

SUNDAY- DECEMBER 14TH, 2025 -9:00 AM

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH OF MT. HOREB

A family in faith, reaching out to share in God's love with all people

WELCOMING WORD

A note of joyful expectation marks today's worship. Isaiah announces that the desert shall rejoice and blossom, and Jesus points to the unexpected and transforming signs of God's reign. We wait with patience for the coming of the Lord, even as we rejoice at his presence among us this day: in word and holy supper, in church and in our homes, in silent reflection and in works of justice and love. We pray that God would open our eyes and ears to the wonders of Christ's advent among us.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM



“Signs of Christmas”

WE WELCOME ALL TO ELC!

Everyone. Without exception. Regardless of race, ethnicity, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, faith traditions, physical or mental abilities, financial resources, family status, or personal struggles. We are committed to being an anti-racist community. By the power of the Holy Spirit, we will work to extend God's grace, love, justice, and dignity. You belong here. Your story and your life are valuable. In Christ's love, we welcome you.



MINISTERS
INTERIM PASTOR

ALL MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH
KAREN HOFSTAD

ELC@MHTC.NET - 608-437-5012

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Sunday, December 14, 2025 | Third Sunday of Advent | 9:00 AM

(+ = stand if able; L = Leader / C = Congregation)

PRELUDE Diane Dangerfield

+CONGREGATIONAL HYMN Insert Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

+CONFESSIONS AND FORGIVENESS

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose home is heaven and earth, whose salvation is sure.

C: Amen.

L: 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.

C: Amen.

L: 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 for reflection and self-examination.

L: Long-expected God,

C: We confess that we look to ourselves for the peace and security only you can provide. We reach for swords and spears, reluctant to release our grip on the ways of war. We become impatient while waiting and weary of keeping awake. Free us from self-reliance, and teach us to live in harmony with our neighbors. Increase our trust in God's timing, and awaken us to your advent among us, that we may abound in the hope you have promised.

Amen.

L: God judges us not as we deserve, but according to God's own righteousness. You are freed and forgiven, saved by grace, and ready to welcome the Savior.

C: Amen.

GREETING

+KYRIE pg. 147

+HYMN OF PRAISE pg. 148 "Glory to God in the Highest..."

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

CONGREGATIONAL SONGS *Bethlehem Highway*
Prince of Peace

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Isaiah 35:1-10

¹ The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus ² it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and shouting. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. ³ Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. ⁴ Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God. He will come with vengeance, with terrible recompense. He will come and save you." ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be opened; ⁶ then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy. For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert; ⁷ the burning sand shall become a pool and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp; the grass shall become reeds and rushes. ⁸ A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way; the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people; no traveler, not even fools, shall go astray. ⁹ No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it; they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there. ¹⁰ And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

James 5:7-10

⁷ Be patient, therefore, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious crop from the earth, being patient with it until it receives the early and the late rains. ⁸ You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. ⁹ Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! ¹⁰ As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

+ACCLAMATION pg. 151

(sing) Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

+L: The Gospel according to Matthew, Chapter 11.

+C: Glory to you, O Lord.

GOSPEL

Matthew 11:2-11

² When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples ³ and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" ⁴ Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵ the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, those with a skin disease are

cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶ And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.” ⁷ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸ What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹ What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰ This is the one about whom it is written, ‘See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.’” ¹¹ “Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

+L: The Gospel of the Lord.

+C: Praise to you, O Christ.

SENIOR CHOIR ANTHEM *How Far Is It to Bethlehem?*

SIGNS *Sunday School Christmas Program-*

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CAST:

Leader - Gabe Sadler

Sign Finders: Leah Gaulke, Evelyn Eggers, Sedona Vondra, Illana Hartenberger, Naomi Baumann, Sarah Zelle, Maria Van Ooyen, Leah Zelle

Mary: Gia Dsouza

Joseph: Colby Johanning

Shepherds: Aiden Dsouza, Gustavo Wilson

Angels: Violet Steel, Isla Vondra

Wisemen: Louie Johanning, Colton Baumann, Jacob Stehn

SONG: “Signs” - SS Children

- No Vacancy Sign
- Quiet Please and Shhh Signs

SONG: “Away in the Manger” - Congregation sings along (Verse 1 and 2)

- Sheep Crossing Sign
- Caution . . . Angels Ahead Sign
- Follow the Star Sign

SONG: “Follow the Star” - SS Children

- The Perfect Sign

SONG: "This Will Be a Sign" - SS Children

- O' Come VS Y'all Come Signs

SONG: "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful / Y'all Come" -

(Congregation may sing for verse 1, SS children finish song)

- Help Wanted Sign

SONG: "Signs - Reprise" - SS Children

MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL!

+CONGREGATIONAL HYMN #250 Blessed Be the God of Israel

+APOSTLES' CREED pg. 105

INSTALLATION OF CHURCH COUNCIL

+THE PRAYERS pg. 152

SHARING OF THE PEACE

BENEVOLENCE

OFFERING PRAISE TEAM *Prepare the Way*

+OFFERTORY #184 "Let the Vineyards..."

+OFFERING PRAYER O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

+THE LORD'S PRAYER pg. 154 (right hand column)

COMMUNITY WORD

+BLESSING

L: 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.

C: Amen.

+CONGREGATIONAL HYMN #270 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

+DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace. Keep awake. Christ is coming!

C: Thanks be to God.

"I am God's child, deserving of love and respect, and God will use me to change the world."

If you would like more information about ELC of Mount Horeb please fill out the visitor cards in the pew pads which are passed during offering

DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 14, 2025

SHARE: What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

READ: Read the daily readings to deepen your understanding:

Monday, Psalm 42, Longing for God's Help

Tuesday, Jude 17-25, Warnings and Exhortations

Wednesday, Zechariah 8:1-17, God's Promises to Zion

Thursday, Psalm 80:1-7; 17-19, Prayer for Restoration

Friday, 2 Samuel 7:18-22, David's Prayer

Saturday, John 3:31-36, The One Who Comes from Heaven

TALK: Consider some of these ideas:

***"The blind receives their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed,
the deaf hear, the dead are raised,
and the poor have good news brought to them." -- Matthew 11:7***

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

- Isaiah paints God's redemption as a dangerous desert made lush and safe. What image would you use? (Isa 35:6-9)
- Would you live differently today if you thought the Lord was coming tomorrow? Why or why not? (James 5:7-9)
- If someone asked you, "Is Jesus the one?" what evidence would you point to that he is God's chosen? (Matt 11:3)

PRAY: Stir up the wills of all who look to you, Lord God, and strengthen our faith in your coming, that, transformed by grace, we may walk in your way; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

BLESS: God the eternal Word, who dwells with us in Jesus, and who holds us in the grace of the Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.