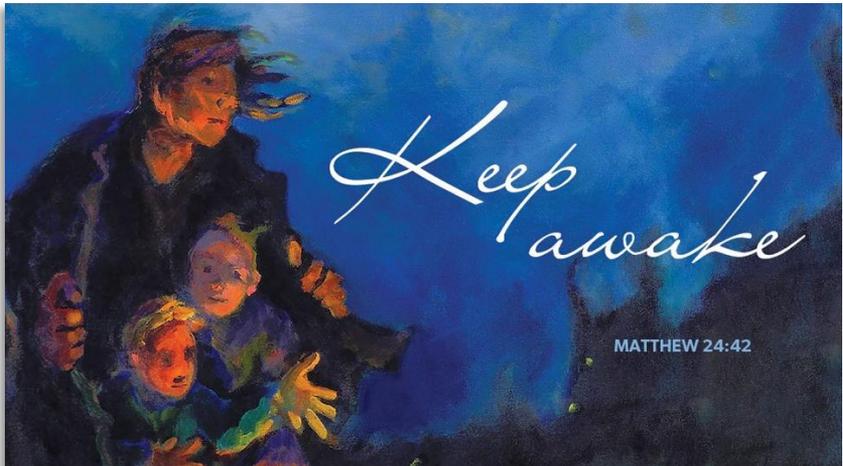




FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NOVEMBER 20, 2022

9:30 AM



Bethel Lutheran Church
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Great Falls, MT 59404
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Pastor Jessie Obrecht

A congregation of the Montana Synod of the
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Large print bulletins are available, please see the ushers for a copy.

As we gather for worship and prepare our hearts, we would ask that you please silence your cell phones for the duration of the service.

INTRODUCTION

The new church year begins with a wake-up call: Christ is coming soon! In today's readings both Paul and Jesus challenge us to wake from sleep, for we know neither the day nor hour of the Lord's coming. Isaiah proclaims the day when God will gather all people on the holy mountain and there will be no more war or suffering. Though we vigilantly watch for the promised day of salvation, we wait for what we already have: Christ comes among us this day as the word and meal that strengthens our faith in the promises of God.

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

ELW 438 My Lord What a Morning [1,3]

LIGHTING OF THE FIRST ADVENT CANDLE

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.
You call all nations to walk in your light and to seek your ways of justice and peace, for the night is past, and the dawn of your coming is near. Bless us as we light the first candle of this wreath. Rouse us from sleep, that we may be ready to greet our Lord when he comes and welcome him into our hearts and homes, for he is our light and our salvation. Blessed be God Forever. **Amen.**

BOB 146

*Light the first candle, and sing:
Light the candle as a symbol of the Light that leads the way;
For each candle is a symbol of the hope that's ours today.
As we Strike the match and light the wick,
Come Spirit shine bright.
Grant that all may see from the darkness
Your Gift, Your Truth, Your Light.*

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
who alone does wondrous things.
Blessed be God's name forever. Amen.

Beloved, now is the time to wake from sleep.
Let us confront our sins,
and confess them to the one who is merciful and just.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God of new beginnings,
we confess that we have not welcomed your holy reign.
We have strayed from your paths.
We prepare for war instead of peace.
We dishonor one another and your creation.
Purify us with your refining fire
and set us again on your way of love,
that we may bear fruit worthy of repentance,
and welcome your coming among us. Amen.

People of God,
a new thing is growing in our midst,
a tender branch,
a living sign.
By water and the Spirit you are joined to this wonder.
You have put on † Christ,
and your sins have been washed away.
Rejoice in the way of the Lord. **Amen.**

GREETING

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

KYRIE

*Kyrie eleison, christe eleison,
Kyrie eleison, eleison, eleison.*

HYMN OF PRAISE

WOV 638 Holy Child Within the Manger

*Holy Child within the manger,
long ago yet ever near;
Come as friend to ev'ry stranger,
come as hope for ev'ry fear.
As you lived to heal the broken,
greet the out-cast, free the bound,
As you taught us love unspoken,
teach us now where you are found.*

*Once again we tell the story how
your love for us was shown,*

*When the image of your glory
wore an image like our own.
Come, enlighten with your wisdom,
come and fill us with your grace.
May the fire of your compassion
Kindle ev'ry land and race.*

*Holy Child within the manger,
Lead us ever in your way,
So we see in ev'ry stranger
How you come to us today.
In our lives and in our living
Give us strength to live as you,
That our hearts might be forgiving
And our spirits strong and true.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come.

**By your merciful protection
save us from the threatening dangers of our sins,
and enlighten our walk in the way of your salvation,
for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.**

FIRST READING: ISAIAH 2:1-5

The visionary message presented in this reading focuses on a future day when God establishes a universal reign of peace. Divine decisions will make war obsolete, and the worshipping community responds: "Let us walk in the light of that Lord now!"

The word that Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

In days to come
the mountain of the LORD's house
shall be established as the highest of the mountains,
and shall be raised above the hills;
all the nations shall stream to it.
Many peoples shall come and say,
"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the house of the God of Jacob;
that he may teach us his ways

and that we may walk in his paths.”
For out of Zion shall go forth instruction,
and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
He shall judge between the nations,
and shall arbitrate for many peoples;
they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.
O house of Jacob,
come, let us walk
in the light of the LORD!

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 122

I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD.”

**Now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.**

Jerusalem is built as a city
that is at unity with itself;
**to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD,
the assembly of Israel, to praise the name of the LORD.**

For there are the thrones of judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.

**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
“May they prosper who love you.**

Peace be within your walls
and quietness within your towers.

**For the sake of my kindred and companions,
I pray for your prosperity.**

Because of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek to do you good.”

SECOND READING: ROMANS 13:11-14

Paul compares the advent of Christ to the coming of dawn. We live our lives today in light of Christ's coming in the future.

Besides this, you know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light; let us live honorably as in the day, not in reveling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ELW 715 Christ, Be Our Light

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.

Longing for truth, we turn to you.

Make us your own your holy people, light for the world to see.

Christ, be our light!

Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.

Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gathered today.

The holy gospel according to Matthew the twenty-fourth chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 24:36-44

Jesus describes his second coming as a sudden, turbulent event that will bring about deep change to our normal, day-to-day lives. Therefore, he urges people to stay awake, be aware, and wait expectantly, because the Son of Man will come unannounced.

[Jesus said to the disciples,] "About that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming. But understand this: if the

owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.”

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

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE AND SERMON

Pastor Jessie Obrecht

HYMN OF THE DAY

ELW 439 Soon and Very Soon [1,2]

PROFESSION OF FAITH

Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith.

**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 CHURCH

Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

THE PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

OFFERING/OFFERTORY

Dakota Road Build Up

Build up, prepare the way.

Remove the obstructions from my people's way.

Build up, prepare the way. God is near, God is here today.

Break the chains of injustice. Let the oppressed go free.

Share our homes with the homeless and our bread with the hungry.

Build up, prepare the way.

Remove the obstructions from my people's way.

Build up, prepare the way. God is near, God is here today.

Then your light will break forth like the dawn and your healing will break into song.

Build up, prepare the way.

Remove the obstructions from my people's way.

Build up, prepare the way. God is near, God is here today.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Let us pray. Eternal God,

you make the desert bloom

and send springs of water to thirsty ground.

Receive these simple gifts of bread, wine, and money,

and make us messengers of your mercy and love

for all in need of your healing and justice.

We ask this through Christ our Savior. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give our thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,...and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

ELW 413 Holy Holy Holy

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!

Early in the morning your song shall rise to thee.

Holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty!

God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus first taught us:

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

The Lord's Table is open to believers of all Christian traditions.

Small children or adults who are not receiving the sacrament are

welcome to come forward for a blessing. We believe that Christ

comes to us in the bread and cup for the forgiveness of sins and

new life. Gluten free wafers are available, please let your server

know. Choice of red wine and white grape juice offered.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

LH 232 Thine the Amen

ELW 461 All Who Hunger Gather Here

ELW 466 In the Singing

ELW 474 Bread of Life from Heaven

COMMUNION BLESSING

May the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in God's grace. **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray. Faithful God,
**in this meal you have remembered your mercy,
bringing heaven to earth in the body and blood of Christ.
As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled,
sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery.
Guide us toward your promised future,
coming to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

God the eternal Word,
who dwells with us in Jesus,
and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit,
✠ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

ELW 244 Rejoice, Rejoice Believers [1,2]

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is near.
Thanks be to God.

And all God's children said: **Amen.**

SERVING TODAY

Accompanist	Lynn Ryan, piano; Mac Carlson, violin; Sara Graft, jimbe
Lay Assistant	Judy Statham
Usher	Sara Sexe
Tech	Adam Elkin
Children's Church	Julia Elkin and Ava Fossen
Hospitality	AnneRose Rogers and Terry Korpela
Counters	Stephanie Cummings and Sara Sexe

Flowers are given by Matt and Sandy Pepos in memory of Sandy's mother Cheri Schmidt's birthday.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today at Bethel we celebrate First Sunday of Advent.

Please stay after worship today to spread a little **Christmas cheer** and decorate the sanctuary and narthex.

THIS WEEK

Tuesday 11/29

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am.
- Men's Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall and Zoom 7:00 am

Wednesday 11/30

- Bible Study led by Pastor Jessie on Zoom 10:00 am
- Logos Youth ministry 5:30 pm; High School 6:30 pm

Friday 12/2

- Bethel office closed
- Aitz Chaim Friday worship service 6:00 pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday 12/4

- Logos Christmas Program and Family Worship led by Pastor Jessie and the Logos Youth Ministry in-person & live stream 9:30 am
- Stop by our craft and bake sale and support our Vacation Bible School Fund.

Tuesday 12/6

- Electric City Bible Study, Zoom meeting 7:00 am.
- Men's Breakfast in the Fellowship Hall and Zoom 7:00 am

Wednesday 12/7

- Bible Study led by Pastor Jessie on Zoom 10:00 am
- Logos Youth ministry 5:30 pm; High School 6:30 pm

Thursday 12/8

- Exec Board Zoom meeting 5:30 pm

Friday 12/9

- Bethel office closed

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