

December 21, 2025
4th Sunday in Advent
Faith Candle

PRELUDE/BELLS

GATHERING/ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Please stand as able*



***THE PASSING OF THE PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you

And also with you

Let us greet one another in the spirit of God's special peace.

***Gathering Song** *The King Shall Come (ELW #260)*

***CALL TO CONFESSION**

Friends, every day we are given choices—

the choice to be a friend, to be an ally, to extend a welcoming hand.

Some days we choose wisely, but from time to time, we inevitably get it

wrong. That is one of the many reasons we need the Prayer of

Confession. In this moment of prayer, we are able to practice the art of forgiveness. So join me in this transformative moment.

Join me receiving grace. Let us pray.

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION & WORDS OF FORGIVENESS**

When you were afraid, did I stay by your side? Did I offer my hand,

or did I leave you alone? When you were afraid, did I choose solidarity?

Did I see your fear, or did I only see mine? Friend, none of us are

perfect. We all make mistakes. Fortunately, God offers grace, and we do too. So take a deep breath, and let's start again. Thank you. Your mercy

is a gift. Now we must ask— when you were afraid, did we stay by your side? Did we offer our hands, or did we leave you alone?

When you were afraid, did we choose solidarity? Did we see your fear?

Or did we only see ours? Friends, none of us are perfect. We all make mistakes. Fortunately, God offers grace, and I do too. So take a deep breath, and let's start again. Thank you. Your mercy is a gift.

We accept your grace and would love to start again.

May it be so, with God's help. Alleluia, amen.

***CALL TO WORSHIP**

Here in worship—

we pray together,

we stand together,

we sing together,

we listen together.

Here in worship— we are not alone.

So when life gives you reason to grieve, to fear, or to worry, remember this moment.

We are not alone.

Let us worship our with-us God.

CANDLE LIGHTING: BYGLAND – THORESON FAMILY, FISHER- SOLHEIM FAMILY

In a world full of fear, where do you see the presence of love?

We see love all around us. We see love when people hold open the door. We see love in a warm embrace, a homemade casserole, a phone call after a long day. We see love in random acts of kindness and intentional acts of empathy. We see love all around us.

You are right. Even in a fearful world, love is all around us.

Today we light the candle of love as a reminder of this good news. May this flicker of light help us remember that even in a fearful world, love is here. Love is world-changing. Love is shining bright. We only have to look for it.

Light candle.

Thanks be to God for a love like that! Amen. *Light candles.*

WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 41:5-10

⁵ The coastlands have seen and are afraid; the ends of the earth tremble; they have drawn near and come. ⁶ Each one helps the other, saying to one another, "Take courage!" ⁷ The artisan encourages the goldsmith, and the one who smooths with the hammer encourages the one who strikes the anvil, saying of the soldering, "It is good," and they fasten it with nails so that it cannot be moved. ⁸ But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend; ⁹ you whom I took from the ends of the earth and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, "You are my servant; I have chosen you and not cast you off"; ¹⁰ do not fear, for I am with you; do not be afraid,

for I am your God; I will strengthen you; I will help you; I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM: 80: 2-3, 15-16, 18-19

² before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh.

Stir up your might,
and come to save us!

³ **Restore us, O God;**

let your face shine, that we may be saved.

¹⁵ **the stock that your right hand planted.**

¹⁶ It has been burned with fire; it has been cut down;
may they perish at the rebuke of your countenance.

¹⁸ Then we will never turn back from you;
give us life, and we will call on your name.

¹⁹ Restore us, O LORD God of hosts;
let your face shine, that we may be saved.

TIME WITH THE CHILDREN - as the children come forward the congregation sings Jesus Loves Me (ELW #595) (V. 1)

***GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹⁸ Now 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 pregnant from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But 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. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

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

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY:** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (ELW #257) (VV. 1-4, 8)*

***APOSTLES CREED** (*ELW p. 189*)

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

Ever-reaching, with-us God,
we don't always know the words to pray.
We stumble over our words. We meander in our thoughts.
We fail to be eloquent when we try.
But no matter our words, we know that you are listening.
So today, holy God, we want to say thank you for the "reachers."
Thank you for the people in our life who have reached for us when we
have needed it most.

Thank you for friends and family,
for Sunday school teachers and confirmation mentors,
for therapists and school chaplains,
for neighbors and attentive strangers.
Thank you for the people, who like Joseph, chose to reach for us and
stay by our side when we
needed it most.

We pause to remember their names and faces now, and to silently lift
these individuals to you in gratitude.

Moment of silence..

Holy One, while we count our blessings, we also pray for those who face
their fear alone.

We pray for those who do not have a Joseph in their life.

In particular, we remember those in isolation jail cells,
and for those in medical quarantine.

We pray for single parents, and for widowers.

We pray for those who feel isolated by their grief, their addiction, or
their mental health.

Show us how to reach across dividing lines.

Show us how to walk with each other, on the good days and the bad.

Show us how to see each other.

Show us how to reach for each other.

As you do, like Joseph, we will do our best to walk each other home.

Thy will be done, AMEN.

MEAL

OFFERING SONG *Create In Me a Clean Heart (ELW p. 186)*

OFFERING

***WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

***GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING**

Let us pray... **Loving God, pour out your Spirit on this Table. Pour out
you Spirit on this ordinary bread. Pour out your Spirit on this ordinary
juice. For the thing we fear the most is distance from you, so draw
near to us here. Saturate this room with your Spirit and this Table with
your love. And as you do, we will join our voices and pray the words
your son taught us to pray.**

***LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 191)**

**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**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Come to the banquet, for all is now ready.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

Lutheran Christians believe Holy Communion is “the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ for us Christians to eat and drink” (Luther’s Small Catechism). All baptized Christians are invited to commune.

COMMUNION SONG: *Show Up* (Advent theme song) Lyrics and music by Britt Kusserow

Verse 1:

Sun setting early, get out the
candles
So much revealed in a spark
What do you picture in these
growing shadows?
What do you fear in the dark?

Verse 2:

Thoughts run like branches,
losing their leaves
Worries that loved ones will fall
Questioning safety as the rules
change around me
Knowing that safe isn’t all

Refrain:

I believe that a God, born into
empire
Carries the message that hope
is enough
A little brave candle against
growing shadows
Fearful or not, we show up
We show up

Verse 3:

You who are tired, you who are
worn
Weary and slow on your feet

Know that your actions will
carry beyond you
Know you are more than belief

Verse 4:

Fear can be message, fear can
be gift
If met with a curious heart
Be not afraid of the fear that’s
beside you
Let it be known who you are

Refrain:

I believe that a God, born into
empire
Carries the message that hope
is enough
A little brave candle against
growing shadows
Fearful or not, we show up
We show up

Refrain:

I believe that a God, born into
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***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray... **Loving God, In a world racked with fear, you gather us together. You set the table. You meet us here. You nourish our bodies as you nourish our spirits. You remind us that this is a joyful feast, and that fear cannot win every time. So with renewed courage, with renewed hope, with renewed conviction, send us out into the world. Help us to feed others as you have fed us. With gratitude we pray. Amen.**

SENDING

***BENEDICTION:**

In a fearful world, may you look for God's spirit. May you reach for each other's hands. May you choose courage whenever you can. And in all things, may you remember that good news is louder than fear. In the name of the one who calls, the one who sends, and the one who journeys with – go in peace and be not afraid. **Amen.**

***SENDING SONG** *All Earth is Hopeful (ELW #266)*

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

BELLS/POSTLUDE

JOYFULLY SERVING

Fisher Lutheran Church Office phone number: 218-891-4632

Pastor: Gretchen Enoch 812-639-7816

Parish Secretary: Jami Olson (Email the office at

office@fisherbygland.org, or If you need an immediate response contact Pastor Gretchen.)

Organist: Jane Traub

FLC Ushers: Ross & Kelli Korynta Family

FLC Readers: Ross & Kelli Korynta Family

FLC Communion Server: Corban Korynta

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Tue. Dec. 23rd 8:00 AM Stretch and Pray
- Wed. Dec. 24th Christmas Eve
3:00 PM Worship at Fisher
5:00 PM Worship at Bygland
NO Confirmation
- Sun. Dec. 28th, 9:00 AM Joint Worship at Fisher
NO Sunday School
- As of November 30th Fisher is currently at 58% of our budgeted expenses for 2025.
- As of December 7th, Bygland's 2025 budget is 50.13%.
- Annual Meeting Dates: Bygland: Jan. 25th
Fisher: Feb. 1st

The series at a glance

| 1 st Sunday of Advent | 2 nd Sunday of Advent | 3 rd Sunday of Advent | 4 th Sunday of Advent | Christmas Eve | Sunday After Christmas | Epiphany |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|---|
| in the time of herod, we long for god to break in | when we're running out of hope, god is at work | even in our fear, we are called forward | when you're afraid, give me your hand | good news is louder than fear | let fear fuel a fire for justice | fear doesn't stop us |
| <p>Luke 1:5-13 (Luke starts the story with King Herod, in an era of fear)</p> <p><u>Lamentations</u> 3:55-57 ("When I called on you, you said, 'Do not fear!'")</p> | <p>Matthew 11:1-11 (John the Baptist is running out of hope and reaches out to Jesus)</p> <p>Isaiah 43:19-21 ("I am about to do a new thing")</p> | <p>Luke 1:26-39 (The angel visits Mary)</p> <p>Jeremiah 1:4-10 (Jeremiah is called as a prophet)</p> | <p>Matthew 1:18-25 (The angel visits Joseph in a dream)</p> <p>Isaiah 41:5-10 ("Do not fear, for I am with you")</p> | <p>Luke 2:1-20 (The angels deliver good news to the shepherds, who go to the newborn Christ)</p> | <p>Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 (The Holy family flees to Egypt, then returns to Galilee once it's safe)</p> | <p><u>Matthew 2:1-12</u> 16-18 (The magi visit Christ; Herod responds with the massacre of the innocents)</p> |