



**Thursday, December 11, 2025**  
**Third Sunday of Advent**

**First English Lutheran Church**  
**402 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ave., Wausau, Wisconsin 54401-4448**  
**715-842-5727**

**<https://www.firstenglishlutheranwausau.org>**

**A Congregation of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**

**Pastor: Reverend Mary E. Zupansic**  
**Minister of Music: Daniel Larson**  
**Pianist: Hal Osborn**  
**Parish Administrator: Debra Kluetz**

## **WELCOME TO FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH**

**Whether you are joining us in person or online, we are blessed to have you worshipping with us today. We pray that our time of worship together further encourages and strengthens our call to discipleship.**

**If you are a visitor, please fill out the neon green Visitor Card and drop and give it to an usher or greeter. Please come to worship with us again!**

**Worship Leader: Pastor Mary E. Zupansic  
Pianist: Hal Osborn    Lector: Barry Levine**

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY**

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.

### **PRELUDE**

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

### **CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

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

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God  
and of one another.

Long-expected God,  
**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.**

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. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG**    *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn*

**ELW #242**



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for  
 2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -  
 3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when  
 4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing, Sing out your joy, for  
 man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is  
 all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so  
 dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.  
 qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;  
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.  
 crown you with light, be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -  
 mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -  
 Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in  
 Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and  
 kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to  
 won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and  
 sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.  
 shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness.  
 weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.  
 bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen

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## 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.**

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us 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.**

## WORD

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

### FIRST READING: Isaiah 35:1-10

A reading from Isaiah.

- <sup>1</sup> The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;  
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;  
like the crocus <sup>2</sup> 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.
- <sup>3</sup> Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees.
- <sup>4</sup> 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."
- <sup>5</sup> Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
- <sup>6</sup> 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;
- <sup>7</sup> 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.
- <sup>8</sup> 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.

- <sup>9</sup> 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.
- <sup>10</sup> 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.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM: Psalm 146:5-10 (responsively)**

- <sup>5</sup> Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,  
whose hope is in the LORD their God;
- <sup>6</sup> **who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;  
who keeps promises forever;**
- <sup>7</sup> who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.  
The LORD sets the captive free.
- <sup>8</sup> **The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who  
are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.**
- <sup>9</sup> The LORD cares for the stranger; the LORD sustains the orphan and  
widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.
- <sup>10</sup> **The LORD shall reign forever, your God, O Zion, throughout  
all generations. Hallelujah!**

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**SECOND READING: James 5:7-10**

A reading from James.

- <sup>7</sup> 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. <sup>8</sup> You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. <sup>9</sup> Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors!

<sup>10</sup> As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Word of God, word of life.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11**

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>2</sup> When John heard in prison what the Messiah was doing, he sent word by his disciples <sup>3</sup> and said to him, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” <sup>4</sup> Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> 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. <sup>6</sup> And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me.”

<sup>7</sup> 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? <sup>8</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. <sup>9</sup> What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. <sup>10</sup> 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.’

<sup>11</sup> “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.”

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**SERMON**

**Pastor Mary E. Zupansic**



- 1 Pre - pare the roy - al high - way; the King of kings is near!
- 2 God's peo - ple, see him com - ing: your own e - ter - nal king!
- 3 Then fling the gates wide o - pen to greet your prom - ised king!
- 4 His is no earth - ly king - dom; it comes from heav'n a - bove.



Let ev - 'ry hill and val - ley a lev - el road ap - pear!  
 Palm branch - es strew be - fore him! Spread gar - ments! Shout and sing!  
 Your king, yet ev - 'ry na - tion its trib - ute too may bring.  
 His rule is peace and free - dom and jus - tice, truth, and love.



Then greet the King of glo - ry, fore - told in sa - cred sto - ry:  
 God's prom - ise will not fail you! No more shall doubt as - sail you!  
 All lands will bow be - fore him; their voic - es join your sing - ing:  
 So let your praise be sound - ing for kind - ness so a - bound - ing:

*Refrain*



Ho - san - na to the Lord, for he ful - fills God's word!

Text: Frans Mikael Franzén, 1772–1847; tr. *Lutheran Book of Worship*  
 Music: BEREDEN VÄG FÖR HERRAN, Swedish folk tune, 17th cent.  
 Text © 1978 *Lutheran Book of Worship*, admin. Augsburg Fortress



## **APOSTLES' CREED**

**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.**

## **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.

*Each petition ends with the following response.*

God of grace, **hear 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.**

## **PEACE**

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**And also with you.**

## **MEAL**

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

### **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.**

### **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

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.

### **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.**

## **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

Here is life. God is with us.

Come, receive what God has promised.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **COMMUNION: Instrumental Interlude**

## **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.**

## **SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

## **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.**



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -  
 2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their  
 3 No more let sin and sor - row grow nor thorns in -  
 4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him  
 songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and  
 fest the ground; he comes to make his bless - ings  
 na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture  
 plains re - peat the sound-ing joy, re - peat the sound-ing  
 flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is  
 ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.  
 joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.  
 found, far as, far as the curse is found.  
 love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748

Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, 18th cent.; arr. Lowell Mason, 1792–1872

## DISMISSAL

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

## POSTLUDE

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## **PASTORAL CARE**

If you would like a visit from Pastor Mary, or if you have a pastoral emergency, please call Pastor on her cell phone 920-671-4338.

## **NEW OFFICE EMAILS**

Pastor Mary: [pastor@firstenglishlutheranwausau.org](mailto:pastor@firstenglishlutheranwausau.org)

Deb: [parishadmin@firstenglishlutheranwausau.org](mailto:parishadmin@firstenglishlutheranwausau.org)

These are now working emails. Please send all correspondence to these addresses.

## **GIFTS have been given by**

Elevator Fund: Marla Zumann in memory of Joyce Utecht; Virgil Voigt in memory of Joyce Utecht;

## **AN OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE**

Our annual Advent Hunger Offering will be received during the month of December.

The need for such an offering remains so important.

The special Hunger Appeal offering envelopes are available on the narthex tables.

Let your gratitude and love flow freely during this season of giving with an extra gift to ELCA World Hunger. You may place your gifts in the offering plate on Sunday morning or Thursday evening. Thank you for caring and sharing!

## **WORSHIP ATTENDANCE**

Thursday, Dec. 4: 26

Sunday, Dec. 7: 98

**SUNDAY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE** Sunday, November 30: 8

## **FIRST ENGLISH LUTHERAN CHURCH CANCELLATION POLICY**

If cancellation of FELC worship service is necessary because of inclement weather, please check the following sources for notice of the closing:

WSAW Channel 7

WAOW Channel 9

First English Lutheran Church Facebook Page

First English Lutheran Church Congregation Email

Every effort will be made to communicate worship service cancellation to you by the above listed communication tools. In case something prevents those communications from reaching you and there are poor weather conditions, please prioritize your safety and stay home.

If the schools are closed due to poor weather conditions, the First English Lutheran Church office will also be closed and scheduled events cancelled.

## **YOUTUBE**

First English has a new temporary YouTube channel. This affects the live-streaming of our Sunday and special worship. So temporarily...in order to view our services through live-streaming, here's what you do: Go to the **YouTube Channel**. In the search space, put **first english wausau**. Then click on **First English Lutheran Church**. If you have any questions, feel free to call the office.

## **TREASURE SALE NEWS...**

Items for next year's Treasure Sale are coming in on a regular basis. We are accepting clean clothes in good condition, housewares, collectibles, books, linens, DVDs, CDs, and more. If donating linens, please mark them with what size they are. This is very helpful.

We will accept small appliances in working condition, and furniture. Your donations can be brought downstairs in the hallway by the Sunday School rooms. There is a sign on the door. Thank you so much for your donations!

## **PEEK AT THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 14-21, 2025**

**Sunday, Dec. 14:** 9:00 a.m. Worship / 10:15 a.m. Choir Practice

10:15 a.m. Sunday School  
**Sunday, Dec. 15:** 6:00 p.m. Church Council  
**Tuesday, Dec. 16:** 9:00 a.m. Quilting  
 6:00 p.m. Handbell Choir / 6:45 p.m. Choir Practice  
**Thursday, Dec. 18:** 6:00 p.m. Worship (*in the sanctuary*)  
**Friday, Dec. 19:** 6:30 p.m. NA Meeting  
**Sunday, Dec. 21:** 9:00 a.m. Worship  
 10:15 a.m. Sunday School  
 10:15 a.m. Choir Practice  
 3:00-5:00 p.m. Christmas Meditation (*sanctuary*)

### **LET US REMEMBER IN PRAYER...**

John Otto  
 Karl Otto  
 Linda Kittel  
 Judy Beemer (*sister of Roger DeWitt*)  
 Ron Wiese (*friend of the DeWitt family*)  
 John (family of Klapperich and Wynn)  
 Melinda (*sister of Matt Heyne*)  
 John & Pat Alters (*parents of John & Mike*)  
 Diane (*Aunt to Angela Greenfield & Jarek Nelson*)  
 Heidi Olson (*daughter of Duane & Darlene Chapman*)  
 Janet Alters (*Family member of Mike & Joan, Jack & Kim, Erin, Spencer and Ella*)  
 Tracey (*friend of Sheri Fochs*)

**Homebound / Assisted Lived:** Kathie Peterson (*Primrose*), Dolores Hintz (*Sylvan Crossings*), Sue McKee (*Rennes in Weston*), Diane Zuelke (*Mountain Terrace*), Michelle Detert (*Cady Home*), Ila Barttelt (*Rennes*), Joyce Utecht (*Rennes*), Gary Klingbeil (*Wood Aven*), Rick Petzke (*Crossroads Care Center in Weyauwega*)  
 Dennis & Laurayne Nicoliasen (*Rennes*) Geraldine Hopperdietzel (*Wood Aven*)  
 Audrey Fellbaum  
 Delphine Saeger

**Daily Prayers Offered for:** Bishops Anne Edison-Albright (*East Central Synod*) and Yehiel Curry (*Presiding Bishop of the ELCA*), and all those who work in the East Central Synod Office; ShyAnn and Peter Egwalata (*in Uganda*)

## **UPCOMING COMMEMORATIONS**

### **John of the Cross, renewer of the church, died 1591**

**Sunday, December 14, 2025**

John was a member of the Carmelite monastic order, and worked to reform it. His writings reflect a deep interest in mystical thought and meditation.

### **Las Posadas (LLC)**

**Tuesday, December 16, 2025**

This celebration, long popular in Mexico, takes its name from the "posadas," or lodgings, sought by Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem. Their search is reenacted in a neighborhood, unsuccessfully, until finally they are welcomed in, and a party commences.

### **Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church, died 1552**

**Saturday, December 20, 2025**

Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katie eventually took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin.