



## First Sunday of Christmas

A Service of Lessons & Carols  
December 28, 2025 at 10:30 a.m.

First Lutheran Church  
Decorah, IA

# WELCOME TO FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH

Whatever your country of origin or ancestry, your race or ethnic heritage, and whether you are religious or not, Christian or not, or Lutheran or not, you are welcome here.

Whether you are male, female or transgender, young or old, straight, gay, lesbian or bisexual, you are welcome here.

Whether you are single or partnered, married, widowed or divorced, you are welcome here.

Whether you are wealthy or poor, own a home or rent, live at home or are homeless, you are welcome here.

Whatever your political views - whether to the right, to the left or to the center, you are welcome here.

Whatever your strengths or weaknesses, gifts or challenges, they will be honored, for you are welcome here.

First Lutheran Church is committed to being a loving and welcoming community centered in the Good News of Jesus Christ. In faithfulness to the Christian Gospel, in reflection of our Lutheran emphasis on grace, and in celebration of our shared baptismal journey, we promise to enter into ministry with all who seek God here.

We invite you to join us for worship and take up your place with us in ministry for you are welcome at First Lutheran Church.

## NOTES ABOUT WORSHIP:

This **bulletin** contains the prayers, readings, music, and responses that you will need to participate in worship.

**Hymnals** can be found in the pews. We use both the red Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) and purple All Creation Sings (ACS) hymnals. We also offer large print copies of the hymn text at the back of the sanctuary.

We receive an **offering** that is used to support the ministries of this congregation and partner ministries in the community and across the world.

The **communion meal** is open to all who desire to participate, of any age. Communion is received in three stations: receive the bread, receive the wine, then consume at the third station. Gluten-free wafers and juice are available at both stations. Individual communion kits are also available as you enter the sanctuary for those who wish to remain in the pews.

**Children are welcome at all of our worship services.** A play area, where you'll also find quiet bags, is available for families in the sanctuary. Parents are welcome to nurse or feed their children anywhere in the sanctuary or building they are comfortable. We also have a staffed nursery during Sunday worship; follow the signs out the door at the front of the sanctuary.

**Are you visiting?** We invite you to fill out a yellow connection card found in your pew. Please also introduce yourself to Pr. Mike on your way out! Consider yourself welcome and invited to participate in the activities and worship life of this congregation!

PRELUDE Three Christmas Carols arr. P. Manz

## WELCOME

\*GATHERING HYMN ELW 269 Once in Royal David's City

\*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.**

\*PRAYER OF THE DAY *After we pause to breathe and for personal prayer, the presiding minister will pray.*  
Light of life, you came in flesh, born into human pain and joy,  
and gave us power to be your children. Grant us faith, O Christ, to  
see your presence among us, so that all of creation may sing new  
songs of gladness and walk in the way of peace. **Amen.**

READING Isaiah 63:7-9

<sup>7</sup> I will recount the gracious deeds of the LORD,  
the praiseworthy acts of the LORD,  
because of all that the LORD has done for us  
and the great favor to the house of Israel  
that he has shown them according to his mercy,  
according to the abundance of his steadfast love.  
<sup>8</sup> For he said, "Surely they are my people,  
children who will not act deceitfully,"  
and he became their savior  
<sup>9</sup> in all their distress.  
It was no messenger or angel  
but his presence that saved them;  
in his love and pity it was he who redeemed them;  
he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.

HYMN ELW 272 Lo, how a rose e'er blooming

**READING** Hebrews 2:10-18

<sup>10</sup> It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings. <sup>11</sup> For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, <sup>12</sup> saying,

“I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.”

<sup>13</sup> And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Here am I and the children whom God has given me.”

<sup>14</sup> Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, <sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. <sup>16</sup> For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

**HYMN** ELW 286 Your Little Ones, Dear Lord

**READING** Luke 2:1-7

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup> This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup> All went to their own towns to be registered. <sup>4</sup> Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. <sup>5</sup> He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. <sup>6</sup> While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. <sup>7</sup> And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

**HYMN** ACS 908 In a far-off place, Jesus comes

**READING** Luke 2:8-20

<sup>8</sup> In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup> Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see — I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: <sup>11</sup> to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace among those whom he favors!"

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." <sup>16</sup> So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; <sup>18</sup> and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. <sup>19</sup> But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

**HYMN** ACS 909 Where Shepherds Lately Kneled

**READING** Matthew 2:1-12

<sup>1</sup> In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." <sup>3</sup> When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; <sup>4</sup> and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. <sup>5</sup> They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

<sup>6</sup> 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.'"

<sup>7</sup> Then Herod secretly called for the wise men and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. <sup>8</sup> Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when

you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." <sup>9</sup> When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. <sup>10</sup> When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. <sup>11</sup> On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. <sup>12</sup> And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

**HYMN** ELW 294 In the Bleak Midwinter

**READING** Matthew 2:13-23

<sup>13</sup> Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." <sup>14</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, <sup>15</sup> and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." <sup>16</sup> When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. <sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

<sup>18</sup> "A voice was heard in Ramah,  
wailing and loud lamentation,  
Rachel weeping for her children;  
she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

<sup>19</sup> When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, <sup>20</sup> "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." <sup>21</sup> Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. <sup>23</sup> There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazarene."

**HYMN** ACS 1060 Gentle Joseph Heard a Warning

**READING** John 1:1-14

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being <sup>4</sup> in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. <sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

**HYMN** ELW 296 What Child Is This?

**\*PRAYERS** Empowered by the news of Christ's birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

*A brief silence.*

Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

With the joy of Christ's birth in our hearts, we commend our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your boundless mercy and eternal love; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

**\*PEACE** The peace of Christ be with you always. **And also with you.**

**OFFERING** From Heaven Above arr. W. Held

*Join our entire First Lutheran family in bringing gifts to the Christ child this Christmas season. Our goal is 100% participation—every household giving at least \$1—because when we all give together, we embody the joy of the magi's generosity. If giving cash, please use an offering envelope with your name so we can acknowledge your gift.*

*Give online at [firstlutherandecorah.org/give](http://firstlutherandecorah.org/give), text "GIVE" to (563) 412-2243, or scan the QR code.*



**\*GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, from east to west, from north to south, in all seasons of our life, to give thanks to you, O God, O Living One.

Dwelling beyond time and space, you abide among us, embracing the world with your justice and love. And so, with the church in all times and places, with the multitudes in heaven and the countless choirs of angels, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**\*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

sung to *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of heav'n and earth adored.**

**O how blest is he who comes in the holy name of God.**

**Joyful all the nations praise; loud hosannas now we raise;**

**with the heav'nly choirs proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem!"**

**Lift your voice and with them sing, "Glory to the newborn king!"**

**\*THANKSGIVING AT THE  
TABLE WITH WORDS OF  
INSTITUTION**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life:

Blessed are you for the birth of creation.

**Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light.**

Blessed are you for your promise to your people.

**Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams.**

Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will.

**Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.**

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. 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. Do this for the remembrance of me.

So, as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup, we proclaim the mystery of our faith.

**Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**



With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. Make your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**\*LORD'S PRAYER**

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

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

**INVITATION TO  
COMMUNION**

**COMMUNION MUSIC**

ELW 279 O Little Town of Bethlehem

ELW 284 'Twas in the Moon of Winter Time

**\*PRAYER AFTER  
COMMUNION**

God our redeemer, you have fed us at this table with gifts of grace, truth, and life. As you have gathered us in joy, send us forth as messengers of your peace. Make us shine with the good news of your glory, born to us in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

**\*BLESSING**

The Word that Mary brought to birth carry you into new and abundant life. **Amen.**

The Word that Joseph cradled in his arms enfold you with love and strength. **Amen.**

The Word that angels proclaimed in song bring harmony to our world. **Amen.**

And the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the + Son, and the Holy Spirit, be upon you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

\*SENDING HYMN    ELW 270 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

\*DISMISSAL    Go in peace. Christ is with you.  
**Thanks be to God.**

\*POSTLUDE    God Rest You, Merry One and All    arr. R. Haan



**WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS:**

Pr. Mike Wilker, preaching & presiding minister  
Jon Thompson, assisting minister  
Diane Scholl, reader  
Lindy Borske-Hubbard, reader & communion assistant  
Elise Nelson, communion assistant  
Serina Norvold Hallquist, organ  
Pat Seckar, worship welcome team  
Brian Erickson, worship welcome team  
Jeff & Donita Joens, worship welcome team  
Brian Foust & Eric Winters, worship welcome team



**The altar arrangements** are in loving memory of Paul Dirks.

Given by Norma Dirks, Carrie Dirks and Leo & Andre Dirks Amodeo, and Nathan, Rachel, Noah & June Breitenbach-Dirks.