

Lutheran Church of the Cross



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December 28, 2025 - 1st Sunday of Christmas



Lutheran Church of the Cross

Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.
Welcome to Church of the Cross.
We pray our worship today blesses your life.

ORDER OF SERVICE Rev. James Townsend, Presiding

PRELUDE

Arr. Stan Pehel

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

Mark Coldiron

WELCOME

Jacquie Haney

OPENING HYMN

"In the Bleak Midwinter"

ELW# 294 (*stand*)

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, Wonderful Counselor, Mighty Savior,
Prince of Peace.

C Amen.

P Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithfulness, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

P Reconciling God,

C we yearn for your presence to transform our grief, pain, and despair.

**We confess that we have not always prepared room in our hearts for your
love; we have not always recognized your presence among us;
we have not always embraced your message of peace.**

We cry out, weary with the burden of violence, oppression, and fear.

**We confess our failure to make room for those seeking refuge;
our participation in violent systems that harm your innocent ones;
our reluctance to embody your good news.**

Be born in us today and teach us to sing the joyful song of your salvation.

Amen.

P God's grace upon grace flows over you. Christ's presence redeems the whole
creation. Your sins are forgiven. Let the earth rejoice and be glad!

C Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P Let us pray...

O Lord God, you know that we cannot place our trust in our own powers. As you protected the infant Jesus, so defend us and all the needy from harm and adversity, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

SCRIPTURE LESSONS

Jacquie Haney

Old Testament Reading ... Isaiah 63:7-9

⁷ 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.

⁸ For he said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will not act deceitfully,"
and he became their savior

⁹ 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.

Psalm 148

(read responsively)

¹ Hallelujah! Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise God in the heights.

² **Praise the Lord, all you angels;
sing praise, all you hosts of heaven.**

³ Praise the Lord, sun and moon;
sing praise, all you shining stars.

⁴ **Praise the Lord, heaven of heavens,
and you waters above the heavens.**

⁵ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
who commanded, and they were created,

**⁶ who made them stand fast forever and ever,
giving them a law that shall not pass away.**

⁷ Praise the Lord from the earth,
you sea monsters and all deeps;

**⁸ fire and hail, snow and fog,
tempestuous wind, doing God's will;**

⁹ mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars;

**¹⁰ wild beasts and all cattle,
creeping things and flying birds;**

¹¹ sovereigns of the earth and all peoples,
princes and all rulers of the world;

**¹² young men and maidens,
old and young together.**

¹³ Let them praise the name of the Lord,
whose name only is exalted, whose splendor is over earth and heaven.

**¹⁴ The Lord has raised up strength for the people and praise for all
faithful servants, the children of Israel, a people who are near the Lord.
Hallelujah!**

Epistle Reading ... Hebrews 2:10-18

¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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, ¹² saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you."

¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him."

And again, "Here am I and the children whom God has given me."

¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels but the descendants of Abraham.

¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

R The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

GOSPEL READING ... Matthew 2:13-23

(Please rise for the Gospel)

P The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ Now after the magi 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." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt ¹⁵ 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"

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, 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 magi. ¹⁷ Then what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸ "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."

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "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." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² 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.

²³ 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.”
P the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

MESSAGE OF THE DAY

Pastor Jim Townsend

HYMN OF THE DAY “’Twas in the Moon of Wintertime” ELW #284

APOSTLES’ CREED

(stand)

P Let us express our faith as found in the words of the Apostles’ Creed.

C I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again 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.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P Empowered by the news of Christ’s birth, let us pray boldly for the church, creation, and all who are in need.

After each petition the Pastor will say: Hear us, O God,

*Response: **your mercy is great.***

P God of grace, you show us mercy not according to our worthiness, but according to the abundance of your steadfast love. Grant us the courage to go into the world and do likewise. Hear us, O God.

P God of abundance, the sun and moon praise you and the shining stars sing of your love. Where we have desecrated your creation, make us into a healing balm for what we have broken. Hear us, O God.

P God of righteousness, when leaders fail to fulfill their calls to enact justice, you suffer alongside us. Propel those in power to see you reflected in the faces of all they serve. Hear us, O God.

P God of life, you claim us as your own and care for us as Christ's siblings. Pour out your compassion in every place your people suffer, and protect them in the palm of your hand. Hear our prayers for those on our prayer list and those close to our heart that we name before you aloud or silently....

Hear us, O God,

P God of compassion, you nurture children as the apple of your eye. As you sheltered your son Jesus from Herod's grasp, shelter all children in danger. As you comforted Rachel, comfort all who have lost children to violence. Hear us, O God.

P God of love, you console those who weep for lost beloved ones. Even as we mourn, we offer thanks for those who have gone before us, trusting in your comfort and protection. Hear us, O God.

P 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.

C Amen.

COMMUNION

(Stand)

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.

In the wonder and mystery of the Word made flesh you have opened the eyes of faith to a new and radiant vision of your glory, that, beholding the God made visible, we may be drawn to love the God whom we cannot see.

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:

**C Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might:
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

P You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.
You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.
You so loved the world that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who
believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.
We give you thanks for his coming into the world to fulfill for us your holy will
and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

C Amen.

P 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.

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

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

P Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,
his life-giving passion and death, his glorious resurrection and ascension,
and the promise of his coming again, we give thanks to you, O Lord
God Almighty, not as we ought but as we are able;
we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving and with your Word
and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants, and these your own gifts of bread and
wine, so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ may be filled
with heavenly blessing and grace, and, receiving the forgiveness of sin,
may be formed to live as your holy people and be given our inheritance with all
your saints.

To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.

C Amen.

P Let us pray together the prayer our Lord has taught us.

**C 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, the power and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

OFFERING *Bring your offering with you as you take Communion. As you return to
your seat, place your Offering and your Prayer Requests in the Basket at the table at
the back of the Sanctuary. At that time, you may also light a candle at the table of
votives in honor or memory of someone, or for any need.*

OFFERING PRAYER

P God of glory,

**C great are your wonders among us and many are the blessings you
bestow. Use us and these your gifts for the needs of the world,
that all the ends of the earth may rejoice in your saving grace,
through Christ our Savior. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P God is now in flesh appearing. Come to the feast of joy!

*(The Usher will direct you forward. Should you wish to have us bring Communion to you,
let the usher know and remain seated. Pastor has bread and Reader has the tray with
the outer circle of cups being wine and inner circles, grape juice. A gluten-free option is
available. Each person take a cup, then put the empty cup into the last tray.)*

SPECIAL MUSIC

“The Huron Christmas Carol”

Mark Coldiron

Arr. Terry Osman

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

P Incarnate God, you are among us at this table. May we treasure this gift and
ponder in our hearts the mystery of your presence. Move us to discover the
wonders of your love in the everyday moments of our lives, through Christ
born in us.

C Amen.

BLESSING

P The triune God, glorious Mystery, holy Incarnate One, abiding Comforter,
bless you with endless grace, peace, and joy.
C Amen.

SENDING HYMN “Cold December Flies Away” ELW #299

OPPORTUNITIES FOR MINISTRY

DISMISSAL & SHARING OF THE PEACE

P Glory to God in the highest!
C And peace to God’s people on earth!
P Go in joy. Embody God’s redeeming grace.
C Thanks be to God.
P May the peace of the Lord be with you always.
C And also with you.
P Let us share the peace of the Lord with each other as we leave today.

+++++
WE LEAVE TO BE THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD!

CHURCH OF THE CROSS

- Douglas Whiteaker, Council President 916-606-8976
- Kevin Brown, Church Secretary 916-628-6382
- Jacquie Haney, Facilities Manager 916-456-8880
- Church Email: sacchurchofthecross@gmail.com

Thank you, Pastor Townsend!

NOTES & EVENTS

Join us today in the Social Hall following Service for Coffee Fellowship.

“BLUE CHRISTMAS” Service on Sunday, January 4, 2026 at 11:00am.
led by our Intern, Sharon Hermosillo.

Come out, and join with us in sharing and hearing prayers, scripture, and music that acknowledge that God’s presence is for those who mourn, for those who struggle - and that God’s Word comes to shine light into our darkness. Everyone, is welcome! (regardless of church background or lack of it). Join us and start the new year out renewed!

PRAYER REQUESTS AND ANSWERED PRAYERS

Wil Hale, Kevin's brother-in-law, who is undergoing treatment for basal cell carcinoma on his head and will have surgery Jan. 22.

Nelly Quiban, grandma of Heaven and Hunter, and of Harmony and Holden (Douglas Whiteaker's children) who has been diagnosed with stage 4 brain cancer.

Prayers for Mark and Patricia who were in 2 auto accidents recently.

Sonya Tafejian, Tami Stoddard's sister, who is fighting a very aggressive breast cancer after successful surgery.

Lisa Mulz, who lost her dog, Petra, due to cancer. Also, for Lisa's mom who is on hospice.

Deanna Ransom who has vertigo and issues with her gall bladder.

Jim Dugan, friend of the congregation, who has early onset Alzheimer's.

Blair Bagley, Julie Andrews' friend who is recovering from Chiari 1 Malformation brain surgery.

Chuck Hines, for successful chemo for lung cancer and for continued healing of wounds on his foot. And, for Chuck's friend, Ken, who had a fall and is resistant to help at his assisted living home. Also, for Elaine Hussey, friend of Chuck's who is recovering from a leg wound.

May Drobny, who fractured her hip but is recovering at home.

Donya Wiken, who is homebound.

Julie Nemes' friend Danica and her husband, Abraham, who is struggling with Parkinson's. Also, for healing of Julie N's broken tooth, which will need replacement. And, for Julie's son Brad, who is waiting for favorable biopsy results.

Judy Kaylor, who is in hospice care and for her daughter, Tina Anger, who is in a care facility.

Sue Fossum's sister-in-law, Nancy, who is in hospice. And for Mark, Sue's brother.

Fossum's sister in law Deb - prayer for a successful outcome for colon surgery on 12/22.

Sarah - Fossum family friend who is awaiting surgery and treatment for breast cancer.

Emma - Fossum close family friend - prayers for understanding and positive outcomes related to health concerns. Ongoing prayers for Fossum neighbor and close friend Jen who has just finished radiation for breast cancer.

Jackie Walters who is suffering from rheumatoid arthritis. Also, Hans, Jackie's husband who has Parkinson's.

Julie Andrews' sister-in-law, Marilyn, who is in a care facility. Also, her sister-in-law, Pat.

Paul Santos, Jacquie Haney's brother-in-law hoping to receive a kidney transplant.

Erin Sullivan, Jacquie's friend, prayers for continued healing after beating breast cancer.

Karin Kretz, a member who had eye surgery and is now in assisted living.

LUTHERAN CHURCH OF THE CROSS
PARTICIPATING & PARTNERING IN SERVICE

Here is a sample:

- 1) St. John's Program for Real Change – Preparing & serving dinners at Women's & Children's Shelter
- 2) Fortunate Feast – Christmas Event for Families in need
- 3) LSS of Northern California's program for Youth who have aged out of the Foster Care system
- 4) River City Community Services – Food closet
- 5) Habitat for Humanity
- 6) Rock Point Navajo Reservation - Providing school supplies, Christmas gifts for children and more
- 7) "Run to Feed the Hungry" Care Station – supporting Sacramento Food Bank
- 8) Blue Star Moms – Sending "care" packages to our troops

Some projects receive support funding by Thrivent Financial
- A Non-Profit Fraternal Benefit Society that returns funds from financial products purchased by members to fund endeavors in the Community.

Other Groups That Use Our Facility:

- 1) Al-Anon
- 2) Women's AA

**Come Join Us in Our Service
to Our Community**

Worship For All Ages - Sunday 11:00 a.m.
Pet Friendly – Bring your Dog, Cat, or other Friends
WE ARE AN OPEN and DIVERSE ASSEMBLY
ALL ARE WELCOME !!