



Faith Lutheran Church & School

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Vaunda Noerenberg, Traditional Worship

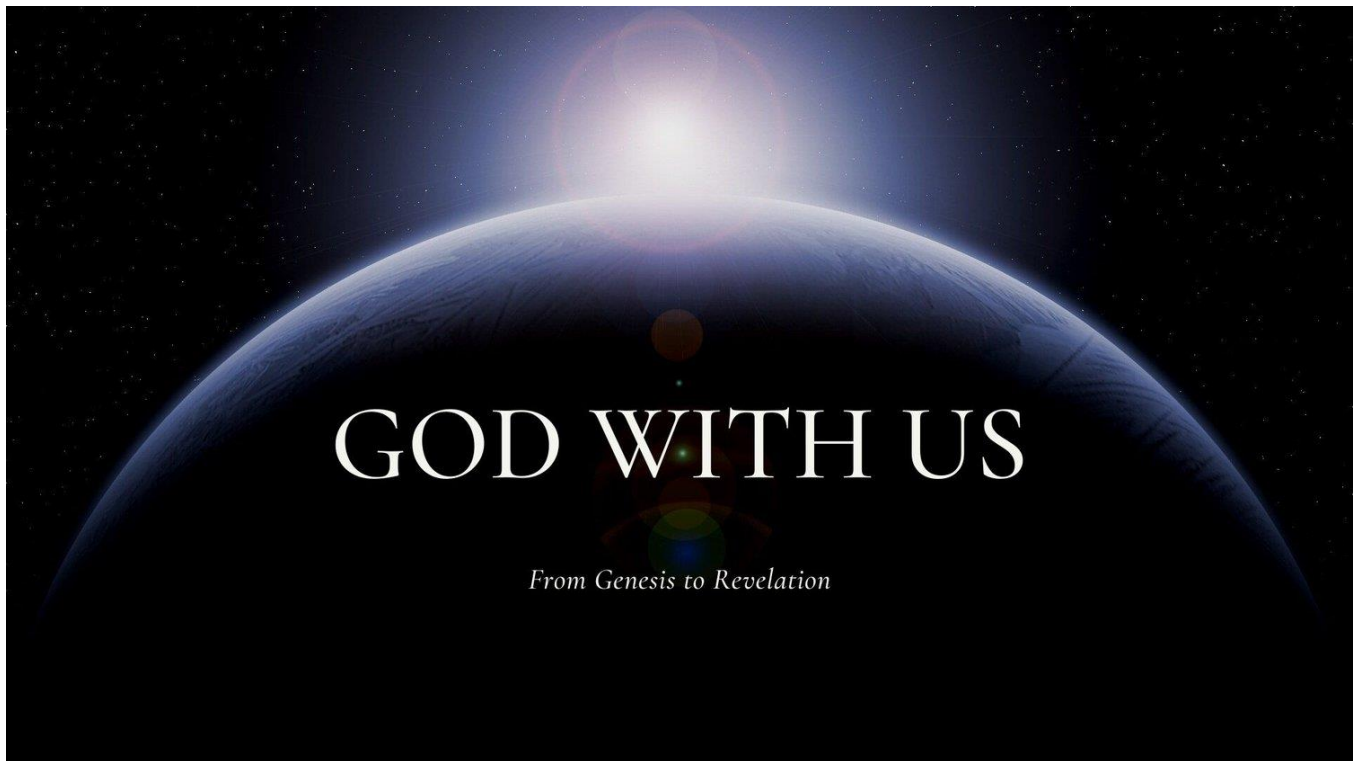
Reid Stevens, Contemporary Worship

THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

DECEMBER 15, 2024

11 AM

“Exalted... God with Us.”



⁹ As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love.

¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. - *Jesus, to His Disciples* (John 15)

³ But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. - *Jesus, to His Father* (John 17)

ALTAR FLOWERS TODAY ARE GIVEN TODAY TO THE GLORY OF GOD

At the beginning of the service all are asked to sign the attendance card located in the pew racks and place them in the offering plate during the collection. So that we may better serve you and send you more information, guests, please print your address and telephone number on this card.

Acknowledgments

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THIS WEEK AT FAITH

The letter to the Philippians is Paul’s reply to all this concern. He said basically, “Don’t worry about me. I’m not upset or depressed. I have great joy! Because joy is not tied to circumstances. It’s not about our happiness. Instead, joy is about our relationship with Christ Jesus, and I have that!” The joy we have in Advent is not joy around a jolly gift giver, in sparkling lights, or in the gifts under the tree. Those things might make us happy, but they are fleeting. Joy in Advent comes from knowing Jesus is born for us, lived for us, so that we can be saved through His death and resurrection.

No matter what, God has come for you. God loves you. He’ll help you through tough times and help you find joy in His coming. The baby who was born is also the Jesus who died and rose again, so you will live forever with Him. “He Who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ!” (Philippians 1:6) -- Tawn Buelmann, Youth ESource (LCMS Youth Ministry)

WE BELIEVE GOD’S WORD... ON THE LORD’S SUPPER

We believe that in the Sacrament of Holy Communion Christ gives His true body and blood under the form of bread and wine for the assurance of the forgiveness of sins. We believe Jesus is truly present in the Sacrament, and as we come in faith to receive it, we receive Him. The Bible teaches that those who eat without recognizing the Lord's body, eat and drink judgment on themselves (*1 Corinthians 11:27-29*). Those baptized and believing Christians who share our confession of faith are welcome guests at the Altar. The Pastor would be glad to answer any questions relating to our faith or practice. Anyone not confirmed or communing is welcome to come and receive a blessing.

Also Happening This Week (Dec 16 to 21, 2024)

Tuesday, 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. Create in Me - Ladies’ Crafts
Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., Advent Worship Early Childhood

Our Discipleship the Past Weeks:

Worship	11/24/24	12/1/24	12/8/24	12/15/24	12/22/24
8:15 Traditional	85(80)	67 (59)	79 (77)		
11:00 Contemporary	46 (40)	54 (50)	52 (50)		
Sunday School		30			
Monthly Budget	\$44,200	\$44,200	\$44,200	\$44,200	\$44,200
Giving MTD	\$57,747	\$6763	\$29,661		
Weekly Giving	\$31,129.84	\$6763	\$22,898		

ORDER OF WORSHIP

As We Gather Are you feeling the joy? At this point in the month of December, studies show that many people are not feeling joy. Many people are feeling overwhelmed as they approach Christmas, feeling stressors that include not having enough money, missing loved ones, and anticipating family conflict. No matter how we come to our time of worship today, even if stressed, distracted, and frazzled, what great timing to hear what God speaks to us in this season and each day. From all our Readings today, we hear of joy! It is a joy not based on our own momentary perspectives of how things should go, but rather a joy from God's eternal perspective for our sake and what has freely been done for us. As our Advent season continues, may our true joy be found in the one for whom we prepare—Christ, who was born for us and who is with us and for us and is today in our midst as He comes to us in the means of grace.

OPENING SONG

“PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD”

♪ Intro **Prepare the way prepare the way Prepare the way of the Lord**

Chorus 1 **Jesus Jesus Jesus Jesus
Jesus Jesus Jesus Jesus**

Verse 1 **You are the light of the world
You are the light of the world
You are the light of the world Jesus**

Verse 2 **You are the King of the earth
You are the King of the earth
You are the King of the earth Jesus**

INVOCATION

In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

We light the third Advent candle as we prepare for the arrival of the Savior, who would come to His people in human flesh, and who promises to come again. In a world of darkness, a light shines. Jesus Christ is the light of the world.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The third, pink Advent candle has been known as the shepherd candle or the candle of joy. The third Sunday of Advent is known also as Gaudete Sunday. *Gaudete* in Latin means “rejoice,” as found in Philippians 4:4. We find our joy in Christ this season and always as we prepare to celebrate His birth. Jesus affirms the joy found only in Him as we remain connected to Him: “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.”

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

Guided by the light of joy, we respond with the psalmist: “Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth! Serve the LORD with gladness! Come into His presence with singing!
Know that the LORD, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise!
Give thanks to Him; bless His name!

For the LORD is good; His steadfast love endures forever,
and His faithfulness to all generations.”

Three Advent candles are lit.

O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL (LSB 357 STS. 5– 7)

♩ **5. O come, Thou Key of David, come, And open wide our heav’nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high, And close the path to misery.**

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

**6. O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s dark shadows put to flight. Refrain**

Rejoice... Again I say rejoice!

**7. O come, Desire of nations, bind
In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease,
And be Thyself our King of Peace. Refrain**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

As we gather today to hear God’s Word and call upon Him in prayer and praise, we come before Him as people who are broken by an imperfect world, burdened by sin, and bearing guilt for the things we have done and the things we have left undone. In the midst of our condition, the Word of God speaks to us. In today’s Epistle, we hear, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.”

We confess we do not rejoice in everything; instead, we let the weight of this world bring us down. Instead of seeing all good things from Your hand, at times we focus on that which does not give You glory nor bring lasting joy to our lives.

“Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand.”

We confess we have at times been unreasonable in our relationships with others and in our relationship with You. Our witness to Your grace has faltered.

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.”

We confess we have been anxious about our sin and our circumstances of life. Create in us a clean heart and renew in us a right spirit that we may abide in Your love and that Your joy may be in us, and our joy may be full.

Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of the Word, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the †Son and of the Holy Spirit. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING

ZEPHANIAH 3:14–20

¹⁴Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel!

Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!

¹⁵The LORD has taken away the judgments against you;
he has cleared away your enemies.

The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil.

¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: “Fear not, O Zion;
let not your hands grow weak.

¹⁷The LORD your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save;
he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love;
he will exult over you with loud singing.

¹⁸I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival,
so that you will no longer suffer reproach.

¹⁹Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors.

And I will save the lame and gather the outcast,
and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth.

²⁰At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together;
for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth,
when I restore your fortunes before your eyes,” says the LORD.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

INTROIT

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

Blessèd is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God,
who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them,
who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.

The LORD sets the prisoners free; the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.

The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;

as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

EPISTLE

PHILIPPIANS 4:4–7

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

VERSE

MATTHEW 11:10

Alleluia. Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,
who will prepare Your way before You. Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL

LUKE 7:18–35

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the seventh chapter.

Glory to You, O Lord.

¹⁸The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, ¹⁹calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” ²⁰And when the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’” ²¹In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. ²²And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. ²³And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.”

²⁴When John’s messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?

²⁵What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings’ courts.

²⁶What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet.

²⁷This is he of whom it is written,

“Behold, I send my messenger before your face,
who will prepare your way before you.’

²⁸I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.” ²⁹(When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, ³⁰but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

³¹“To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like?

³²They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,

“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.’

³³For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ ³⁴The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵Yet wisdom is justified by all her children.”

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

MESSAGE SONG

“LORD, I GIVE YOU MY HEART”

♪ **1. This is my desire To honor You**

Lord, with all my heart I worship You

All I have within me I give You praise All that I adore is in You

Chorus Lord, I give You my heart, I give You my soul

I live for You alone

Ev'ry breath that I take Ev'ry moment I'm awake, Lord, have Your way in me

MESSAGE

“EXALTED, GOD WITH US”

Oh come, let us sing to the Lord;

let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

² Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;

let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!

³ For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

⁴ In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also.

⁵ The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land.

⁶ Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

⁷ For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture,

and the sheep of his hand. (Psalm 95)

NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ the only-begotten Son of God,
begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God,
begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again according to the
Scriptures and ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son
together is worshiped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Let us pray for the church, for the people of God, and for all people according to their needs.

We praise You, O Lord, for the joys You have given us in this life. For each day You grant us in this life, we rejoice in You always, **again I will say, Rejoice.**

For the opportunities You give us to share Your Word to children, family, friends, neighbors, and communities, and for the privilege we carry to model Your love and to give a reason for the hope that we have, we rejoice in You always, **again I will say, Rejoice.**

For those who face their days with struggle and sorrows, especially those who ask for our prayers, [*including . . .*], that even though in this world we have trouble, we take heart that Christ has overcome the world. We rejoice in You always, **again I will say, Rejoice.**

For those who serve our nation here and across the world in the armed forces, for those who keep our community safe through law and order, for those You use to make people well in times of physical and mental distress, and for all vocations in which the gifts and abilities You have given are used on behalf of others, we rejoice in You always, **again I will say, Rejoice.**

For the uniqueness of the season of this wintertime, for the blessing of this Advent season of the Church Year as we prepare to welcome again the Savior sent and born for us, and for Your presence and blessings freely given to Your people each and every season, we rejoice in You always, **again I will say, Rejoice.**

Into Your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen.

COLLECTION OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS



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For your convenience, we now accept gifts via Venmo or PayPal.

As we prepare for the Lord's Supper, let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, whose way John the Baptist prepared, proclaiming Him the promised Messiah, the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and calling sinners to repentance that they might escape from the wrath to be revealed when He comes again in glory.

Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and out of perfect love sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior who we look to, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Instill in us the joy of receiving Your healing grace through Christ's body and blood given and shed for us.

Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

**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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST

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

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

Please take a moment and share the Peace of the Lord with those around you.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Let us pray. We give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

CLOSING SENTENCES

JOHN 1:5, 9

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING SONG

“PREPARE HIM ROOM”

Chorus **Let every heart Let every heart**

Prepare Him room

Tag **We're making room**

We're making room

Bridge **All creation groans in labor**

Waiting for our humble Savior

Joyful hope for Jesus' coming

In our hearts is overflowing

SENDING

Pastor: Go in peace to serve the Lord!

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Principal Amy Kurtz's last day will be Friday, December 20, 2024. Join us for a "Farewell and Godspeed" TODAY, in-between services (Cafeteria) and at noon.

Voters' Meeting, December 15, 2024, at 9:30 a.m., Sanctuary

Bible Studies at Faith, Sundays, 9:45 a.m.

- ▶ Exalted, God With Us: Praying to Our Savior God (Choir Room)
- ▶ *The Wired Word*: What does the Bible say about? (Board Room)
- ▶ Sunday School: Ages 4 through 6th Grade (Gathers in Sanctuary)
- ▶ Youth Confirmation: 7th and 8th Graders (Confirmation Room)
 - ▶ High School/College Age Bible Study (Youth Room)
 - * Advent Midweek 3, Dec 18 ECE Worship
(Dinner 5:30 p.m., worship 6:30 p.m.)

Dec 22 (Advent 4) Regular Worship Schedule: Reception of New Members

School Break 12/23 - 1/6/2025

(Staff In-Service, Mon 1/6/2025 // Students Return, Tue 1/7/2025)

Dec 24 (Tuesday, Christmas Eve)

5 p.m. Family Worship with Communion

7 p.m. Traditional Candlelight with Communion

Dec 25 (Wednesday, Christmas Day) 10 a.m.

Festival Worship with Communion (Stephen Wareham, Preacher)



God's Mission for the World: An Advent Reflection Pastor Steven Schave

Why is Advent a great season to consider God's mission for the world?

The simple answer is that Advent is a time of anticipation of Christ's coming into the world, including when He will come again on the Last Day. Even when Christ first came into the world through the incarnation, it was long foretold that His coming was for both the Jew and the Gentile alike. And so it is no surprise that when His coming again on the Last Day is explained in Scripture, it describes how "all tribes of the earth" will see Christ coming on the clouds, with power and great glory (Revelation 1:7). He came into the world for all nations and will come again in judgment of all nations.

Brought to the Farthest Reaches

With this season of anticipation, there is a greater urgency that the day is drawing near for the final harvest, after which the workers will rest from their labors. But in Advent, we understand that before the end of time, the Gospel will be taken to the ends of the earth—to all nations, peoples, tribes, and languages. Because when Jesus returns, He will send His angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to another. This also means that Christ will first send His heralds of the Good News to the farthest reaches to preach and to teach. He says, "You will be My witnesses . . . to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8, emphasis added).

Sent with an Invitation

So, too, we are given the picture of the Advent of Christ as a master sending servants with an invitation to His great banquet. When the rest of the world turns down the invitation because they are consumed in worldly things, whom does the master want invited? He says to His servants, "Invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind" (Luke 14:13). This is how He wants His house to be filled for the banquet—down to the very least among us. And the wedding is all about when Christ comes again to gather us for the feast on Judgement Day.

Invited into Heaven

It is our Advent prayer: "Come quickly, Lord Jesus." But until that day, the invitations to the master's house are still to be delivered. To be sure, they might be delivered across the street to your neighbor's house or across town to the desk of a co-worker. But make no mistake—it also means some invitations being airmailed to the middle of nowhere, at the farthest and darkest corners of the earth. All of it will be consummated in an Advent vision of heaven, when we will see "a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!' " (Revelation 7:9–10).

And for this, in the season of Advent, we will wait with great anticipation!

Come, Lord Jesus. But until that time, send me!

Scripture: ESV®.