Spirit overshadows, and we ourselves become God’s house, a moving tabernacle, a holy dwelling—dancing in darkness at the wonder of a child.

Upcoming Events at Immanuel

Sunday, Dec. 24: Christmas Eve Worship 9:00 PM

Sunday, Dec. 31: Worship with Lessons and Carols

Immanuel’s Staff and Leadership

The Rev. Keith Fry.....	Pastor
Kevin McDaniel.....	Congregation Council President
James Morehead	Music Director
Greg Hummel.....	Organist
Laurie Stivers.....	Associate Organist
Kristen Wood.....	Parish Administrator

**Immanuel Lutheran Church is a Reconciling in Christ congregation of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), Metropolitan Chicago Synod.
We’ve been worshipping God and serving the Evanston community since 1888!**