

Community of Christ Lutheran Church Second Sunday of Advent, December 7, 2025 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. Pastor Stephen C. Bond



THE GATHERING

Welcome Pastor Stephen Bond

Musical Prelude

"The Star Carol" by Alfred Burt

Eric Dickey

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed are you, O God, who first called light out of darkness, who is present with us now, who promises new creation. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence is kept for reflection.

O God in whom we hope,

We confess that we have turned from you, and from the goodness of your reign. We resist your gentle pull that draws us close to Christ. We reject your welcome, letting old divisions fester into hostility and hate. We wander off impatiently in our own direction, rather than wait for your coming. We have refused to learn your way of peace. Forgive us, O God. Turn these hearts back to you, and gather us into your peaceable kingdom. Amen.

God is doing a new thing, here and now. See it, and know you are forgiven.

You have been found and taken by the hand.

You have been welcomed into the family of Christ.

You are freed to belong in the people of God forever. Hear it, and know it is true.

Amen.

Hymn "Hark, the Glad Sound!" ELW 239

Greeting

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





Prayer of the Day

P Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming nurture our growth as people of repentance and peace; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath "He Came Down"



- 1 He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love;
- 2 He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light;



he came down that we may have love; hal-le-lu-jah for-ev-er - more. he came down that we may have light;

Childrens Sermon

THE READINGS

The First Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

- ¹ A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.
 - ² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD.

He shall not judge by what his eyes see

or decide by what his ears hear,

⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge for the poor and decide with equity for the oppressed of the earth;

he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth,

and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb;

the leopard shall lie down with the kid;

the calf and the lion will feed together,

and a little child shall lead them.

⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze;

their young shall lie down together;

and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹ They will not hurt or destroy

on all my holy mountain,

for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD

as the waters cover the sea.

¹⁰ On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

L The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God!

The Second Reading: Romans 15:4-13

⁴Whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, so that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

⁵ May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁷ Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God. ⁸ For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the circumcised on behalf of the truth of God in order that he might confirm the promises given to the ancestors ⁹ and that the gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,

"Therefore I will confess you among the gentiles and sing praises to your name";

¹⁰ and again he says,

"Rejoice, O gentiles, with his people";

¹¹ and again,

"Praise the Lord, all you gentiles, and let all the peoples praise him";

¹² and again Isaiah says,

"The root of Jesse shall come,

the one who rises to rule the gentiles;

in him the gentiles shall hope."

¹³ May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

L The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God!





The Holy Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

P The Holy Gospel according to.... C Glory to you, O Lord!

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord; make his paths straight.'"

⁴ Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵ Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region around the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the River Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? ⁸ Therefore, bear fruit worthy of repentance, ⁹ and do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰ Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; therefore every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹ "I baptize you with water for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is more powerful than I, and I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹² His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

P The Gospel of the Lord! C Praise to you, O Christ!

Sermon "U-Turns Allowed" Pastor Stephen Bond

Hymn "On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry" ELW 249

Nicene Creed

C We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him, all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven; was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day, he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

WE DEDICATE OUR HEARTS IN PRAYER

P In our waiting and watching, we come to you in prayer, O God, trusting your promise to renew the church, the nations, and the whole creation.

A brief silence.

AM With wisdom and understanding, inspire the faithful around the world. Unite hearts and minds in work to address poverty, access to housing, and equity among peoples. God of grace, hear our prayer.

AM With counsel and might, move us to care for creation. As we dream of the day when all creatures will flourish alongside one another, guide us in ways humanity and all creation will mutually thrive. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

AM With righteousness and faithfulness, encourage nations to live in harmony with one another. We pray for international student and teacher exchanges, for our partner churches, and for the shared mission of Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran Disaster Response. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

AM With steadfastness and encouragement, strengthen those who have lost hope in the face of grief, depression, or disease; Tom Jennings, Larry Battles, Sue & Jim Enk, Christal & Chad Pritchard, Frank O'Konski, Luke Holtz, Ron Hetherwick, Jake Cope, Virginia Dillon, Staci, Laura Reimer, Greg Urbanski, Matt Jurrus, Sally, Tom Druschel, Cindy Hartbarger, Phyllis Sturgeon, Jeff Bucher, Albert Preston, Paul Ladd, Greg Ganelli, Jessica Queen, Charles Gorniak, David Reimer, Stacy Huffman, Carol Borkowski, Barb Thober, Rita Dusseau, Laynee Bishop, Shirley Lambert, Vicki Masterson, Barb Marsing, Don Dayton... and all others whom we remember in silence. Renew the spirits of those recovering from surgery and medical procedures. God of grace, hear our prayer.

AM With welcome and hospitality, embolden us in our shared ministry to overcome all that divides. In acts of repentance, reconciliation, and reparation, may we serve in the way of Christ. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

AM With joy and peace, we remember our loved ones in faith, *especially Matt Davis*. Fill us with the hope of the Holy Spirit now and into the ages of ages. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

P Draw near to us, O God, as we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy through Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. **Amen.**

THE MEAL

All Christians are welcome to commune at our Altar. You do not have to be a member of this congregation to receive Communion. Grape juice is available in the inner ring of glasses for those desiring it.

Sharing of the Peace

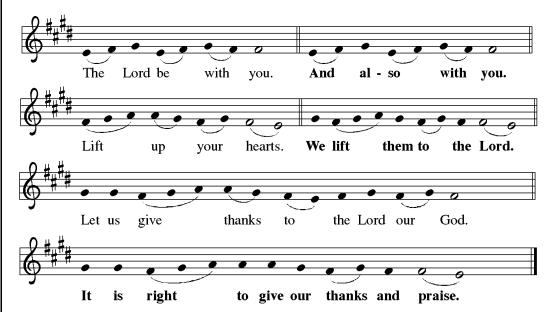
P The Peace of the Lord be with you all! **C** And also with you! Share an expression of peace with your neighbor, please.

Our Tithes and Offering *Bring your gifts to the Altar, or you may offer gifts in the tray located at the rear of the sanctuary. Thank you.*

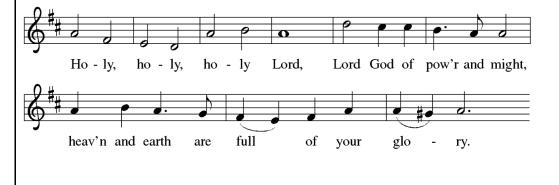
Offering Prayer

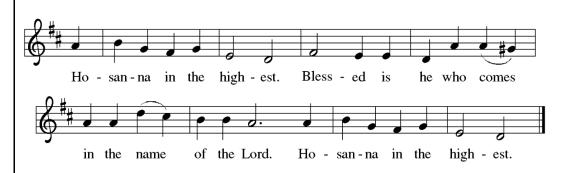
AM Nourishing God, you are water in the wilderness and streams in the desert. Through this meal, satisfy our parched places, that we may rejoice and be for the world signs of your kingdom come. **Amen.**

The Great Thanksgiving



**Eucharistic Prayer Continues





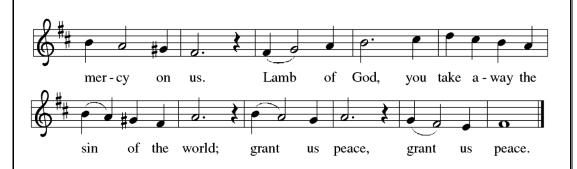
The Words of Institution

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus said, Do this for the remembrance of me.

The Lord's Prayer

P Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray...C 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.





Hymn

"Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"
"Come to the Table"

Sung 2x

ELW 254 ELW 481

Post Communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

AM God our host, at this table you have fed us with joy and gladness. Send us forth, eager to share the feast, welcome the stranger, and bear good fruit in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

THE SENDING

Milestones & Announcements:

The Blessing

P May God who comes among us, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, grant you patience in waiting, peace in the darkness, and good news to share today and always. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn

"Prepare the Royal Highway"

ELW 264

Dismissal

AM Go in peace. Keep Awake. Thanks be to God.

AM And next week, C Bring a friend!

Postlude

Making Jesus Known"

Welcome to Community of Christ! We welcome YOU to worship with us at one of our TWO worship services. Join us at 8:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. in person or on Facebook Live. We look forward to seeing you, and as always, BRING A FRIEND!!!!

Thursday Bible Study Looks at Wisdom Literature Join us for our Thursday Afternoon Bible Study series at 1:00 p.m., as Pastor Steve and Vicar Natalie delve into the Wisdom Literature in the Bible. These are a set of writings in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament that offer perspectives for daily living and the meaning of life, community, work, and goodness. They can be as short as a fortune-cookie fortune (like the Proverbs), as expansive as a philosophical treatise and memoir (like Ecclesiastes), as dramatic as the saga of Job, and as romantic as the poetry of Song of Songs. So, think of this series like a charcuterie board—a sampling of the different flavors and textures of all these kinds of wisdom literature in your Bible, which you might be led to study and read more in depth on your own. Join us on Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. in the Bible Study/Council room, with weekly video summaries up online on our church Facebook and YouTube as well. See you around the table!

Sunday School Advent Series. With the beginning of Advent, our Sunday School children have launched a new series following the theme of each week's candle. On December 21, they will celebrate with a birthday party for Jesus. As a special way to help families prepare for Christ's coming, each child will also receive a take-home Advent bag filled with crafts and conversation starters to help connect what we're learning in church with faith at home throughout the week.

Deadline for Newsletter Looking ahead, due to the busyness of the holiday season and upcoming vacations, the firm deadlines for the next newsletter will be Tuesday, December 17, for our January 2026 newsletter. Thank you for your understanding.

Adopt a Resident at the Lutheran Home of Mercy!
Thank you to those who have adopted a resident at the LHM! TODAY,
December 7th, is the last day to drop off your wrapped gifts under the tree in the gathering space. As you drop them off, please be sure to sign the resident sheet back in with the date and your name. Thank you for showing love and kindness as Jesus teaches us! Let's make this holiday season special for our residents.

Angel Gifts for Salem's Children

This year, as in past years, Community of Christ will have the opportunity to reach out and bless the children of our sister church, Salem Lutheran Church, in north Toledo. Pastor Mike from Salem will be providing us with a list of names of their children and their gift requests. We will incorporate these requests into an envelope and have them displayed on the bulletin board in the Gathering Place. Here are some important dates for the project:

- Sunday, November 23rd, 2025, the bulletin board in the Gathering Space will be decorated with Salem Angel requests.
- Select your "Angel" and enter your name and phone number on the pink or blue Angel slip on the board. Take the envelope behind the pink or blue slip with you. It has all the information you need regarding the gift request. Please do not remove the pink or blue slips or relocate them on the board, as this is our inventory method.
- Shop for your "Angel" and leave your gift under the Christmas tree in the sanctuary.
- Sunday, December 14th, 2025, is the last day to return your gifts. Please have them under the tree by no later than 10:00 am. Ken and I will be transferring your gifts to Salem that day! Thanks for helping to bless these children at Christmas time! Shelly & Ken Hayes

Community of Christ Cookie Exchange! Join us on Sunday, December 14, for a festive Cookie Exchange hosted by the Fellowship Committee! Bring 1–2 dozen cookies to share, along with a container to take home your yummy assortment. We'll also have a fun craft for the kids, plus hot chocolate and coffee—perfect for enjoying a few cookies right away!

Congregational Breakfast – Dec. 21 at 9:00 a.m. Join us for a festive congregational breakfast on Sunday, December 21, at 9:00 a.m.! We're looking for youth families to help provide meals, and everyone is invited to come and enjoy a delicious breakfast together. A free-will offering will be collected, with all proceeds going toward updates to the youth group room. Come share food, fellowship, and fun! Scan the QR Code to sign up to help with food.

"Peace Be Still" - Women's Retreat Calling all ladies!! On February 21st, Community of Christ Lutheran will be hosting a women's retreat called "Peace Be Still: Rest, Release, Renew." Take some time to pause and enjoy a restful time of bible study, worship, spiritual practices, and fellowship. Doors will open at 8 a.m. for check-in. Breakfast and coffee/tea bar will be available before the start of the retreat. The retreat will begin at 9 a.m. and will end at 5 p.m. Lunch will be included in the retreat price. The cost of attendance is \$50.00. Please feel free to invite other women in your life to attend. Reserve your spot by scanning the QR code, or by following this link: https://forms.office.com/r/RNs14uginT?origin=lprLink. Hurry and sign up today, there are only 50 slots available!

A portion of the retreat funds collected will be given to Salem Lutheran Church to support their food ministry. We will also be collecting for The Period Project, a drive to collect feminine hygiene products to support the needs at Salem Lutheran. We ask that each guest consider bringing at least one item to donate in support of this ministry.

"Prayers for the Peaceable Kingdom"-Collected Prayers for Advent

For the past several years in Advent, we have offered an anthology of daily Scripture readings and original prayers for the season that dovetailed with the Scripture readings we are using in Sunday worship (which are also keyed into the Revised Common Lectionary). In 2023, that collection was called "Astonish Us Again," and last year's collection, "On the Edge of Hope," was also available. Because these have been well-received, this year, we are pleased to offer a new compilation that will connect with our new theme for the year that begins with this Advent (November 30). Prayers for the Peaceable Kingdom is a new collection of original prayers and Scripture readings for each day in Advent, drawing especially on readings from the Bible we'll hear this Advent on God's coming reign of peace in which "swords are beaten into plowshares" and "the wolf and the lamb lie down together." This collection is available to you this year either as a printed booklet (in the Gathering Space), as a PDF compilation you can read on your phone, computer, or tablet, or as daily posts on our church Facebook page. These are free, original, and can be shared as far and wide as you would like. Check them out this Advent, as together we pray in hope for the peaceable kingdom of Jesus, our Lord!

Join us on Wednesday Nights for Advent Midweek Worship with Holden Evening Prayer. We call Jesus the "Prince of Peace," and we sing that on the night of his birth, "all is calm, all is bright." But quite often our lives are especially hectic and stressful in the weeks before Christmas, aren't they? From gift-buying and cookie baking to parties and concerts, from decorating our houses and family gatherings, we can feel flustered and frazzled during the "most wonderful time of the year" rather than at peace. So, we want to invite you to a weekly chance to hit the pause button on the craziness and be re-centered on the Good News of God's coming to us in Christ, with our three Advent midweek services using Holden Evening Prayer. Our next two services will be on December 10th and 17th at 7:00 p.m. join us for a beautiful and contemplative sung setting of Evening Prayer and reflections on the Word that will ground us in our hope for Jesus' coming. (Choir will rehearse following these services, starting at 7:45 p.m. on these evenings.) If you've never experienced this setting for evening worship, you'll want to try it, and this is a fantastic event to invite friends and neighbors to, as well! Join us this Advent!

Blue Christmas Service Offers Comfort and Hope—Dec. 21 at 3:00 p.m.

The holidays can be a difficult time for people, especially if they're dealing with grief and loss. Whether still working through a recent death, feeling renewed sadness over a long-time loss, or just struggling while others seem full of Christmas-time cheer, this can be a heavy season of the year. So, we'll continue a tradition we've done for the last several years here at Community of Christ by hosting a Blue Christmas service—a time of worship that offers comfort for those who need it, particularly at this time of year, and that connects our faith in God-with-Us who came among us in Bethlehem with our lived experience of loss and grief. This year's service will be held at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 21, with collaboration and shared leadership from our friends at Hope United Methodist Church as well. As always, it is open to any and all who would find it helpful. You are welcome to invite friends, relatives, neighbors, or community members who might need a moment this season for grief to be named and comfort to be given, together with folks from around our community.

The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!

You're invited to come spread Christmas cheer this holiday season by caroling for some of our dear friends who could use a little extra Christmas cheer. We will gather at the Community of Christ parking lot at 5:00 pm on FRIDAY, December 12th, to go spread joy. Afterwards, anyone interested is welcome to come to Kevin and Kari Swagler's house for a pizza party. Kindly sign up below so we have an idea of how many to expect.



This Christmas season, Hope United Methodist Church is excited to present a community-involved Christmas cantata entitled A Christmas Offering: A Musical Celebration of Worship and Hope, which is a heartfelt worship experience that celebrates the true meaning of the season: bringing our praise and gifts back to the King.

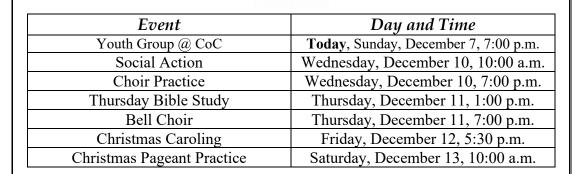
Blending contemporary Christian songs with updated carols and a moving narration, this musical speaks directly to those walking through the ups and downs of everyday life, reminding us of the unshakable hope found in Jesus. With creative arrangements by Marty Parks ranging from a Celtic-inspired "The Infant God" to an energetic, Mannheim Steamroller-style "God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen," there's something here for every musical taste.

Our talented cast of almost 30 participants includes most of the Whitehouse Hope Choir. And they are joined by friends and participants from five Northwest Ohio area churches, spanning from Bowling Green to Waterville, and Maumee to Sylvania.

The cantata runs for just under an hour, a perfect length for people of all ages, especially during the holiday season! The performances will be on **Sunday**, **December 14**, **and Monday**, **December 15**, **both at 7:00 p.m.** at Hope United Methodist Church, located at 10610 Waterville St. in Whitehouse, Ohio.

Additionally, all presentations are completely free! And light refreshments will be served.

So please consider joining us for an incredible message that reiterates the true reason for the season! If you have any questions, you can contact Hope Church at (419) 877-5232.





Altar Flowers given by Dale and Debbie Grimes.

During the spirit of the holiday season, winter flowers are the smiles of God's love, goodness, and hope!

2025 Congregational Meeting!

TODAY! December 7, following the 10:00 a.m. service. Please plan to attend!

Community of Christ will host three worship services on Christmas Eve: 4:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., & 11:00 p.m. Each worship service will include Christmas carols, candlelight (battery-operated candles for the kids), and Holy Communion. Invite a friend to worship with you this season!

The Church Office will be closed: Wednesday, December 24, Thursday, December 25, Friday, December 26, and Thursday, January 1st.