

Albany Lutherans Together  
First † Good Shepherd † Holy Spirit † St. John's



COMPLINE *for* ADVENT

---

Wednesdays in Advent, 2023 † 8:00 P.M.

## Welcome to Advent

*As night falls, we gather as Lutherans in Albany to wait in silence, word, and song for hope incarnate to be born anew in our midst.*

*Each Wednesday, we hear of God's deeds of mercy and love from times long ago as told in scripture and as revealed in the lives of those who came before us.*

December 6     Commemoration of Nicholas, bishop of Myra.

December 13    Commemoration of Lucia, martyr.

December 20    Commemoration of Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church.

## Zoom Connection

<http://firstlutheranalbany.org/zoom> or call 301-715-8592 or 929-436-2866. The meeting code is 518-463-1326, the passcode is "1"

## Notes on worshipping together

*You are invited to create a sacred space in your home, perhaps lighting a candle or your Advent wreath. Please remain muted except during the prayers and other times that the leader invites speaking. The music is all recorded by St. John's Collegium and will be played over Zoom. You are encouraged to sing along at home.*

*Italics are notes, a leader reads plain text, all read bold text*

## Opening

*After brief notes on the service, the assembly centers for worship in silence. After a time, the presiding minister begins.*

Almighty God grant us a quiet night and peace at the last.

**Amen.**

By day, O God,

**you grant your steadfast love,**

and at night your song is with me,

**a prayer to the God of my life.**

## Night Hymn

ACS 901

## Now the Heavens Start to Whisper



1 Now the heav - ens start to whis - per, as the veil is grow - ing thin.  
 2 Heav - y clouds that block the moon - light now be - gin to drift a - way.  
 3 Christ, e - ter - nal Sun of jus - tice, Christ, the rose of wis - dom's seed,



Earth from slum - ber wakes to lis - ten to the stir - ring, faint with - in:  
 Dia - mond bril - liance through the dark - ness shines the hope of com - ing day.  
 come to bless with fire and fra - grance hours of yearn - ing, hurt, and need.



seed of prom - ise, deep - ly plant - ed, child to spring from Jes - se's stem!  
 Christ, the morn - ing star of splen - dor, gleams with - in a world grown dim.  
 In the lone - ly, in the strang - er, in the out - cast, hid from view;



Like the soil be - neath the frost - line, hearts grow soft to wel - come him.  
 Heav - en's em - ber fans to full - ness; hearts grow warm to wel - come him.  
 Child who comes to grace the man - ger, teach our hearts to wel - come you.



Text: Mary Louise Bringle, b. 1953

Music: SUO GAN, Welsh melody; arr. hymnal version

Text © 2006 GIA Publications, Inc., giamusic.com. All rights reserved.

Arr. © 2020 Augsburg Fortress

## **Confession and Forgiveness**

*The presiding minister invites the assembly into the confession.*

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

*The assembly keeps silence for self-examination.*

*The leader begins the confession.*

I confess to God Almighty,  
before the whole company of heaven,  
and to you, my siblings  
that I have sinned by my own fault  
in thought, word, and deed.  
I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me,  
forgive me all my sins,  
and bring me to everlasting life.

**Almighty and merciful God  
grant you healing, pardon,  
and forgiveness of all your sins. Amen.**

**I confess to God Almighty,  
before the whole company of heaven,  
and to you, my siblings  
that I have sinned by my own fault  
in thought, word, and deed.  
I pray God Almighty to have mercy on me,  
forgive me all my sins,  
and bring me to everlasting life.**

Almighty and merciful God  
grant you healing, pardon, and  
forgiveness of all your sins. Amen.

# Psalmody

*The reader and homilist read Psalm 4 responsively.*

*All are invited to join either or both, with microphones off.*

- <sup>1</sup>Answer me when I call, O God, defender <sup>1</sup> of my cause;  
you set me free when I was in distress;  
have mercy on me and <sup>1</sup> hear my prayer
- <sup>2</sup>**“You mortals, how long will you dishon- <sup>1</sup> or my glory;  
how long will you love illusions and seek <sup>1</sup> after lies?”**
- <sup>3</sup>Know that the LORD does wonders <sup>1</sup> for the faithful;  
the LORD will hear me <sup>1</sup> when I call.
- <sup>4</sup>**Tremble, then, and <sup>1</sup> do not sin;  
speak to your heart in silence up- <sup>1</sup> on your bed.**
- <sup>5</sup>Offer the appointed <sup>1</sup> sacrifices,  
and put your trust <sup>1</sup> in the LORD.
- <sup>6</sup>**Many are saying, “Who will show us <sup>1</sup> any good?”  
Let the light of your face shine upon <sup>1</sup> us, O LORD.**
- <sup>7</sup>You have put gladness <sup>1</sup> in my heart,  
more than when grain and <sup>1</sup> wine abound.
- <sup>8</sup>**In peace, I will lie <sup>1</sup> down and sleep;  
for you alone, O LORD, make me <sup>1</sup> rest secure.**



# Word

## December 6

Nicholas, bishop of Myra

*Nicholas was bishop for twenty-five years in a city that now is in Turkey. Given few facts about his ministry, there arose medieval legends of him as a wonderworker. Stories of his care for children led to his being named the protector of children and eventually to his evolution into Santa Claus. In some northern European places, December 6, Nicholas's death day, is the day of winter gift-giving.*

*One famous story tells of his providing dowries in the form of bags of gold to three impoverished young girls, to save them from prostitution. In our time, a sign displaying three gold globes denotes the shop of a pawnbroker.*

- From *More Days for Praise*, by Gail Ramshaw



“St. Nicolas rescuing captives” (1660) by Jan Cossiers

## READING

LUKE 21:34-38 (NRSVUE)

[Jesus said], <sup>34</sup>“Be on guard so that your hearts are not weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of this life and that day does not catch you unexpectedly, <sup>35</sup>like a trap. For it will come upon all who live on the face of the whole earth. <sup>36</sup>Be alert at all times, praying that you may have the strength to escape all these things that will take place and to stand before the Son of Man.”

<sup>37</sup>Every day he was teaching in the temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. <sup>38</sup>And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the temple.

## REFLECTION

*The homilist offers a brief reflection on the text and the day.*

## SONG

ELW 252

## EACH WINTER AS THE YEAR GROWS OLDER



1 Each win - ter as the year grows old - er, we each grow old - er,  
 2 When race and class cry out for trea - son, when si - rens call for  
 3 Yet I be - lieve be - yond be - liev - ing that life can spring from  
 4 So e - ven as the sun is turn - ing to jour - ney to the  
 5 O Child of ec - sta - sy and sor - rows, O Prince of peace and



too. The chill sets in a lit - tle cold - er; the  
 war, they o - ver - shout the voice of rea - son and  
 death, that growth can flow - er from our griev - ing, that  
 north, the liv - ing flame, in se - cret burn - ing, can  
 pain, bright - en to - day's world by to - mor - row's, re -



ver - i - ties we knew seem shak - en and un - true.  
 scream till we ig - nore all we held dear be - fore.  
 we can catch our breath and turn trans - fixed by faith.  
 kin - dle on the earth and bring God's love to birth.  
 new our lives a - gain; Lord Je - sus, come and reign!

**December 13**

Lucia, martyr

Lucy was martyred during the Diocletian persecution in 304. She was praised for her care of the poor and her dedication to her vow of virginity. Because her name means “light,” and since her martyrdom occurred at the time of the medieval designation of the winter solstice, especially Scandinavia celebrates her day with a St. Lucy’s (or Lucia’s) Day ritual, in which a girl, wearing a wreath of burning candles in her hair, serves early morning sweets to the family and community

Lucy is shown carrying a light source, such as an oil lamp. Because of the legend that she tore out her own eyes to deter a suitor who had admired them, in art she is often shown holding her own eyes on a dish.

- From More Days for Praise, by Gail Ramshaw





## READING

LUKE 1:5-17 (Page 15)

## REFLECTION

The homilist offers a brief reflection on the text and the day.

## SONG

LOST IN THE NIGHT | ELW 243



1 Lost in the night do the peo - ple yet lan - guish,  
2 Must we be vain - ly a - wait - ing the mor - row?  
3 Sor - row - ing wan - d'ers, in dark - ness yet dwell - ing,  
4 Light o'er the land of the need - y is beam - ing;

long - ing for morn - ing the dark - ness to van - quish,  
Shall those who have light no light let us bor - row,  
dawned has the day of a ra - diance ex - cel - ling,  
riv - ers of life through its des - erts are stream - ing,

plain - tive - ly sigh - ing with hearts full of an - guish.  
giv - ing no heed to our bur - den of sor - row?  
death's deep - est shad - ows for - ev - er dis - pel - ling.  
bring - ing all peo - ples a Sav - ior re - deem - ing.

Will not day come soon? Will not day come soon?  
Will you help us soon? Will you help us soon?  
Christ is com - ing soon! Christ is com - ing soon!  
Come and save us soon! Come and save us soon!

**December 20**

Katharina von Bora Luther  
renewer of the church

The woman whom Martin Luther called “my lord Katie” managed the family’s complex household, which at times resembled a hotel, and its extended farm. Thanks largely to her success, the phenomenon of a married clergy and a socially significant parsonage became the ideal for most Protestants. The story is told that at Luther’s marriage, the Archbishop Albrecht of Mainz, who opposed Luther’s reforms, sent a wedding gift of twenty guilders. Martin intended to refuse the money, but Katharina, who knew their emerging financial needs, said that the money had come from the Lord, and they must keep it; and they did.

- From *More Days for Praise*, by Gail Ramshaw

*I will cling to Christ like a burr to a dress.*

- Katharina’s last recorded words.



Katharina von Bora Luther  
painted by Lucas Cranach the Elder

**READING****MARK 9:9-13 (NRSVUE)**

<sup>9</sup>As [Peter, James, John, and Jesus] were coming down the mountain, [Jesus] ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead. <sup>10</sup>So they kept the matter to themselves, questioning what this rising from the dead could mean. <sup>11</sup>Then they asked him, “Why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” <sup>12</sup>He said to them, “Elijah is indeed coming first to restore all things. How then is it written about the Son of Man, that he is to go through many sufferings and be treated with contempt? <sup>13</sup>But I tell you that Elijah has come, and they did to him whatever they pleased, as it is written about him.”

**REFLECTION**

*The homilist offers a brief reflection on the text and the day.*

**SONG**      IN A FAR OFF PLACE, JESUS COMES | ACS 908

1 In a far - off place, Je - sus comes to earth.  
2 For the poor in heart, Je - sus comes to earth.  
3 In our deep - est night, Je - sus comes to earth:



Sheep and cat - tle grace the site. As the  
Hum - ble shep - herds start the news. For each  
ra - diant star to light our way. Sum - mer's



an - gel songs be - gin, like the whis - per of the wind,  
home - less in - fant born, for the meek and those who mourn,  
heat or win - ter's chill, with a warm and lov - ing will,



na - ture's hope a - wakes a - gain; Je - sus comes.  
for the wear - y and the worn, Je - sus comes.  
to a world that needs him still, Je - sus comes.

# Prayers

*The intercessor leads us in prayer.*

*All are invited to turn on your microphones.*

Hear my prayer, O Lord;

**listen to my cry.**

Keep me as the apple of your eye;

**hide me in the shadow of your wings.**

In righteousness I shall see you;

**when I awake, your presence will give me joy.**

*One or more of the following prayers are said by the intercessor.*

Be present, merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of life may find our rest in you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OR

O Lord, support us all the day long of this troubled life, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes and the busy world is hushed, the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then, in your mercy, grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OR

Be our light in the darkness, O God, and in your great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night; for the love of your only Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

OR

Keep watch, dear Lord, with those who work or watch or weep this night, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend the sick, give rest to the weary, bless the dying, soothe the suffering, comfort the afflicted, shield the joyous; and all for your love's sake. **Amen.**

OR

Eternal God, the hours both of day and night are yours, and to you the darkness is no threat. Be present, we pray, with those who labor in these hours of night, especially those who watch and work on behalf of others. Grant them diligence in their watching, faithfulness in their service, courage in danger, and competence in emergencies. Help them to meet the needs of others with confidence and compassion; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OR

Gracious God, we give you thanks for the day, especially for the good we were permitted to give and to receive; the day is now past and we commit it to you. We entrust to you the night; we rest securely, for you are our help, and you neither slumber nor sleep; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **Lord's Prayer**

*The intercessor leads us in the Lord's Prayer.*

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen.**

*Please silence your microphones.*

## **Gospel Canticle**

*The presiding minister leads us in the Song of Simeon.*

Guide us waking, O Lord,  
and guard us sleeping;  
that awake we may watch with Christ  
and asleep may rest in peace.

**Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace:  
your word has been fulfilled.**

**My own eyes have seen the salvation  
which you have prepared in the sight of ev'ry people:  
a light to reveal you to the nations  
and the glory of your people Israel.**

**Guide us waking, O Lord,  
and guard us sleeping;  
that awake we may watch with Christ  
and asleep we may rest in peace.**

## **Blessing**

Let us bless the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

Almighty and merciful God, Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,  
bless, preserve, and keep us, this night and forevermore.

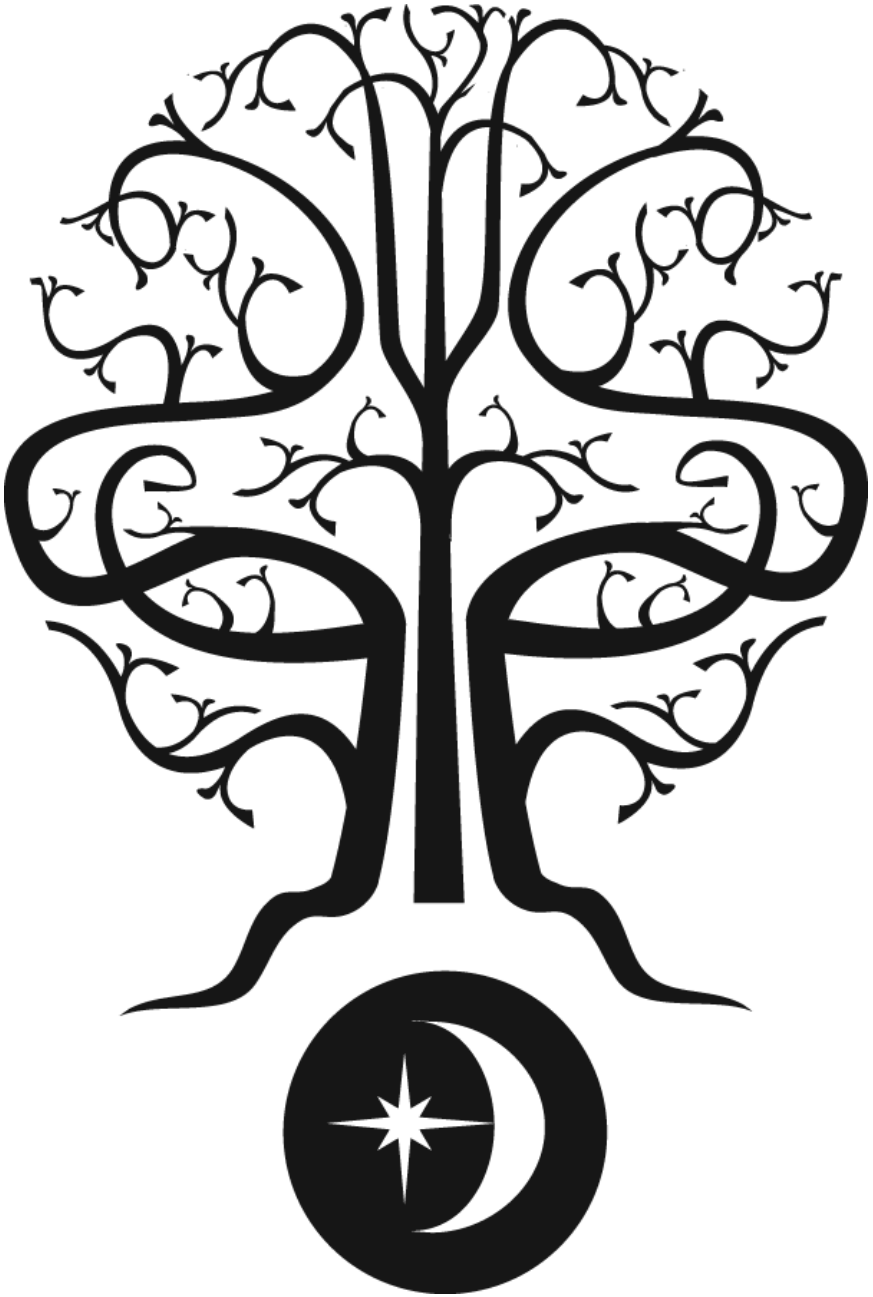
**Amen.**

*A greeting of peace may be shared by all as we depart.*

**THE READING FOR DECEMBER 13**      LUKE 1:5-17 (NRSVUE)

<sup>5</sup>In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly order of Abijah. His wife was descended from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. <sup>6</sup>Both of them were righteous before God, living blamelessly according to all the commandments and regulations of the Lord. <sup>7</sup>But they had no children because Elizabeth was barren, and both were getting on in years.

<sup>8</sup>Once when he was serving as priest before God during his section's turn of duty, <sup>9</sup>he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter the sanctuary of the Lord to offer incense. <sup>10</sup>Now at the time of the incense offering, the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. <sup>11</sup>Then there appeared to him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup>When Zechariah saw him, he was terrified, and fear overwhelmed him. <sup>13</sup>But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John. <sup>14</sup>You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, <sup>15</sup>for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink; even before his birth he will be filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>16</sup>He will turn many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup>With the spirit and power of Elijah he will go before him, to turn the hearts of parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."



Acknowledgements: **Readings** are from *The New Revised Standard Version: Updated Edition (NRSVue) Bible* © 2021 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. **The Psalm text** is from *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, © 2007 Augsburg Fortress. **The liturgy** is adapted from "Night Prayer" in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, © 2007 Augsburg Fortress and *SundaysAndSeasons.com* © 2023 Augsburg Fortress, used by permission of Augsburg Fortress Annual Liturgies License #SAS021975. Hymns are reprinted under OneLicense.net #A-713714.