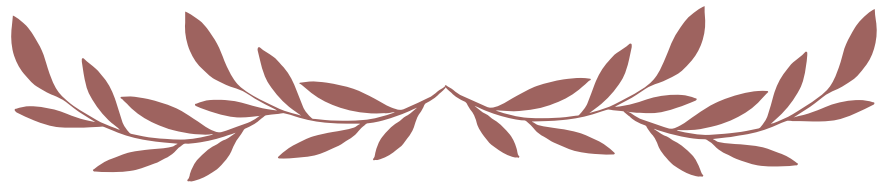




**The Child Who Is
Zechariah's Hope**



December 3, 2025

Midweek Advent Service

AS WE GATHER

When Israel was going into exile in Babylon, the Lord promised comfort, both in a return a few decades later and also in a Messiah to pay for their sins. Centuries later, most people had forgotten the promise, but the priest Zechariah and his wife, Elizabeth, were among those trusting in God. Yet when the angel brought Zechariah news of his son, who would be John the Baptist, preparing the way of the Lord, it was too good to be believed. It is our problem also as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the Lord Jesus, the Messiah. God overwhelms us with His love, remembering the promises we sometimes forget and forgiving us purely by grace. The Child, the Son of Mary, is the fulfiller of all God's promises. He is Zechariah's hope and ours.

INVOCATION AND OPENING SENTENCES

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

P Remember Your mercy, O LORD, and Your steadfast love,

C for they have been from of old.

P Remember not the sins of my youth or my transgressions;

C according to Your steadfast love remember me,
for the sake of Your goodness, O LORD! *Psalm 25:6–7*

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

P “Comfort, comfort my people,” the Lord told Isaiah to speak to His people. Let us confess our sins to God, confident that we shall hear His forgiving word of comfort for the sake of Christ, whose birth we are preparing to celebrate.

Silence for reflection on the Word of God and our sinful condition.

P Gracious, heavenly Father,

C we confess that too often in our thinking we have relegated Your promises to eternity. In our speaking, we have neglected to speak about the news of Your grace and mercy to the people around us. In our acting, we have considered our efforts as meriting Your attention. Though declared righteous by Your grace with ancient Zechariah, we also share his doubts about Your readiness to bless us in our current circumstances. Forgive us and strengthen our faith in Him for whom Zechariah's son would prepare the way, Jesus, the Word made flesh, the babe, the Son of Mary.

P The priest Zechariah was sentenced to silence because of his doubt, but the baby whose way his son, John, would prepare is both our great High Priest and also the Sacrifice for all our sins. Be still and hear His word of comfort and peace that I, His servant, proclaim to you: In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

FIRST READING

Isaiah 40:1–5

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.
Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that her warfare is ended,
that her iniquity is pardoned,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

A voice cries:

“In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD;
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.

And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all flesh shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

L This is the Word of the Lord. **C** Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:5–18

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body have you prepared for me;
in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

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

When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

And every priest stands daily at his service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after saying,

“This is the covenant that I will make with them
after those days, declares the Lord:
I will put my laws on their hearts,
and write them on their minds,”

then he adds,

“I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more.”

Where there is forgiveness of these,
there is no longer any offering for sin.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

THIRD READING

Luke 1:5–25

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years.

Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”

And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.” And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.” And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple. And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home. After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying, “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

APOSTLES' CREED

Second Article

P What child is this, who, laid to rest, on Mary's lap is sleeping?

C This, this is Christ the King,
the Father'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 into hell.

The third day He rose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of
God the Father Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead
—the Babe, the Son of Mary!

SERMON

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

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BENEDICTION

P May God Almighty—the Father, who kept all His ancient promises; the Son, who entered human history as one of us to save us from our sins; and the Holy Spirit, who has worked faith in our hearts that we may celebrate the birth of the Babe, the Son of Mary—bless you and keep you, now and forever.

C Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

LSB 344 “On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry”

DISMISSAL

P Go in peace as you serve the Lord.

C Thanks be to God!



Emmanuel Lutheran's Children's Choir Performance

11 am Service
DECEMBER 21, 2025

Are you 5- 15 years old?
Wanna Join?
Contact Heather M.
Practice is Wednesdays
in the Sanctuary during December
5:30-6:00 pm



SIGN UP FOR POINSETTIAS

CLICK
DECEMBER 14TH
ON SIGN-UP GENIUS

SCAN QR
CODE



OR CONTACT THE OFFICE





**the Miracle
of
Jesus**
A Christmas Event for Families

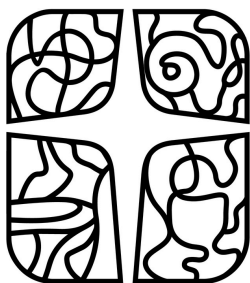
December 3rd
3:30-5:30pm
Visit the town of
Bethlehem in the
church courtyard

Join us for Emmanuel Lutheran's

**What Child
Is This?**

Wednesday Advent Services
in person @ Noon
December 3rd, 10th, & 17th

Online Only at 7:00 pm



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