



DECEMBER 17, 2025

7:00 p.m

Joy

MIDWEEK ADVENT WORSHIP
Wednesday, December 17, 2025

IN THE NAME OF JESUS, WELCOME TO ST. PAUL'S!

VESPERS

7:00 p.m.



PRELUDE

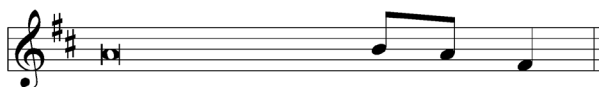
Veni Emmanuel
Setting: Mark Hayes

ENTRANCE VERSE (Stand)

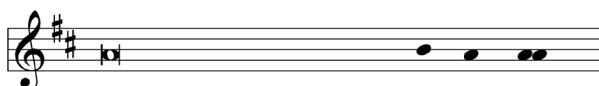
LSB 229



L O Lord, o - pen my lips,



C and my mouth will de - clare Your praise.



L Make haste, O God, to de - liv - er me;



C make haste to help me, O Lord.



C Glo-ry be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it;



as it was in the be - gin - ning, is now, and will be for-ev-er. A - men.



Praise to You, O Christ, King who comes to save us.

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the Son of God appear. *Refrain***

Refrain

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

- 2 O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,
Who ord'rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show,
And teach us in her ways to go. *Refrain***
- 3 O come, O come, Thou Lord of might,
Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the Law
In cloud and majesty and awe. *Refrain***
- 4 O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree,
Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save,
And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain***
- 5 O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav'nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery. *Refrain***
- 6 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death's dark shadows put to flight. *Refrain***
- 7 O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace. *Refrain***

There was a certain man of Ramathaim-zophim of the hill country of Ephraim whose name was Elkanah the son of Jeroham, son of Elihu, son of Tohu, son of Zuph, an Ephrathite. He had two wives. The name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other, Peninnah. And Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

Now this man used to go up year by year from his city to worship and to sacrifice to the LORD of hosts at Shiloh, where the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests of the LORD. On the day when Elkanah sacrificed, he would give portions to Peninnah his wife and to all her sons and daughters. But to Hannah he gave a double portion, because he loved her, though the LORD had closed her womb. And her rival used to provoke her grievously to irritate her, because the LORD had closed her womb. So it went on year by year. As often as she went up to the house of the LORD, she used to provoke her. Therefore Hannah wept and would not eat. And Elkanah, her husband, said to her, "Hannah, why do you weep? And why do you not eat? And why is your heart sad? Am I not more to you than ten sons?"

After they had eaten and drunk in Shiloh, Hannah rose. Now Eli the priest was sitting on the seat beside the doorpost of the temple of the LORD. She was deeply distressed and prayed to the LORD and wept bitterly. And she vowed a vow and said, "O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life, and no razor shall touch his head."

As she continued praying before the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. Hannah was speaking in her heart; only her lips moved, and her voice was not heard. Therefore Eli took her to be a drunken woman. And Eli said to her, "How long will you go on being drunk? Put away your wine from you." But Hannah answered, "No, my lord, I am a woman troubled in spirit. I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but I have been pouring out my soul before the LORD. Do not regard your servant as a worthless woman, for all along I have been speaking out of my

great anxiety and vexation.” Then Eli answered, “Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him.” And she said, “Let your servant find favor in your eyes.” Then the woman went her way and ate, and her face was no longer sad.

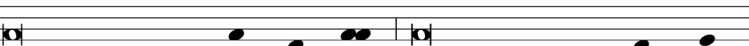
They rose early in the morning and worshiped before the LORD; then they went back to their house at Ramah. And Elkanah knew Hannah his wife, and the LORD remembered her. And in due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, "I have asked for him from the LORD."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORY (Stand)

Verse *To Refrain*




L 1 Behold, the days
are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise
up for David a right-teous Branch.

2 In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will
dwell se - cure - ly.

3 Glory be to the
Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spir - it.

Refrain



This is the name
by which He will be called: The Lord Is Our Righteousness.

SECOND READING

Luke 1:26-38

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 1st chapter
Glory to You, O Lord.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled

at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He 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 father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.” And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

SERMON (Be seated)

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus. Amen. Dear friends in Christ:

There is possibly no greater joy, in all of life’s experiences, than that of expecting a child. Despite the fears that come with it, the anticipation of the soon-to-arrive child’s impact on us, and the thoughts about who they will become, is unlike any other joy in the world.

To acknowledge this joy, people like to throw parties. And for many years, the party which most frequently acknowledged this joy was the baby shower... a party where the new family was also showered with love and gifts, mostly by women.

But around twenty years ago, a different kind of party started to become popular. This one centered around the revealing of the

baby's sex – meaning whether the child was a boy or a girl. These parties, which were sometimes simply video presentations, became known as “gender reveals.”

The popularity of the gender reveal – beyond the natural excitement of that which is to be revealed – has no doubt been helped by the great creative efforts people have put into these and the exposure they have gotten on social media and video channels. Using the time-honored color scheme of pink for girls and blue for boys, people and business have come up with all kinds of creative options. Star Wars fans can buy a special lightsaber that lights up blue or pink when turned on. Opaque balloons can be filled with blue or pink confetti released upon popping. Piñatas can be stuffed with blue or pink candy that falls to the ground when the piñatas are struck with a stick. Cakes can be layered with blue or pink icing that can be seen when the cake is sliced open. And golfers can purchase special golf balls packed with blue or pink powder that comes out when the balls are met with the swing of a club. I'm not making this up!

The largest gender reveal party in the world is widely considered to have been the one done by the Anasala family in 2020. This husband-and-wife duo, already YouTube personalities with millions of followers world-wide, decided that the gender reveal party for their second child would take place in Dubai, across from the world's tallest building. To mark the big moment, they arranged for a countdown of big neon numbers to be displayed on the side of the half mile high building, starting at ten. When the countdown got to zero, the building then lit up with the color (pause)...blue..., followed by vertical, large-font words saying: “It's a boy!” People put the price tag for this big reveal at about \$100,000!

As it turns out, the revealing of the birth of a child was a big deal in the Bible too. The large number of such stories confirms this.

But these reveals weren't about the child's gender. Nor were they opportunities to show love and give gifts. Rather, they were

announcements of miraculous births which would bring great joy and help, sometimes to many.

To an Egyptian handmaid named Hagar, on the run from Sarah's harsh treatment, the angel of the Lord said, *"Behold, you are with child and will bear a son; and you shall call his name Ishmael"* – which means "God hears" (Genesis 16:11, AMP). To an elderly man who had been promised a child but had been waiting for decades, God said, *"Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac"* (Genesis 17:19). To the barren wife of Manoah, unnamed in the scriptures, the angel of the Lord appeared and said, *"Behold, you are barren and have not borne children, but you shall conceive and bear a son"* – a child whom they would name Samson (Judges 13:3). To weeping and fervent-praying Hannah, Eli the priest announced that the Lord had heard her prayers, saying: *"Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition that you have made to him,"* after which she bore Samuel (1 Kings 1:20). And to an elderly priest on duty whose wife was also barren, an angel of the Lord said, *"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"* (Luke 1:13). We read about this last birth at our service a week ago.

The Bible's grandest reveal of all, however, would come to a young woman in a small town around 2000 years ago. We read the account of this reveal a few moments ago, in our Gospel lesson. There Luke tells us that *"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!' But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be."*

This reveal was completely unexpected, especially by Mary. And we can understand why she was troubled. How could she be a mother? She was a virgin, and no doubt very young.

In her bewilderment, the angel quickly comforts her, saying: *“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.”* The word “favor” would have brought instant help to Mary, since it was a common Hebrew expression of God’s grace and affection, first used in describing God’s choosing of Noah. The angel’s point is that Mary has nothing to fear, for she, too, was a beneficiary of God’s wonderful grace.

And with that being understood, the angel then unveils God’s unique plan for her, saying: *“Behold, you will conceive in the womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.”*

This is hands down God’s most significant reveal of all time. And we know this not only because Mary is a virgin and the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit, but also because of what the angel says of this child. The angel explains: *“He 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 father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”*

These words, comparing the reign of Mary’s child to that of King David, with the added explanation that this kingdom would endure forever, are certainly important reveals about what was going on. They helped explain why the child would be great.

At the same time, there was also another reveal in the angel’s words that perhaps said even more. This reveal is the one given in the baby’s name.

For most of us, names tend to reflect our parents’ attitudes and desires more than anything else. My parents decided to give their kids Biblical names that are short. They wanted to make a statement about faith, and they wanted to make sure people didn’t have to struggle with both our first name and our last name. Thus, we are Mark, Dan and Joel. Shaltanis.

When my children were about to be born, we considered this same bit of advice but were also pulled in the direction of going

outside the box a bit. We'd moved to the east coast, after all. And we didn't want to do all the same things our parents did. When it was time to name our children, we considered names that are a bit unusual and didn't make the "top ten."

At the end of the day, however, we decided to follow the safer path. Like my parents, we chose short and Biblical names – David and Chloe. But we did at least go with two-syllable names. And one of the names isn't commonly known to be in the Bible.

For Mary, the name of her baby was already picked out for her. The angel said: *"You shall call his name Jesus."*

And this name was chosen because Jesus means "savior." The name would tell his story better than any others. And that's because Jesus would be Mary's Savior, my Savior, your Savior and everyone's Savior. Jesus would save us all from our sins.

Jesus would do this – and did do it! – by dying on the cross and paying the price of all human sin. His sacrifice gives us victory over sin's curse, which is death.

And proof of this victory was given as Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Death could not hold him, and now it no longer has a hold on us.

Today Jesus reigns as king among us. He does so in similar ways as his ancestor David but also in much different ways too. Jesus' kingdom is not defined by borders but found wherever people acknowledge his lordship and live according to his teachings of love, mercy, and grace.

The revealing of Jesus and his kingdom to the world is now our calling. As his followers, we are to do this through our events and gatherings, our conversations and examples – our "Jesus Reveals" if you will.

After Jesus was born, an old man named Simeon who rightfully identified Jesus as the great king promised by God, called him *"a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people"*

Israel" (Luke 2:32). These words remind us that Jesus is revealed best when his light is reflected and when people live in ways that glorify him.

As the day of Jesus' birthday approaches, let us remember that the parties and gatherings, celebrations and activities we engage in during this season are to be times for revealing Jesus. We are to reveal him to the nations. And we are to reveal him to one another. Jesus is the true reason for the season, for it's his revealing that brings joy and salvation.

The greatest joy in life comes in knowing we have a savior. Our savior's name is Jesus, and his revealing means everything.

May God bless our witness and celebration. In the holy name of Jesus. Amen.

MAGNIFICAT (Stand) Tell Out, My Soul, the Greatness of the Lord
LSB 935

- 1 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
Unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
Tender to me the promise of His Word;
In God my Savior shall my heart rejoice.**
- 2 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name!
Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done;
His mercy sure, from age to age the same;
His holy name, the Lord, the Mighty One.**
- 3 Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!
Pow'rs and dominions lay their glory by.
Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.**
- 4 Tell out, my soul, the glories of His Word!
Firm is His promise, and His mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
To children's children and forevermore!**

OFFERING (Be seated)

Offerings support the church's mission work – both here and through our many partners. Offerings may be placed in the box at the sanctuary entrance or sent to the church through our website or the mail. Fellowship Cards help us welcome new people and track participation. Please fill one out and place it in the offering box following the service.

PRAYERS (Kneel)

LSB 233-234

KYRIE

LSB 233

**Lord, have mercy;
Christ, have mercy;
Lord, have mercy.**

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

COLLECT FOR PEACE

O God, from whom come all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works, give to us, Your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey Your commandments and also that we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may live in peace and quietness; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING HYMN LUTHER'S EVENING PRAYER Setting: John A. Behnke

Choir:

I thank you, my heav'nly Father,
through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son,
that You have kept me this day.
I pray that You forgive me
for all the wrong that I have done this day.
For into Your hands I commend myself,
my body and soul, and all things.
Let Your holy angel be with me,
that the evil foe may have no power over me.

Congregation and Choir:

**I thank you, my heav'nly Father,
through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son,
that You have kept me this day.
I pray that You forgive me
for all the wrong that I have done this day.
For into Your hands I commend myself,
my body and soul, and all things.
Let Your holy angel be with me,
that the evil foe may have no power over me.
I thank you, my heav'nly Father
through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son,
that You have kept me this day,
I pray that you forgive me
for all the wrong that I have done this day.**

Choir: Keep me this night. Amen

Those serving:

Greeter: Steve Janssen

Reader: Dede Dixon

AV/Streaming: Richard Irwin

Acknowledgments

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CHRISTMAS AT ST. PAUL'S
WORSHIP SCHEDULE



Christmas Eve Worship – Wednesday, December 24

5:00 p.m. Candlelight service for families

7:30 p.m. Pre-service Music

8:00 p.m. Candlelight service with Holy Communion

Christmas Day Worship – Thursday, December 25

10:00 a.m. Celebration of Christ's Birth
with Holy Communion

**ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
7426 IDYLWOOD ROAD
FALLS CHURCH, VIRGINIA 22043**

A member congregation of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod

CONGREGATIONAL MINISTRIES

Leadership Officers, Working Boards, Chinese Ministry, The Preschool,
Sunday School, LWML, Youth Group, Altar Guild, Choirs,
Caring Ministry, Safety Ministry, Leisure Group
Other seasonal and occasional working groups

CHURCH STAFF

The Rev. Mark Shaltanis, Pastor
The Rev. Xinhong “Chris” Yang, Associate and Chinese Pastor
The. Rev. Wayne Lehrer, Pastor Emeritus

Kantor Aaron Jansen, Dir. of Parish Music	Jill Cha, Preschool Director
Tawni Harrell, Director of Youth	Norm Williams, Business Manager
Linda Fekete, Parish Secretary	Richard Irwin, Building Manager

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