



Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church - E.L.C.A.

Fourth Sunday in Advent

Sunday, December 21st, 2025

Theme: The Power of Yes

In this liminal time, there are so many reasons to not say yes. Even the small yeses in our daily lives feel riskier somehow. Decisions about where we put our money, our time, our energy, our confidence, and our faith feel more important than ever during these volatile times. We come from a history of people who said yes. Throughout the story of the people of God, brave and faithful, everyday people said yes to God. In Advent, these yeses are even more significant. What does it take to get to yes? Why does it matter? Why does it matter that we believe this? This is a story that we tell, that isn't just on a page or in ancient tales, but one that lives in our bones, and calls to us to say our own yes when we are called into what God is doing now.

Call to Worship

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity, + one God, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved. **C: Amen**

CANDLE-LIGHTING (WELCA (Women of the Evangelical Church in America))

We light four candles for the four corners of the earth: Everything to the north, and the south, Everything to the east, and the west. We light four candles to say YES to the invitation to care for the earth and for all her good creation.

CANDLE LIGHTING HYMN

Light One Candle To Watch For Messiah

ELW #240-All Verses

CALL TO CONFESSION

Fear can be a good thing. It can help us be attentive while driving down the highway. It can alert us to possible accidents. It can motivate us to do our best. However, fear can also be harmful. For so many of us, fear of the other, fear of failure, or fear of the unknown has led us to make sinful choices in our lives—choices such as building walls or tearing others down. Today, in confession, we ask for mercy and pray for guidance. As we confess, we come before an entirely merciful and loving God who says to us, “Do not be afraid.” Let us pray:

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Patient God, you know just how often we make decisions from a place of fear rather than love. You know just how often we allow fear to take the place of logic, fanning unhealthy fires in our lives. You know just how often we tuck your words, “Do not be afraid” on dusty shelves and in the back of closets, stubbornly holding onto our own point of view. Forgive us for giving fear the microphone. Silence the voices of scarcity, shame, and rejection, which spark and feed so much of our fear, to recenter us in love. With hope we pray, amen.

WORDS OF FORGIVENESS

P: Family of faith, even when we forget God’s words, God does not forget us. Even when we lose our way, God does not lose us. Even when we fall short or make mistakes, God forgives and holds onto us. We are known, forgiven, and loved. **C: Thanks be to God! Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

ELW #257 vs 1-3

GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C: And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Lord God, Like Joseph, give us tender and open hearts, ready to do your will. Help us to see where our hopes and dreams fit with your plans for our lives, Amen.

READING

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy

Spirit. ¹⁹ Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ "Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." ²⁴ When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵ but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

P: The word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE

HYMN OF THE DAY

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

ELW #257 vs 4-6

APOSTLE'S 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 THE PEOPLE

Response: **Hear Our Prayer**

OFFERING

Ways To Give Offering: In Person, Venmo and Online www.galutheranchurch.org



Because you give...
we worship, fellowship, learn, serve and grow.
Thank you for your generosity!

OFFERING SONG

Give Thanks

Gray #170

OFFERING PRAYER

God of every good gift, We offer what we have back to you, knowing that your son is the greatest gift we will ever receive. Grant us glad and generous hearts, ever and always, Amen.

Communion Prayer/Words of Institution

LORD'S PRAYER

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P: At this table, Christ invites us to step into God's power of Yes—to say Yes to hope stronger than despair, Yes to mercy wider than our mistakes, Yes to a Savior who meets us in bread and cup. Come, you who are weary. Come, you who rejoice. Come, you who are still searching. Your presence here is already a Yes. Come to the table of grace where the Power of God's Yes meets our open hands.

COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION

(All Are Welcome to Receive Communion Here at GA Church)

POST COMMUNION BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

L: Christ Jesus, You have fed us with love incarnate, and we are utterly changed. Send us forth from this meal to be forces for change in this world, as we find the YES within each of us, **C: Amen.**

BLESSING

May God bless you with courage, as you seek the YES within you; May Christ be born again in every risk you take for the sake of the world; And may the Holy Spirit remind you, again and again, that you are never alone, and that you are loved beyond measure. **C: Amen.**

SENDING HYMN

Wait For The Lord

ELW #262 x2

DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace, live in hope

All: and share the Good News of God's Word and serve the community and the world.

Thanks be to God.

Mission Statement of Gustaf Adolf Lutheran Church (Adopted in 2022)

To share the Good News of God's Word and to serve the community and the world.

Matthew 22:39 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

Matthew 28:19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

We celebrate weekly Holy Communion. We welcome all who believe in the Risen Christ and who find in the sacrament our Lord's real presence for the forgiveness of sins and the renewal of life. If you receive communion in your home congregation, you are invited to receive it here at G.A. Red wine and white grape juice will be offered to you in Christ's name. You may choose your preference. If you are unable to receive wheat bread, or wine, be sure that in a single element you receive the Presence and all the gifts of the sacrament. *From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright 2025 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted and live streamed by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #35904. CCLI# 3138595 and #21256999*

A Thrill of Hope: Advent in a Box Volume 2 Written by: Nate Crary & Rev. Miriam Samuelson Roberts

The Power of Yes - Advent To Go Vol. 3 (2025)

By Rev. Andrea Roske-Metcalf © Church Anew. Used with Permission."

Liturgy adapted from a prayer by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org