

**To him who
overcomes
I will grant
to sit with Me
on My throne,
as I also overcame
and sat down
with My Father
on His
throne.**



Immanuel Lutheran Church & School

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As We Gather

The shadows lengthen as we gather for our first midweek Advent worship. We often cry out, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," yet our text from Revelation reveals a startling image: the Savior already standing nearby, not seated on a throne, but waiting outside a closed door. To the church at Laodicea, Jesus offered a grave warning against spiritual indifference—a lukewarm state that feels rich but is wretched. Today, we confront the uncomfortable reality of the barrier within. Who is it that stands on the threshold? And what obstruction behind the door prevents it from opening? Let us quiet our minds and listen for the persistent, gracious knocking of the One who desires not merely to visit, but to abide and dine with us.

✠ Preparation for Worship ✠

Hymn

58 (1, 4-5, 7, 9) – O Lord, How Shall I Meet Thee

Invocation

P In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Opening Sentences

Psalm 51:15; Psalm 119:130; Luke 3:4

P O Lord, open my lips,

C And my mouth shall show forth Your praise.

P The entrance of Your words gives light;

C It gives understanding to the simple.

P Prepare the way of the LORD;

C Make His paths straight.

Confession and Absolution

P In this Advent season, we hear the cry to wake, for our salvation draws near. Yet the Lord knows our works and how easily our faith grows lukewarm. We often imagine ourselves rich and needing nothing, unaware that without Christ we are wretched, poor, and naked. Therefore, let us heed His counsel to buy from Him refined gold and white garments. Let us confess our sins, seeking His grace to open the closed doors of our hearts.

P Almighty God,

C We confess that we have grown complacent, allowing love of the world to crowd out our love for You. We have shut our hearts against Your Word, preferring pride and comfort over Your will. Lukewarm in devotion and slow to repent, we have not watched for Your coming. Forgive us, O Lord. Remove our filthy garments of sin and clothe us in the righteousness of Christ.

P Fear not, for the Lord has taken away your iniquity. As He spoke through the prophet Zechariah: "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." Upon this, your confession, and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

✠ The Service of the Word ✠

Salutation

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P Let us pray...

... who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Zechariah 3:1-5

¹ Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the Angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right hand to oppose him. ² And the LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is this not a brand plucked from the fire?" ³ Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and was standing before the Angel. ⁴ Then He answered and spoke to those who stood before Him, saying, "Take away the filthy garments from him." And to him He said, "See, I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will clothe you with rich robes." ⁵ And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head, and they put the clothes on him. And the Angel of the LORD stood by.

Psalm of the Day

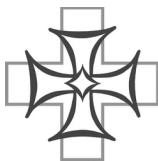
Psalm 24

- P** The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness,
C **The world and those who dwell therein.**
P For He has founded it upon the seas,
C **And established it upon the waters.**
P Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?
C **Or who may stand in His holy place?**
P He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
C **Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, Nor sworn deceitfully.**
P He shall receive blessing from the LORD,
C **And righteousness from the God of his salvation.**
P This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,
C **Who seek Your face.**
P Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors!
C **And the King of glory shall come in.**
P Who is this King of glory?
C **The LORD strong and mighty, The LORD mighty in battle.**
P Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors!
C **And the King of glory shall come in.**
P Who is this King of glory?
C **The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.**

Gospel Reading

Luke 12:35-40

³⁵ “Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; ³⁶ and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. ³⁷ Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. ³⁸ And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. ³⁹ But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰ Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”



Alleluia

P Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and keep it.



Confession of Faith

Luther's Explanation of the Second Article

I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord.

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death.

He did this that I should be His very own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and joy; just as He is risen from death, lives and reigns in eternity.

This is most certainly true.

Hymn

705 – Come, O Long-Expected Jesus

Sermon Text

Revelation 3:14-22

¹⁴ “And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write, ‘These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: ¹⁵ “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. ¹⁶ So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth. ¹⁷ Because you say, ‘I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing’—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—¹⁸ I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. ¹⁹ As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. ²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. ²¹ To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne. ²² “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” ’ ”



Sermon

The Heart's Closed Door

Offertory

702 (1, 4) – As Angels Joyed with One Accord

1 As an - gels joyed with one ac - cord Up -
 2 In ev - 'ry age let praise a - bound. He
 on comes; the ad - vent of our Lord, So
 we hear His voice re - sound. His
 laud we all and bless the name Of
 glo - rious gos - pel does not cease To
 Him who from the Fa - ther came.
 bring us com - fort, joy, and peace.

General Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

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 and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you.
 The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you.
 The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.
- C** Amen.


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✝ Announcements ✝

December 3	2:00 pm	Midweek Advent Worship
December 7	9:15 am	Bible Class
	10:15 am	Worship Service w/ Holy Communion
	11:30 am	Holiday Potluck Meal
	12:30 pm	Church Council/Board of Trustees Meeting
December 10	2:00 pm	Midweek Advent Worship
December 12	10:30 am	Learning with Littles
December 14	8:00 am	Worship Service (Orlando)
	10:15 am	Worship Service (Winter Haven)

Upcoming Meetings: Here is a schedule of our upcoming meetings:

- **December 7** – Trustees/Church Council
- **January 4** – Annual Voters’ Meeting
- **February 1** – Education/Elders

 **Staff Christmas Gifts:** We are collecting money for our pastor and teachers for Christmas. If you would like to contribute, please provide money to Ed Morris or John Kuehne by December 7.

In Our Prayers: Please keep our shut-in members in your prayers: Don Beymer, Bob & Joan Doriot, Johanna Jaehnigen, David & Elsie Kleinschmidt, Shirley Rosenberry, and Mike Sheffield.

Christmas Candy Bags: We are preparing, once again, to share the joy of Christmas with the children of our congregation and school through Christmas Candy Bags. Please consider donating candy for this effort. Donations can be placed on the conference table in Pastor’s office.

Looking Forward to Next Sunday: The world offers optimism, but often it is a leaky vessel. When trials come, mere positive thinking drains away. Next Sunday, we turn to Romans 15:4–13 to discover a “Hope that Holds Water.” St. Paul declares that “whatever things were written before were written for our learning,” that we might have hope through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures. This hope is no wishful dream; it is a certainty anchored in Christ, the Root of Jesse. Join us as the God of hope fills us

“with all joy and peace in believing,” ensuring our confidence remains watertight against the floods of doubt.

Midweek Advent Services – As the world fills with noise and hurried preparations, we are called to a different kind of preparation: to make our hearts ready for the coming of the King.

This year's sermon series, "Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room," is a call to move away from worldly self-sufficiency and toward true, repentant faith. Through God's Word, we will ask the Holy Spirit to open our "closed doors," smooth our "rough places," and give us the humble, receptive heart of a servant.

Service Schedule & Themes:

- **December 3 (2:00 PM)**
 - **Theme:** "The Heart's Closed Door"
 - **Text:** Revelation 3:15-22
- **December 10 (2:00 PM)**
 - **Theme:** "The Heart's Rough Places"
 - **Text:** Isaiah 40:1-11
- **December 17 (2:00 PM)**
 - **Theme:** "Behold, the Servant's Heart"
 - **Text:** Luke 1:26-38

Make this special time of worship a part of your Advent preparation as we ready ourselves to receive our Savior in Word and Sacrament.

For those unable to join us at 2:00 PM, you can watch online. Visit <https://winterhavenlutheran.com/sermons/>

Southeastern Women's Retreat: Registration is now open for the Southeastern Women's Retreat, to be held in Sherrills Ford, NC, February 13-15, 2026. The theme this year is "Sisters in Christ". To register, please head over to women'sretreat.clclutheran.net, click on SOUTHEAST, and scroll down to the link for the online form. If you would like to register over email or you have any questions, reach out to southeasternwomensretreat@gmail.com. We hope to see you there!

Holiday Meal – Everyone is warmly invited to our annual Holiday Potluck, scheduled for Sunday, December 7, immediately following the worship service. Please bring a dish to share as we join together for food and fellowship. We look forward to this blessed time with our church family.

