



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
READING, PENNSYLVANIA
Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 21, 2025



*The Dream of Saint Joseph (c. 1628–1645)
Georges de La Tour (1593–1652)*

*Matthew 1 focuses on Joseph's quiet crisis and the angelic assurance that the child is 'God with us.'
La Tour's candlelit 'Dream of Saint Joseph' lingers on the tension between shadow and soft light on Joseph's face, echoing how faith often takes shape in the nocturnal spaces where God's promises disturb and console the conscience.*

WELCOME TO TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

FOUNDED IN 1751

*The Rev. Hans E.
Becklin*
SENIOR PASTOR

*Deaconess Deborah
Matern Graf*
DEACON FOR
FORMATION
AND SERVICE

*Dr. Cameron
Lee Wentz*
CANTOR

Matthew Mellen
DIRECTOR OF
TECHNOLOGY AND
COMMUNICATION

Rachel Gambone
CONGREGATIONAL LIFE
COORDINATOR

Peter Graf
FINANCIAL
ADMINISTRATOR

Pam Wasmuth
BOOKKEEPER

John McKeon
PROPERTY MANAGER

Dave Troche
SEXTON



*The Rev. Fred S.
Opalinski*
PASTOR EMERITUS

*Karen S.
Eddinger*
MINISTER OF MUSIC
EMERITA



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US TODAY as we worship God through word and sacrament in this landmark building, home to our congregation since 1791. Our liturgy is rooted in tradition; all are welcome to participate as they feel comfortable.

TRINITY IS A VIBRANT CONGREGATION with members from around Berks County and beyond. If you are interested in learning more about membership, speak with a member of our staff.



DURING WORSHIP, we pray, sing, listen, chant, read, and move our bodies. Please silence your cell phone so as not to disturb this rich experience for yourself or others.

THE HIGHLIGHT OF OUR WORSHIP is receiving the Eucharist, the true Body and Blood of Christ. All who trust that Jesus is present in this holy meal are invited to receive Him with us today. Detailed instructions for communion can be found on page 19 of the bulletin.

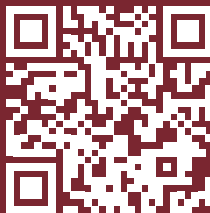


CHILDREN ARE ALWAYS WELCOME in our worship! A changing table can be found in the all-gender restroom on the first floor. Our Meditation Room has space for nursing or a sensory break. Restrooms can be found on the first floor and are accessible by elevator. Our AED is mounted on the wall in the stairway next to the baptismal font.



WE WELCOME ALL LGBTQ+ people as full participants in our common life. We're proud to proclaim this publicly in our city and wider church as a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

OUR WORSHIP IS AN ACT OF OFFERING. By being here, we present ourselves and our time to God.



WE ALSO PRESENT our tithes and monetary offerings to God. During the offertory procession, they are brought forward along with the bread and wine used for the Eucharist.

WE NO LONGER pass an offering plate in the pew. However, an offering plate for cash or checks is available in the narthex. You can also share your offering electronically using this QR code.

The HOLY EUCHARIST AT 10:00 A.M.

Congregational words are in bold print.

PRELUDE

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

Anne Krentz Organ
(b. 1960)

Lisa Speece, flute

INTROIT

Advent Antiphon

Weston Priory/Gregory Norbet
(b. 1940)

*As the Introit begins,
please stand in body
or spirit and face the
processional cross.*

Jacinda Motley, soprano

Heavens, pour down your waters from above:
let the Just One descend,
Open up, O Earth
and let the Savior bud forth.

APOSTOLIC 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.

GATHERING HYMN

Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus

ELW 254

*Continue to follow
the processional cross,
turning as it
passes you.*



1 Come, thou long-ex - pect-ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo-ple free;
2 Born thy peo-ple to de - liv - er, born a child, and yet a king;



from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.
born to reign in us for - ev - er, now thy gra-cious king-dom bring.



Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,
By thine own e - ter - nal Spir-it rule in all our hearts a - lone;



dear de - sire of ev-'ry na-tion, joy of ev-'ry long-ing heart.
by thine all - suf - fi - cient mer-it raise us to thy glo-rious throne.

Text: Charles Wesley,
1707-1788

Music: JEFFERSON
W. Walker,
Southern Harmony,
1835

Arr. © 2006
Augsburg Fortress.

*In Advent instead
of being directed
to God the Father,
this prayer is often
directed to God
the Son, showing
us how Advent is
particularly focused
on the identity and
work of Jesus.*

Please be seated.

*Young people come
forward as the
congregation sings
a refrain, found on
page 18. During this
time, we learn about
the liturgy together.*

PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ,
and come. With your abundant
grace and might, free us from the
sin that hinders our faith, that
eagerly we may receive your

promises, for you live and reign
with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever.

Amen.

READING

Isaiah 7:10-16

The Lord spoke to Ahaz, saying, "Ask a sign
of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol
or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not
ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test."
Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of
David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals
that you weary my God also? Therefore the
Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the

young woman is with child and shall bear a
son and shall name him Immanuel. He shall
eat curds and honey by the time he knows
how to refuse the evil and choose the good.
For before the child knows how to refuse the
evil and choose the good, the land before
whose two kings you are in dread will be
deserted."

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

THE WONDERS OF WORSHIP

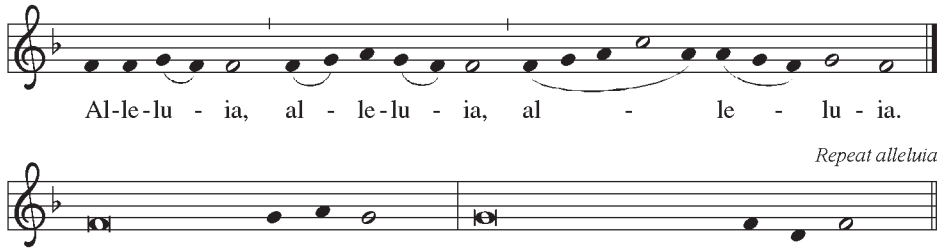
The Gospel

*Please stand
in body or spirit to
welcome the Gospel.*

*The congregation
sings the Alleluia and
Proper Verse.*

*The Alleluia is
repeated after the
verse.*

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



**The virgin shall conceive and | bear a son,
and they shall name | him Emmanuel.**

GOSPEL

Matthew 1:18-25

**The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people

from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

"Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

**The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pastor Hans E. Becklin

*Please stand
in body or spirit.*

HYMN OF THE DAY

Savior of the Nations, Come

ELW 263

Text: attr. Ambrose
of Milan, 340-397;
Martin Luther,
1483-1546;
tr. hymnal version

Music: NUN KOMM,
DER HEIDEN
HEILAND
J. Walter,
*Geistliche
Gesangbüchlein*,
1524

Text © 2006
Augsburg Fortress

The musical score is written for a four-part choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system contains the first four lines of the hymn, and the second system contains the next four lines. The lyrics are printed below the staves, with line numbers 1 through 8 indicating the start of each line of text.

1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.
2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, but the mys - tic Breath of God,
3 Won - drous birth—oh, won - drous child— from his throne, a vir - gin mild!
4 From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, back to God his path - way leads;

Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth: God has cho - sen such a birth.
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of wom - an, blos - som fresh.
Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
out to van - quish death's com - mand, back to reign at God's right hand.

5 Now your manger, shining bright,
hallows night with newborn light.
Night cannot this light subdue;
let our faith shine ever new.

6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity
praise we sing eternally!

APOSTLES' CREED

*Together, we confess
the faith of the
Church.*

**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.**

*Please kneel
or be seated.*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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.

God of grace,
receive our prayer.

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

*After a brief silence
each petition
concludes:*

*After the final
petition:*

IN OUR PRAYERS

IN IMMEDIATE NEED

- ♦ Mary Drehs
- ♦ Darryl Jeffries
- ♦ Peggy Wentz
- ♦ Nancy Zweig
- ♦ Marian Jameson
- ♦ Dee Horst

ONGOING NEEDS

- ♦ Harry Feinauer
- ♦ Frances Frezeman
- ♦ Christine Motley
- ♦ Walter Schur
- ♦ David Strobel
- ♦ Dar Unger
- ♦ Rob Unger
- ♦ Danielle Andress
- ♦ Donnie Diesinger
- ♦ Christina McMahon
- ♦ Yadar

TRINITY HOUSEHOLDS

- ♦ Virginia Binick
- ♦ Matthew Bittle & Kathleen Roman
- ♦ Peggy Bobb
- ♦ Amy & John Bornhofen
- ♦ Catherine & Bradley Bower

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

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,
and of the ✠ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts
are open, all desires known, and
from whom no secrets are hid:
Cleanse the thoughts of our
hearts by the inspiration of your

Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly
love you and worthily magnify
your holy name, through
Jesus Christ our Lord

Amen.

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.
But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins
and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence is kept for
reflection.*

Most merciful God,
**we confess that we are in bondage
to sin and cannot free ourselves.
We have sinned against you in
thought, word, and deed, by what
we have done and by what we have
left undone. We have not loved
you with our whole heart; we have
not loved our neighbors**

**as ourselves. For the sake of your
Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on
us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead
us, so that we may delight in your
will and walk in your ways, to the
glory of your holy name. Amen**

Almighty God, in his mercy, has
given his Son to die for us and, for
his sake, forgives us all our sins. As
a called and ordained minister of
the Church of Christ, and by his
authority, I therefore declare to

you the entire forgiveness
of all your sins,
in the name of the Father,
and of the ✠ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Please stand.

PEACE

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

*Please greet one
another and then
be seated.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*The offering, bread,
and wine are
brought forward
and the altar is set.*

OFFERTORY

Savior of the Nations, Come

Michael Larkin
(b. 1951)

*The Mixed Ensemble
Sandra Sittler, piano & Lisa Speece, flute*

Savior of the nations, come; virgin's son, make here your home.
Marvel now, both heav'n and earth, that the Lord chose such a birth.
Wondrous birth! O wondrous child of the Virgin undefiled!
Though by all the world disowned, still to be in heav'n enthroned.
Christ, the Father's only son, has o'er sin the vict'ry won.
Boundless shall your kingdom be; when shall we its glories see?
Brightly does your manger shine, glorious is its light divine.
Let not night cloud o'er the light; let your faith shine always bright.

- attr. Ambrose of Milan

*Please stand
in body or spirit.*

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

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.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

*The presider greets
the assembly and
invites all to give
thanks.*

The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

PROPER PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.

You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

SANCTUS

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav - en and earth are full of your glo - ry.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.
Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Ho - san - na in the high - est.

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Blessed are you, O God, creator of heaven and earth.
You rescued your covenant people, led them on all their journeys,
and taught them by the prophets.
You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
so that everyone who believes in him
may not perish but may have eternal life.

*During the Words of
Institution, the bread
and wine are elevated
for the congregation
to revere and adore
Christ's presence in
our midst.*

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.

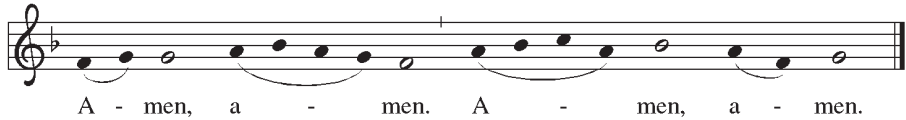
AGAIN, AFTER SUPPER,
HE TOOK THE CUP, GAVE THANKS,
AND GAVE IT FOR ALL TO DRINK,
SAYING: THIS CUP
IS THE NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD,
SHED FOR YOU AND FOR ALL PEOPLE
FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN.
DO THIS FOR THE REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.



Pour out your Holy Spirit in this meal,
and make us one in this community of faith
and with your people throughout the world.

Glory and praise to you, O God,
Author of life,
Word made flesh,
Power of the Most High,
now and forever.



LORD'S PRAYER

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



*Silence is kept as the
bread is broken.
Please be seated.*

*Detailed instructions
for communion can
be found on page 19.*

*This hymn can be
found in the red
hymnal (ELW).*

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Here is life. God is with us.
Come, receive what God has promised.

LAMB OF GOD

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you
take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy
on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace. A - men.

MUSIC DURING DISTRIBUTION

My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness

ELW 251

*Please stand
in body or spirit.*

TABLE BLESSING

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ
strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

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.

*As a sign of God's
blessing, you may
make the sign
of the cross.*

BLESSING

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.

Face the processional
cross, turning as it
passes you.

Text: *Psalterium
Cantionum
Catholicarum*,
Köln, 1710;
tr. composite

Music: VENI,
EMMANUEL,
French processional,
15th cent.

Text: sts. 2. 6. 7 © 1997
Augsburg Fortress

SENDING HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (Verses 7 & 8)

ELW 257

O come, O King of na - tions come, O Cor - ner stone that binds in one:
O come, O Come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el,

re - fresh the hearts that long for you, re - store the bro - ken, make us new.
that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here un - til the Son of God ap - pear.

Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Keep awake.
Thanks be to God.

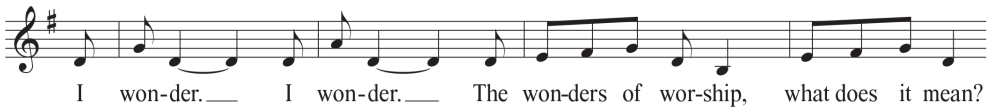
POSTLUDE

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland


J.S. Bach
(1685 - 1750)




WONDERS OF WORSHIP SONG



I won-der. I won-der. The won-ders of wor-ship, what does it mean?



I won-der. I won-der. The won-ders of wor-ship, what does it mean?



Come and see! Come now and see!

SOURCES AND PERMISSIONS

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WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

In-person: 75

Online: 47

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10

In-person: 8

STEEPLE NOTES

Steeple Notes is our bi-monthly news publication which includes news about our church community, updates on ministries and outreach programs, and articles that foster spiritual growth and connection.

Print editions are usually available in the Narthex. You may also read our digital edition by scanning this QR code.



COMMUNION INSTRUCTIONS



All who trust that Jesus Christ is present in this holy meal are invited to receive communion.

Please follow the direction of the usher; if your pew is located on one of the side aisles, walk to the rear of the sanctuary. Two lines will form in the center aisle. The left line will commune at the left side of the altar rail; the right line will commune on the right side.



When you reach the front of the sanctuary, there are serving trays located on the tables. Please choose either an empty glass to receive wine, or, if you prefer, a prefilled glass in the center ring containing grape juice. After taking your cup, proceed to the rail. Fill in around the rail from the center to the ends. You may stand or kneel as is your preference.

The pastor will give you a piece of bread; eat it when you receive it. If you prefer a gluten free alternative, please inform the pastor.



Then, an assistant will come to offer wine from a pouring chalice. Please extend your glass to be filled with wine or indicate that you have grape juice. After drinking the wine or juice, you are welcome to remain in place for a moment of meditation.

After you finish your time of reflection, please return to your pew, depositing your empty glass in the trays located on the tables at the head of the side aisles.

LEADING OUR WORSHIP TODAY

PRESIDING MINISTER
ASSISTING MINISTER
CANTOR
LECTOR
COMMUNION ASSISTANT
ACOLYTE
GREETER

Pr. Hans E. Becklin
Virginia Biniek
Dr. Cameron Lee Wentz
Amy Norton-Ritz
Doris Strobel
Jane Zobian
Declan Rosenbaum

USHERS Anita Dolak, Raye Watson
MEDIA TEAM Declan Rosenbaum, Amy Bornhofen,
Jorge Tomás, Veronika Shick
ALTAR GUILD Allison Kallbach, Amy Litvinov,
Cheryl Moody, Brooke Rosenbaum, Doris Strobel
WORSHIP PLANNERS Program Staff

WORSHIP SPONSORS

These offerings help to defray the cost of altar flowers and the television broadcast.

CHRISTMAS EVE SPONSORSHIP

Opportunities remain to sponsor Christmas Eve worship.

Your dedication will be included in the
broadcast of the 10:30 service.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

9:00 AM

TRINITY TOGETHER SUNDAY FORUM -
Hintz Room

10:00 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP - Nave

11:15 AM

COFFEE & CONVERSATION - Hintz Room
CHRISTMAS DECORATING - Nave

11:30 PM

MIXED ENSEMBLE REHEARSAL - Nave

12:30 PM

TRINITY CHOIR CHRISTMAS EVE REHEARSAL -
Nave

2:00 PM

COMMON GROUND WORSHIP AND MEAL

2:30 PM

CHRISTMAS CAROLING

MONDAY, DECEMBER 22

1:00 PM

PROGRAM STAFF MEETING

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23

9:30 AM

STAFF MEETING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24

4:30 PM

TRINITY BRASS: CAROLS ON THE PORTICO

5:00 PM

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD - Nave

10:30 PM

NATIVITY OF OUR LORD - NAVE

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 25

CHRISTMAS DAY - Office Closed

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28

10:00 AM

SUNDAY WORSHIP - Nave

Baptism of Nels Malcom Becklin

Joint Service with Faith United, Denver, Pa.

11:15 AM

COFFEE & CONVERSATION - Hintz Room

2:00 PM

COMMON GROUND WORSHIP AND MEAL

WONDERS OF WORSHIP: THE GOSPEL

