

**RORATE COELI (“RAIN DOWN”)
THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
FEAST OF ST. THOMAS, APOSTLE
(DECEMBER 21)**

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WELCOME TO ALL! We are pleased you are here!

GUESTS – if you are participating in the live stream during this time, welcome to our Divine Service! If we can assist

you in any way with questions about our confession of faith, spiritual struggles, understanding our liturgical service, or any other need, please let us know. It is our prayer that the Gospel of Jesus Christ will strengthen and comfort you.

PASTORAL CARE AND GUESTS AT THE LORD’S SUPPER: We are concerned about the spiritual welfare of all who commune at the Lord’s Table. If you are a guest and desire to commune, please speak to the pastor before the service. Our altar is open to those who confess oneness with us in doctrine, are members of our congregation or sister congregations of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, and are not under church discipline in another congregation. In Christ, Pastor Lawson

† In the Name of Jesus †

Prayer before Worship: Lord God, heavenly Father, it is good and right that we should give thanks to You, that You have given us a glorious baptism like that of John the Baptist, and that therein You have promised us the forgiveness of sins, the Holy Spirit, and everlasting life through Your Son, Jesus Christ: We beseech You, by Your grace and mercy preserve us in such faith, that we never doubt Your promise, but be comforted by our baptism in all temptations; and grant us Your Holy Spirit that we may renounce sin, and ever continue in the righteousness bestowed on us in baptism, until, by Your grace, we obtain our eternal salvation; through the same, Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

DECEMBER 19, 2021 † 9:00 A. M.

The Divine Service: Rite Two
Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary: p. 60

The Office of the Preparation
(Confession & Absolution)

Hymn of Invocation: 106, *On Jordan's Bank the Herald's Cry*

**C: On Jordan's bank the herald's cry Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings Glad tidings of the King of kings.**

**Then cleansed by ev'ry Christian breast, and furnished for so great a Guest;
Yea, let us each our hearts prepare For Christ to come and enter there.**

**For Thou art our Salvation, Lord, Our Refuge and our great Reward;
Without Thy grace we waste away, Like flow'rs that wither and decay.**

**To heal the sick stretch out Thine hand And bid the fallen sinner stand;
Once more upon Thy people shine And fill the world with love divine.**

**All praise, eternal Son, to Thee, Whose advent set Thy people free:
Whom with the Father we adore And Holy Ghost, forevermore.**

*At the Invocation and Absolution all **may** make the sign of the †
in remembrance of their Baptism.*

Invocation

P: In the Name of the Father and of the Son † and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Confession of Sin (form I)

P: Beloved in the Lord! Let us draw near with a true heart and confess our sins to God, our Father, beseech Him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to grant us forgiveness.

P: Our help is in the name of the Lord.

C: Who made heaven and earth.

P: I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord;

Psalm (All) The heavens declare the `glory of God:/ And the firmament shows `His handiwork.

Their voice is gone out in`to all the earth:/ And their words to the `end of the world.

In the heavens He has set a taberna`cle for the sun:/ Which is like a Bridegroom coming out `of His chamber.

His going forth is from the end `of the heaven:/ And his circuit unto `the end of it.

Gloria Patri (All) Glory be to the Father `and to the Son:/ and to `the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the be`ginning, is now:/ and ever shall be, forever`more. Amen.

Antiphon (All) Rain down, you heav`ens, from above:/ And let the skies pour down `the Righteous One;

Let the earth `open her womb:/ And bring `forth Salvation.

Kyrie

C: Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Gloria in Excelsis is silent until Christmas Day

Salutation

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

Collect for the Day

P: Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come, and help us with Your great might, that whatever is hindered by our sins may be speedily accomplished by Your mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Collect for the Feast of St. Thomas, Apostle (December 21)

P: Almighty and ever-living God, through the Word of Your Son You mightily strengthened the faith of Your Apostle Saint Thomas: by the same Word keep us ever steadfast in the faith unto our end; through the same Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Old Testament: *Isaiah 40:1-11*

P: In those days Isaiah prophesied: “Comfort, yes, comfort My people!” says Your God.

**O come, Thou Rod of Jesse's stem; From ev'ry foe deliver them
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save, And give them victory o'er the grave.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

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

**O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer Our spirits by Thine advent here;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

**O come, Desire of nations, bind All peoples in one heart and mind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel.**

Epistle: *Philippians 4:4-7*

P: *Brethren:* Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made know to God; and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia Verse (Pastor)

Tone 4



Alleluia! Alleluia! You are my help and my `Deliverer:/ Do not delay, O my God. `Alleluia!

C: **Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Holy Gospel: *St. John 1:19-30*

P: The Holy Gospel according to † St. John, the 1st chapter:

C: Glory be to You, O Lord.

P: Now *at that time* this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am

not the Christ.” And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” Then they said to him, “Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?” He said: “I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.” Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. And they asked him, saying, “Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” John answered them, saying, “I baptize with water, but there stands one among you Whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.” These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, ‘After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.’”

P: This is the † Holy Gospel.

C: Praise be to You, O Christ.

*At the words “And was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary
And was made man” all **may** bow out of reverence for Christ’s Incarnation.*

Nicene Creed

C: I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,

**Maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,
Begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
Very God of Very God,
Begotten, not made,
Being of one substance with the Father,
By Whom all things were made;
Who for us men and for our salvation**

**came down from heaven
*and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the Virgin Mary
and was made man;***

and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.

**He suffered and was buried;
and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven,**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father;
And He shall come again with glory
to judge both the living and the dead;
Whose kingdom shall have no end.
And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life,
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
Who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped
and glorified,
Who spoke by the Prophets.
And I believe one holy Christian and Apostolic Church.
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
And I look for the Resurrection of the dead
and the Life † of the world to come. Amen.**

Chief Hymn: *102, Comfort, Comfort Ye My People*

**C: Comfort, comfort, ye My people, Speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
Comfort those who sit in darkness, Mourning 'neath their sorrows' load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell her that her sins I cover And her warfare now is over.**

**Yea, her sins our God will pardon, Blotting out each dark misdeed;
All that well deserved His anger He no more will see or heed.
She hath suffered many a day, Now her griefs have passed away;
God will change her pining sadness Into ever-springing gladness.**

**Hark, the Herald's voice is crying In the desert far and near,
Bidding all men to repentance Since the Kingdom now is here.
Oh, that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;
Let the valleys rise to meet Him And the hills bow down to greet Him.**

**Make ye straight what long was crooked, Make the rougher places plain;
Let your hearts be true and humble, As befits His holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord Now o'er earth is shed abroad,
And all flesh shall see the token That His Word is never broken.**

Sermon

Pulpit Hymn (throughout Advent): 596, *Praise to Thee and Adoration*

**C: Praise to Thee and adoration, Blessed Jesus, Son of God,
Who, to serve Thine own creation, Didst partake of flesh and blood.
Teach me that I never may From Thy fold or pastures stray,
But with zeal and joy exceeding Follow where Thy steps are leading.
Let me never, Lord, forsake Thee, E'en though bitter pain and strife
On my way shall overtake me; But may I through all my life
Walk in fervent love to Thee, In all woes for comfort flee
To Thy birth, Thy death, and Passion, Till I see Thy full salvation.**

The Intercessions: *each petition concludes:* Lord, in Your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

Note: The Intercessions conclude with the blessing: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ..." *The live stream is then turned off for the Holy Communion.*

Hymn of Preparation: 111, *When Sinners See Their Lost Condition*, sts. 1-5, 9 (Tune: 483)

**C: When sinners see their lost condition And feel the pressing load of sin,
And Jesus cometh on His mission To heal the sin-sick heart within,
All grief must flee before His grace And joy divine will take its place.**

**When Jesus enters meek and lowly To fill the home with sweetest peace;
When hearts have felt His blessing holy And found from sin complete release;
Then light and calm within shall reign And hearts divided love again.**

**When Jesus enters land and nation, And moves the people with His love,
When yielding to His kind persuasion, Our hearts His truth and blessings prove,
Then shall our life on earth be blest, The peace of God on us shall rest.**

**When Jesus comes, O blessed story! He works a change in heart and life;
God's kingdom comes with pow'r and glory To young and old, to man and wife;
Through Sacrament and living Word, Faith, love and hope are now conferred.**

**Then stilled are cries and lamentation, Then loosed is Satan's ev'ry band,
In death is hope and consolation, The soul is safe in Jesus' hand:
When we shall walk through death's dark vale His rod and staff shall never fail.**

**Come Thou who spreadest joy and gladness, Forever bide with me and mine,
And bring to those who sit in sadness And gloom of death Thy light divine.
A voice comes from my soul within: Thou blessed of the Lord, come in!**

The Liturgy of the Holy Communion

Preface

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them up unto the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

C: It is good and right so to do.

Proper Preface & Sanctus

P: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the Messiah, the very Lamb of God, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes against in glory. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying:

**C: Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth;
 Heav'n and earth are full of Your glory.
 Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.
 Blessed is He, blessed is He, blessed is He
 who come in the name of the Lord.
 Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

Lord's Prayer: pp. 77-78

P: Our Father who art in heaven,
 Hallowed by 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;

C: For Thine is the kingdom and the pow'r and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Words of Institution: pp. 78-79

*When the Pastor turns and elevates the Host and Cup, the congregation **may** bow as an act of reverent worship toward the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ.*

Pax Domini (The Peace of the Lord): p. 79

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

Agnus Dei: pp. 79-80

**C: O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us.**

**O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
have mercy upon us.**

**O Christ, the Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
grant us Your peace. Amen.**

Distribution of the Holy Communion

*Prayers for “**Before Holy Communion**” and
for “**After Holy Communion**” are found on page 40 in ELH.*

The Nunc Dimittis: pp. 81-82

C: Lord, now You let Your servant depart in peace according to Your word.

**For my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared before the face
of all people, a Light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Your people
Israel.**

**Glory be the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.**

Collect of Thanksgiving: pp. 82-83

P: O give thanks unto the Lord for He is good.

C: And His mercy endures forever.

P: O God the Father, the fountain and source of all goodness, who in lovingkindness sent Your only-begotten Son into the flesh, we thank You that for His sake You have given us pardon and peace in this Sacrament, and we ask You not to forsake Your children but always

to rule our hearts and minds by Your Holy Spirit that we may be enabled constantly to serve You; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

The Salutation: p. 84

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And with your spirit.

The Benedicamus: p. 84

P: Let us bless the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

The Benediction: p. 84

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and † give you peace.

C: Amen. Amen. Amen.

Dismissal Hymn: *90, Savior of the Nations, Come*

**C: Savior of the nations, come, Virgin's Son, make here Thy home!
Marvel now, O heaven and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth.**

**Not by human flesh and blood, By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh – Woman's Offspring, pure and fresh.**

**Wondrous birth! O wondrous Child Of the Virgin undefiled!
Though by all the world disowned, Still to be in heaven enthroned.**

**From the Father forth He came And returneth to the same,
Captive leading death and hell – High the song of triumph swell!**

**Thou, the Father's only Son, Hast o'er sin the victory won.
Boundless shall Thy kingdom be; When shall we its glories see?**

**Brightly doth Thy manger shine, Glorious is its light divine.
Let not sin o'ercloud this light; Ever be our faith thus bright.**

**Praise to God the Father sing, Praise to God the Son, our King,
Praise to God the Spirit be Ever and eternally.**

Our Life Together

Bible Studies: Today we continue our look at James 1. The Thursday morning study will meet this week. There will be no Bible study next Sunday.

Christmas Schedule: Please take note of the Schedule of Services beginning on Friday evening with the traditional Christmas Eve Lessons & Carols here at Bethany at 7pm. The All Parish Christmas Day Divine Service (“Christ Mass”) is at Concordia this year. ***Hopefully everyone will make it their top priority to worship Jesus and give thanks to Him for His birth for our salvation by attending to receive His gifts in preaching and the Sacrament of His body and blood!***

Christmas Decorating after the Service today.

Hope Giving Tree: Thank you to everyone who opened up their hearts to contribute gifts for Hope Clinic.

Advent Alms: Thanks to those who have brought filled-up baby bottles back for the Hope Clinic and items for the food banks. Please continue to bring your donations through Epiphany.

Feasts, Commemorations, and Events this Week
The Office of Matins (“Morning Prayer”)
is live streamed Tuesday-Friday this week at 8am

Monday: Pastor’s Day Off

Tuesday: FEAST OF ST. THOMAS, APOSTLE Pastor at Bethany; County building inspection, 10am

Wednesday: Pastor at Concordia, 9:30am

Thursday: Pastor at Bethany; Bible Study, 10am

Friday: CHRISTMAS EVE Concordia Lessons & Carols, 5pm
Bethany Lessons & Carols, 7pm

Saturday: CHRISTMAS DAY All Parish Holy Communion at Concordia, 10am

Next Sunday: *Sunday After Christmas* Concordia Service of the Word, 9am
Bethany Holy Communion, 11am; No Bible Study



***O Come! Let Us Adore Him!
(and don't forget what Christmas is for!)***

***Schedule of Christmas Services at
Bethany & Concordia***

***Christmas Eve: Vespers with Lessons & Carols
Concordia, 5:00pm & Bethany, 7:00pm***

Christmas Day: All Parish Holy Communion at Concordia, 10:00am

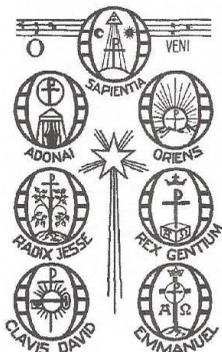
Sunday After Christmas (Dec. 26): Normal Sunday Schedule

***New Year's Eve (Name of Jesus)
All Parish Holy Communion at Bethany, 6:00pm***

Sunday Before the Epiphany (Jan. 2): Normal Sunday Schedule

***Eve of the Epiphany of Our Lord (Jan. 5)
Vespers at Concordia, 6pm***

***Feast of the Epiphany of Our Lord
Holy Communion at Bethany, 6:00pm***



The GRADUAL HYMN throughout Advent, and today's CHIEF HYMN is *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* (ELH 110). The hymn is based on the seven great "O Antiphons." Beginning on December 17, one of these antiphons is sung before and after the Magnificat at Vespers each day leading up to Christmas Eve. They bid our Lord "Come!" using seven different prophetic Names for the promised Messiah: **O Wisdom** (*Sapientia*) Is 11:2-3; Pr 8:12; 9:1; 1 Cor 1:24; **O Lord** (*Adonai*) Is 2:5; 9:6-7; **O Root** (*Radix*) of Jesse Is 11:1, 10; **O Key** (*Clavis*) of David Is 9:6; 22:22; **O Rising Sun** (*Oriens*) Is 9:1; 59:19; **O King of Nations** (*Rex Gentium*) Is 2:4; 9:6-7; **O Emmanuel** Is 7:14.

Benedictine monks of the seventh century arranged the antiphons so that the first letter of each in reverse order spells EROCRAS (*Latin*: "Tomorrow I will come"). In the thirteenth century, an anonymous author arranged the antiphons into verse form and added the refrain. In 1966, the source of the plainsong tune *Veni Emmanuel* was discovered to be a fifteenth-century French Processional used by Franciscan nuns.

Advent 4/Christmas: Jesus brought God delicately amidst sinners, as humble in crucifixion as He was helpless in conception. Yet this estate did not hinder but, in fact, heralded the full realm and reign of God for us. And thereby He reaffirmed the worth of even the feeblest human beings. God's gift of life arrives all the better for the plain packaging He habitually hides it behind. *Prayer: Lamb of God, make it so that our taking hold of You leads us to cradle Your little ones as well. Amen.*
Life Thoughts in the Church Year/Historic Lectionary from lutheransforlife.org