

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024





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December 22, 2024

Memorial Lutheran Church | Nevada, Iowa

Prelude:

Lois Theesfield, organ

Welcome

Call to Worship

In this weary world,
we sing of joy.

In this fragile world,
we lift each other up.

In this beautiful world,
we look for God.

In this tender world,
we hold onto hope.

This is the invitation of faith. So in this time of worship, may we sing, lift up, look for, and hold onto our with-us God.

With hope in our hearts, Amen!

Gathering Song: "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" - ELW #257 verses 7-8

Prayer of the Day

Listening God, We know that you are constantly speaking to us. Through music, scripture, nature, and relationships, you make yourself known again and again. In gratitude, we long to return the favor. In gratitude, we long to meet you. So in this moment, we are quieting the noise in our heads. We are closing our eyes. We are leaning in. We are listening. We are doing the good that is ours to do. Speak to us that we might hear you. Speak to us as only you can. With hope in our hearts we listen, we pray, **Amen.**

Candle Lighting Liturgy

Light a Candle

Advent 4

Light a can - dle for love in the dark - ness, Hearts con - tent, we know You are
near; Ad - vent watch - ing and wait - ing for Je - sus, God with us, Your
pur - pose is clear, Em - man - u - el, love is
here; love is hear!

The musical score is written on four staves in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

First Reading: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸Now 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. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But 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. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All 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."

²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son, and he named him Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Children at Heart Sermon

Gospel Acclamation: "We are Waiting for Jesus" - ACS #905

1 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
2 We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

Sun of jus - tice, shine up - on us; we are trust - ing in your prom - ise.
Lov - ing Shep - herd, walk be - side us; stir our hearts, and gent - ly guide us.

We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.
We are wait - ing for Je - sus; Je - sus brings peace.

The image shows a musical score for a Gospel Acclamation. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one sharp). The first staff has two vocal lines. The second staff has two vocal lines. The third staff is a single vocal line. The fourth staff has two vocal lines. The lyrics are written below the notes.

Text: John Helgen, b. 1957
Music: JESUS BRINGS PEACE, John Helgen
Text and music © 2013 Augsburg Fortress

Gospel Reading: Luke 1:39-55

The Gospel according to Luke
Glory to You, O Lord

³⁹ In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰ where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴² and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³ And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴ For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And

blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.” [

⁴⁶And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

The Gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

Hymn of the Day: “*Canticle of the Turning*” - ELW #723

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

Sharing of the Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

Offering

Music Voluntary:
Lois Theesfield, organ

Offering Prayer

Creator God,
you made the whole world,
even the farthest stars,
and you draw near to feed us.
We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine.
Strengthen us with this food
that we may live in expectation
for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

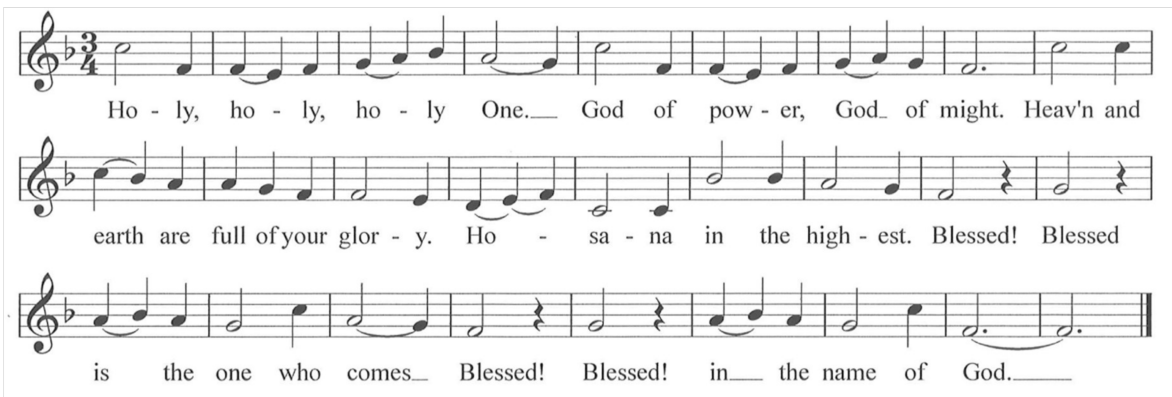
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Eucharistic Prayer

Holy God,
we come to you today feeling tenderhearted.
Life is hard, and our spirits are bruised by the relentless ups and downs.
Disappointment, fear, and grief weigh heavy on our hearts,
and yet we come—seeking you, reaching for your light, daring to hope.
In this season of Advent, as the world waits for your arrival,
we are reminded that even in the darkest night, your promise endures.
You draw near to us in our brokenness, in our longing,
and in the most vulnerable places of our lives.
So with tenderhearted faith, we join our voices with Mary and Joseph,
with angels and shepherds,
with the saints who have gone before us,
and with all the company of heaven, singing:

Holy, Holy, Holy

To the tune of Bring a Torch, Jeannette Isabella, "Everlasting Light" by David Eck



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly One... God of pow - er, God of might. Heav'n and
earth are full of your glor - y. Ho - sa - na in the high - est. Blessed! Blessed
is the one who comes... Blessed! Blessed! in... the name of God._____

Words of Institution

Pour out your Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine.
By this meal, draw near to our most vulnerable places,
and fill us with the hope of your presence.
Let this bread and cup remind us that we are not alone—
that you are with us, and change is always possible.
Empower us, O God, to live like Mary and Joseph,
courageous enough to believe your promises
and bold enough to risk hope in this tenderhearted world.
Through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in your holy church,
all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever. **Amen.**

And now, with all the tenderhearted hope we can muster,
we join our voices together in prayer, saying the words Jesus taught us:

The 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

Hymns during Communion

***"Come Now, O Prince of Peace"* - ELW #247, verses 1-2**

***"Come Thou Long Expected Jesus"* - ELW #254**

Prayer after Communion

Nourishing God,
Sometimes we tell ourselves that too much has taken place to begin again.
We think the world is too far gone.
We think we have made too many mistakes.
We tell ourselves that we couldn't possibly begin again.
But then we come to this Table and we get a glimpse of your kingdom.
And just like that, we have hope.
Just like that, we begin again.
Thank you for the gift of this fresh start.
Thank you for planting hope deep in our bones.
Thank you for meeting us in ordinary bread and wine to remind us that it's never
too late to build your kingdom here.
We are grateful.
Amen.

Announcements

Blessing

God of endings and beginnings,
God in the darkness and the light,
God, our hope for the journey,
+ bless and keep you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Hymn: “Joy o the World” - ELW #267

Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.
Thanks be to God.

Postlude:

Lois Theesfield, organ

Prayers for Healing

If you have a prayer request, please email pastorkathleen@mlcnevada.org or emily@mlcnevada.org, or call the church office at 515-382-6509.

Please keep Pastor Anita Nuetzman and family in your prayers following the death of her husband, +Dennis Nuetzman.

Please keep the family of +Darla Bohrer (niece of Sandy Christian) following her death

Please keep Steve Halverson in your prayers following the death of his brother, Craig Halverson, in Dallas, Texas on Thursday, October 24. Craig graduated from Nevada High School in 1969

Karen Anderson	Crystal Vines	Carol Vincent
Caleb Roof	Katie Bass	Cassie Harrell
Jo Rod	<i>niece of Judy Coverdale</i>	Jean Smith
Kelsee Holzmer	Wayne Johnson	Easton Farrington
<i>granddaughter of Joyce Mack</i>	Troy Vincent	Janice Hartz
Diane Eilers	Kati Stieler	Jackie Byers
Mary-Anne Jungst	<i>sister-in-law of Dan Stieler</i>	<i>daughter of Shellie Black</i>
<i>sister-in-law of Steve Jungst</i>	Johann Thiel	Donna See
Steve Schrum	Mike Neal	Norma Dannan
<i>father of Jill Rhodes</i>	Christina King	<i>friend of Betty Runge</i>
Jake Jacobson	Sherry Kluever	Fred Samuelson
Evelyn Onstot	Kim Elliott	Jaylee Bartleson
Marty Schuler	Pr. Marcia Kisner	George Forsyth
Katy Beno	Marlene Waddell	Janeen Driscoll
<i>sister of Sandy Christian</i>	<i>friend of Virginia Palmisano-Goettsch</i>	Julie Sutherland
Kathy Larsen	John Bass	Jan Cook
Eric Forsyth	<i>son-in-law of Ron & Gloria Jacobson</i>	
Ardith Forsyth		

Hospitalizations: *If you are in the hospital or are going to be in the hospital and want us to be aware of it, please call the church office or have someone call on your behalf. Unless directed otherwise, your name will be placed on the prayer list and included in electronic notifications.*

Announcements

TODAY: Quiet Christmas Service

Sunday, December 22 at 5 pm at Memorial Lutheran

We know that the holidays can often be a difficult time. This season can be filled with too much noise, too much rushing around, or maybe too much grief. This season may not feel like what you want or expect Christmas to feel like. Whatever you may be experiencing in this season, you belong and are invited to come and be with others. Come and hear scripture. Come and pray. Come as you are to find hope and peace in the companionship of Christ and others.

Church Council Update

Thank you once again to all who were willing to be on the ballot for Congregation Council for the 2025-2027 term. Please help us to welcome the following individuals, as we give thanks for their ministry among us in this particular way for the next few years.

Connie Kinyon

Carl Link

Mike Neal

Lynn Rhodes

Generous Gifts Tree

As you walked into the Narthex this morning, you may have noticed the return of our Generous Gifts Tree! You will see a very colorful little tree filled with all kinds of present-shaped ornaments with different monetary values written on them, and you will notice there are some rather substantial gifts hanging on the tree.

Now if you recall recent communications from our treasurer and Stewardship Committee, you will remember that we have been (and are continuing to be) behind with our projected giving for the year. As of October 31, 2024, we are **behind approximately \$33,000** for our General Fund income vs expenses. If

we were to **all pray, discern, and work together** to be able to generously give what is on each of these ornaments on top of our regular giving, we would be caught up with our projected giving to the General Fund.

We are asking that you would take a look at the tree, talk with others in your household, and listen if God might be urging you to take one or maybe even more gift ornaments to add to your regular giving. Thanks for your prayerful consideration.

Important Year-end Giving Information

Thank you for your continued generous support of Memorial Lutheran Church! This email is to help you plan your end of year giving if you wish to receive contribution credit for gifts in 2024.

In order to comply with the IRS, we will only be able to accept gifts for contribution credit in 2024 if the following are true:

1. We receive the gift in the office or the office mailbox by midnight on 12/31/2024 **and the gift is dated 12/31/2024**. Please use the mailbox outside the North doors if the office is closed.
2. A mailed gift is dated **AND** postmarked on or before 12/31/2024. If you intend to mail your gift, date your check 12/31/2024 or before and get it to the post office by closing on 12/31/2024 - **make sure to take it to the counter and ask it to be postmarked in your presence** - this assures it is done on that same day.
3. A gift from distributions such as an IRA is also dated **AND** postmarked by 12/31/2024.
4. Make your gift online using tithe.ly/give before midnight on 12/31/2024.

Thank you for your attention to this important information regarding our mission and ministry together in Nevada and beyond! We wish you all blessings of this Christmas season and a most joyous New Year!

Thank you for your Thrivent Choice Dollars contributions!

We would like to thank all those who have designated their Thrivent Choice Dollars to Memorial. In addition to funding **annual scholarships** for students attending ELCA schools, Thrivent Choice Dollars have been distributed in the

following ways this year: **\$2,500** toward Memorial's "A Welcoming Space = A Welcoming Place" Heating/Cooling Project and **\$500** to much-needed hygiene products for Cubbie's Cupboard. Thank you for your generosity!

Tributes for Pr. Duane Miller's Retirement

Pastor Duane Miller, Memorial's interim pastor from September 2019 through April 2021, is retiring and his son would like to collect words of tribute from our congregation. If you would like to contribute, please email your congratulations, memories from his time at Memorial, etc. to emily@mlcnevada.org, or place them in the secure box outside Emily's office. Thank you!

MLC Member Survey

Earlier this year our congregation council set a goal to reach out to Memorial's membership in the hopes of listening well to the needs and hopes of our congregation. A subcommittee was formed to create a survey that would help in identifying what needs are being met, as well as what needs are not currently being met. The council needs everyone's honest feedback in order to identify how we can best serve and love as Memorial Lutheran Church. Thank you in advance for your time and your thoughts. Your participation will help us to grow and abide together in Christ for the sake of the world.



Online Giving with Tithe.ly

Thank you for joining us for worship today! If you would like to support our ministries, online gifts can be made using <http://tithe.ly/> give or by scanning the QR code. ***Did you know? In Tithe.ly, you can set up one-time or recurring gifts to the General Fund, Capital Improvement (for upcoming building projects), the "A Welcoming Space = A Welcoming Place" heating and cooling project, and more!***



Save the Date

Quiet Christmas Service

When: Thursday, December 22, 5:00 PM

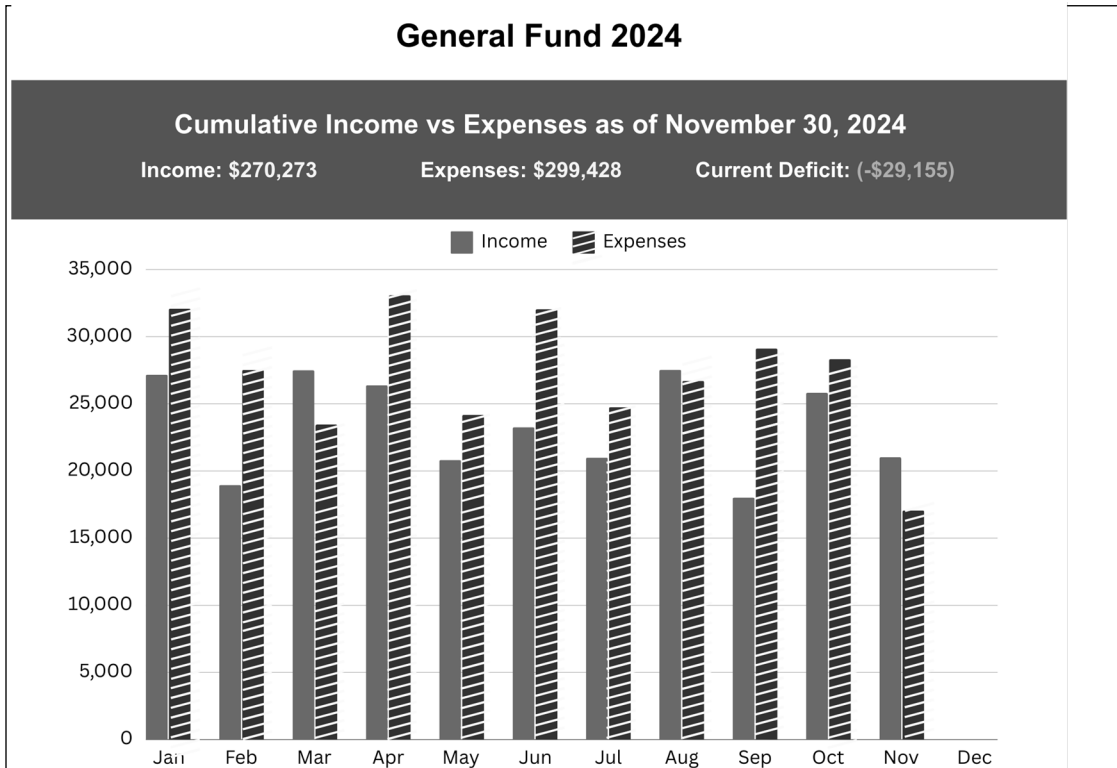
Christmas Eve Worship Services

When: Tuesday, December 24, 5:00 PM and 8:00 PM

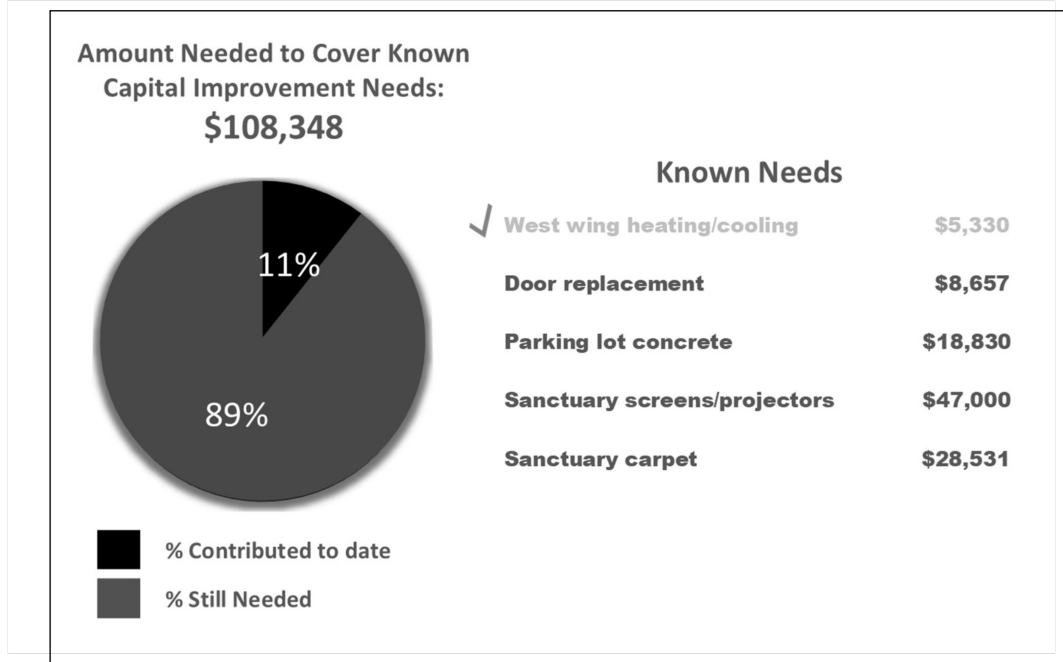
Christmas Day Lessons & Carols Service

When: Wednesday, December 25, 10:00 AM

General Fund Giving—Help us end the year ahead!



Capital Improvement Needs



Memorial Lutheran Church
 701 11th Street, Nevada, IA 50201
 Phone 515-382-6509
pastorkathleen@mlcnevada.org
emily@mlcnevada.org
www.mlcnevada.org

@memluthnevada

▶ Memorial Lutheran

Memorial Lutheran ELCA

Kathleen Lotz, Pastor | Lois Theesfield, Director of Music Ministry
 Emily Dalthorp, Parish Administrator for Outreach & Engagement
 Mike Coverdale, Custodian

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