

**Welcome to Immanuel Lutheran Church
630 Adams St Wausau, WI 54403 | ​​Phone: (715) 842-3644**

[**http://www.immanuelwausau.org/**](http://www.immanuelwausau.org/)

**Sunday, December 24, 2023
Nativity of Our Lord I: Christmas Eve, Year B**

***Fourth Advent Sunday***

Please welcome Kathy Robinson to Immanuel as she leads us in Worship and celebrates Holy Communion with us today.

**Prelude**

**Introduction**

P: In winter’s deepest night, we welcome the light of the Christ child. Isaiah declares that the light of the long-promised king will illumine the world and bring endless peace and justice. Paul reminds us that the grace of God through Jesus Christ brings salvation to all people. The angels declare that Jesus’ birth is good and joyful news for everyone, including lowly shepherds. Filled with the light that shines in our lives, we go forth to share the light of Christ with the whole world.

**Gathering Hymn “O Come, All Ye Faithful” #283 vss. 1 & 3 & 4**

**Greeting**

**P:** Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,

who alone does wondrous things.

**C: Blessed be God’s name forever. Amen.**

**Please be seated.**

**Lighting of the Advent Candles**

**P:Today we welcome Christ into our lives once again! As we remember the special circumstances of Jesus’ birth, we remember, too, the light of preparation from our Advent Journey into the Sabbath.**

**The first purple candle is lit.**

**The candle of hope, calling us to wonder what might be in the year to come.**

**The second purple candle is lit.**

**The candle of peace, calling us to step away from the hustle and bustle of the world.**

**The pink candle is lit.**

**The candle of joy, calling us to praise God for freedom from oppression.**

**The third purple candle is lit.**

**The candle of love, calling us to love God and each other from Sabbath to Sabbath.**

**All of these candles light the path for Christ’s return, not as a conquering hero, but as a little helpless child. We read in Isaiah 9:2**

**“The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For a child is born to us, a son is given to us. The government will rest on his shoulders, and he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David, for all eternity!”**

**So, we light the Christ candle, signifying that God’s hope, peace, joy, and love are realized in Christmas Jesus.**

**The *white* candle is lit.**

**Hymn “Light One Candle To Watch For Messiah” # 240 vs. 4**

O God, we light the Christ candle, knowing that you are present with us at all times, but remembering especially when you were present with us in the flesh as Jesus Christ.

God, we welcome you into our midst! We long to bring you gifts, to touch your robe, to know the beautiful sound of your voice on our earthly ears. Our waiting is rewarded. Not in the way we expect, but in the wonderful Good News of your birth, heralded by heavenly messengers and earthly shepherds alike. Help us to see you in each other, and to be set apart as your hope, peace, joy, and love in the world. **Amen.**

**Hymn “It Came Upon The Midnight Clear” # 282 vss. 1 & 4**

Please stand if able.

**Call to Worship**

P: Christ is born!

**C: Glorify him!**

P: On this holiest of nights,

**C: we come, joining the shepherds who are stunned by wonder.**

P: On this most precious night,

**C: we come, our hopes and dreams joining those of Mary and Joseph.**

P: On this night of carols and candlelight,

**C: we come, our glad songs joining with the choirs of angels over us**.

P: Christ is born!

**C: Glorify him!**

P: The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all (2 Corinthians 13:14).

P**:** 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.

**C: Amen.**

Please be seated.

**Hymn “I Am So Glad Each Christmas Eve” # 271 vss. 1, 2 & 5**

**Prayer of the Day**

P: Let us pray together.

**All: Almighty God, you made this holy night shine with the brightness of the true Light. Grant that here on earth we may walk in the light of Jesus’ presence and in the last day wake to the brightness of his glory; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever**. **Amen.**

**Hymn “The First Noel” # 300 vss. 1, 2**

**First Reading:** **Isaiah 9:2-7**

**R:** A reading from Isaiah.

This poem promises deliverance from Assyrian oppression, a hope based on the birth of a royal child with a name full of promise. While Judah’s king will practice justice and righteousness, the real basis for faith lies in God’s passion for the people: The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

 2The people who walked in darkness
  have seen a great light;
 those who lived in a land of deep darkness—
  on them light has shined.
 3You have multiplied the nation,
  you have increased its joy;
 they rejoice before you
  as with joy at the harvest,
  as people exult when dividing plunder.
 4For the yoke of their burden,
  and the bar across their shoulders,
  the rod of their oppressor,
  you have broken as on the day of Midian.
 5For all the boots of the tramping warriors
  and all the garments rolled in blood
  shall be burned as fuel for the fire.
 6For a child has been born for us,
  a son given to us;
 authority rests upon his shoulders;
  and he is named
 Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
  Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
 7His authority shall grow continually,
  and there shall be endless peace
 for the throne of David and his kingdom.
  He will establish and uphold it
 with justice and with righteousness
  from this time onward and forevermore.
 The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

### R: Word of God. Word of Life C: Thanks be to God.

**Hymn “Away In A Manger” #277 vss. 1, 2, 3**

**Psalm: Psalm 96**

**Reader:** *Let us read Psalm 96 responsively.*

1Sing to the Lord**|** a new song;
  sing to the Lord, **|** all the earth.
 2**Sing to the Lord, bless the name | of the Lord;**
  **proclaim God’s salvation from | day to day.**
 3Declare God’s glory a- **|** mong the nations
  and God’s wonders a- **|** mong all peoples.
 4**For great is the Lord and greatly | to be praised,**
  **more to be feared | than all gods.**
 5As for all the gods of the nations, they **|** are but idols;
  but you, O Lord, have **|** made the heavens.
 6**Majesty and magnificence are | in your presence;**
  **power and splendor are in your | sanctuary.**
 7Ascribe to the Lord, you families **|** of the peoples,
  ascribe to the Lord hon- **|** or and power.
 8**Ascribe to the Lord the honor due the | holy name;**
  **bring offerings and enter the courts | of the Lord.**
 9Worship the Lord in the beau- **|** ty of holiness;
  tremble before the Lord, **|** all the earth.
 10**Tell it out among the nations: “The | Lord is king!**
  **The one who made the world so firm that it cannot be moved will judge the peo- | ples with equity.”**
 11Let the heavens rejoice, and let the **|** earth be glad;
  let the sea thunder and all that is in it; let the field be joyful and all that **|** is therein.
 12**Then shall all the trees of the wood shout for joy at your com- | ing, O Lord,**
  **for you come to | judge the earth.**
 13You will judge the **|** world with righteousness
  and the peoples **|** with your truth.**Amen.**

**Second Reading:** **Titus 2:11-14**

**R:** A reading from Titus.

The appearance of God’s grace in Jesus Christ brings salvation for all humanity. Consequently, in the present we live wisely and justly while also anticipating the hope of our Savior’s final appearance.

11The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, 12training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, 13while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. 14He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.

R: Word of God. Word of Life **C: Thanks be to God**.

Please stand for the gospel.

Alleluia. *I am bringing you good news of great joy for | all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.* Alleluia. (Luke 2:10-11)

**Gospel: Luke 2:1-20**

P: *The Holy Gospel According to Luke*

**C: Glory to you, O Lord.**

P: 1In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. 2This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3All went to their own towns to be registered. 4Joseph 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. 5He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. 6While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. 7And 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.
  8In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: 11to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” 13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying,
 14“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
  and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

15When 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.” 16So they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the child lying in the manger. 17When they saw this, they made known what had been told them about this child; 18and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them. 19But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. 20The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.]

P: The gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ. Amen.**

Please be seated.

**Meditation Kathy Robinson**

**Hymn of the Day** **“Joy to the World” #267 vss. 1 & 3 & 4**

Please stand if able.

**Nicene Creed** *See the yellow sheet in the back of your hymnal.*

Please be seated.

**Prayers of Intercession**

**R:** Trusting in God’s good news of great joy for all people, we offer our prayers for ourselves, our neighbors, and the world God loves. After “**Hear us O God”, please respond with “Your mercy is great!”**

A brief silence.

Glory to you, God, for the song of the angels, proclaiming to the world Christ’s holy birth. Give your church a joyful song to sing, that we bring the good news of peace and salvation to all people. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the stars that shine in the depth of the night. Provoke awe in our hearts at the expansive mystery of the cosmos. Open us to find beauty in the clear darkness of night and in the first glimmers of dawn. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the child born to us who establishes a kingdom of justice and righteousness. Break bonds of oppression, bring reconciliation to warring lands, and establish peace from this time onward and forevermore. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for Mary’s loving care. Lead us to tend to one another in time of need. Share the comfort of your presence with all people tonight who are alone or separated from loved ones due to estrangement, incarceration, or illness (*especially*). Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the faithfulness of the shepherds in their vocation. Grant rest to any who feel exhausted from their work during this season: retail and restaurant workers, church musicians, administrative staff, and clergy, organizers of charitable-giving events, and service workers doing essential tasks. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Glory to you, God, for the multitude of the heavenly host. We rejoice in the zeal of all your saints (*especially*) who have witnessed the appearing of your grace, and who reveal to us your salvation for all. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

Abide with us, O God of mercy, and receive our prayers according to your abundant grace. **Amen.**

**Sharing of the Peace**

**P: The peace of Christ be with you always C: and also, with you.**

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**Offertory Hymn “Go Tell It on the Mountain” #290 vss. 1, 2**

**Offering Prayer**

### P: *Let us pray in unison.*

**All: God of abundance,**

**receive and bless these gifts we have offered.**

**Join our hearts with the song of the angels,**

**and gather us at your table of celebration.**

**Strengthen us to share with all the world**

**the abundance of your grace upon grace,**

**poured out in Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh. Amen.**

**Holy Communion**

### Please stand.

### Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts.

**C: We lift them to the Lord.**

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

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

P: 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.

We praise your name and join their unending hymn:

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.

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

**The Lord’s Prayer**

### Invitation to Communion

Christ spreads a table before you. Gather here with all the saints.

*All are welcome at the Lord’s table. We believe Christ is truly present in the bread and the wine, that is his body and blood are given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sin. If you do not wish to receive communion but wish to receive a blessing, please come forward during the distribution of communion. If you are unable to come forward during distribution and wish to receive communion, please let the usher know and the pastor will come to your seat. Wine and grape juices are available as well as gluten free wafers upon request.*

*Please be seated.*

**Communion Hymn “The Bells Of Christmas” # 298**

### Blessing after Communion

### P: May the body and blood of Jesus Christ strengthen your faith and give you the assurance of forgiveness and unite you with Christ and one another.

### Prayer after Communion

P: Lord Jesus,

in this simple meal you have set a banquet.

Sustain us on the journey,

strengthen us to care for the least of your beloved children,

and give us glad and generous hearts

as we meet you on the way.

**Hymn “Of The Father’s Love Begotten” # 295 vs. 1**

**Litany from John 1**

P: Tonight, we celebrate the coming of Christ, the Light of the world. Our candles bear witness to the Light.

**C: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him…The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.**

P**:** With the coming of God's Son, our Immanuel, the light shines still more

 brightly.

**C: The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.**

P**:** The Light of the Lord continues to shine, as it glows in our lives of Christian love and service; for God has given us his Word.

**C: 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.**

**Lighting of the Candles**

The ushers will light the candles of the first person in the pew who then lights the candle next to them. The ushers will dim the sanctuary lights.

**Hymn** **“Silent Night, Holy Night” # 281**

*The usher brings the lights back up. The congregation extinguishes their candles.*

*Please stand if able.*

**Blessing**

**P:** May the strength of God sustain us; may the power of God preserve us; may the hands of God protect us; may the way of God direct us; may the love of God go with us this day (night) and forever. **Amen.**

**Hymn “Good Christian Friends Rejoice!” # 288 vs. 1**

### Dismissal

**P:** Go in peace. Share the gift of Jesus.

**C: I will, and I ask God to help me.**

**Postlude**

**Prayer Concerns:** Barb West,Joan Bonstead’s daughter (Contact ILC office to update.)

December 25, 2023. *Christmas Day* service will be held at Immanuel at 10:00 a.m.

*If you would like you may pick up your flowers after Christmas Day Service.*

December 31,2023. New Year’s Eve service will be held at our normal time.

January 7th, 2024. New Year, new time. Church Service at Immanuel will start at 10:30 a.m.! Mark your calendars!

**Bell Choir** is still going strong. We will be playing on January 14th. We would love to have you join us! No “musical talent” needed! Just come join us for friendship and fun. Practice is on Wednesdays at 6:30 pm. For more information call Joanne at 715-573-7379. Just give me a ring!

The Mitten Tree looks blessed! Each Holiday season Immanuel decorates our Mitten Tree with mittens and warm hats, these can be handmade or purchased. The items are then given to those in need in our community for the cold winter months. You may place your gifts on or under the tree in the Narthex. Thanks to everyone for their continued support of the Mitten Tree!

The Men’s Discussion Group meets Thursdays at 7:30 am, in the Koinonia room. New participants are always welcome.

Strong Bones Senior Exercise Group meets every Tuesday and Thursday in the old Nursery at 10:30 am. The class is open to anyone wishing to improve balance and maintain strength to prevent falls. New faces are happily welcome.

Volunteers needed to Host Coffee Hours. The sign-up sheet is in the kitchen.

**Attendance on 12/17/23: 44**

Our Sister Church is the Lobatla Parish. Address is: c/o Moruti (Pastor) Rev. G.M. Nkale, P.O. Box 160, Motswedi 2870, Republic of South Africa. Email for Pastor: nkalesto@gmail.com

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| December 2023 Worship Servers  |
| Worship Leader |
| DATE | PIANIST / ORGANIST | READER  | USHER / GREETERS | VIDEO TAPER | COMMUNION |
| 12/24/2023 | Judy Kort | Vern Diestelhorst | Dan Westaby  | V | Joanne Diestelhorst |
| 12/25/2023 | Judy Kort | Adam Doede | Bob Doede | V |   |
| 12/31/2023 | Judy Kort | Holly Westaby  | Dan Westaby  | V |   |
| Altar Guild: Holly Westaby & Kathy Knox |

***A Christmas Affirmation Of Faith***

**We believe that Christmas is more than a time for parties and ornaments; it is a time for remembering Christ and the incarnation of God’s love in human flesh.**

**We believe there are gifts more important than the ones under the Christmas tree, the things we teach our children, the way we share ourselves with friends, and the grace and mercy with which we set about reshaping the world in our time.**

**We believe that the finest carols are often sung by the poorest voices; from hearts made warm by the wonder of the season.**

**We believe in the angel’s message that we should not be afraid - -that the Child of Bethlehem is able to overcome all anxieties and insecurities.**

**We believe in prayer and quietness as a way of appropriating Christmas – that if we wait in silence, we will experience the presence of the One born in the manger, for he lives today as surely as he lived then.**

**We believe in going away from Christmas as the wise men went: “by another way.”  We want to be different when these days are past – more centered, more thoughtful, more caring. And we believe God will help us.  Amen.**

