

Third Sunday of Advent

December 14, 2025



PRELUDE

WELCOME STATEMENT

PROCESSIONAL

“Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn”

ELW 242

GREETING

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

Amen.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

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.

CHORAL ANTHEM

“An Advent Acclamation”

French melody arr. by Stacey Nordmeyer

Chimes: Pam Kueltzo, Diane Makeever

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray...

We praise you, O God, for this victory wreath that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent. As we light the candles on this wreath, strengthen our hearts as we await the Lord's coming in glory. Enlighten us with your grace, that we may serve our neighbors in need. Grant this through Christ our Lord, whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

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.

OLD TESTAMENT READING*Isaiah 35:1-10*

The prophet describes the return from the Babylonian captivity as a joyous procession to Zion. God's coming reign will bring a renewal of creation in which health and wholeness will be restored. There is no need for fear, for God is coming to save.

A reading from Isaiah.

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad;
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus 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.

Strengthen the weak hands
and make firm the feeble knees.
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.”

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.
No lion shall be there,
nor shall any ravenous beast come upon it;
they shall not be found there,
but the redeemed shall walk there.
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.

Holy Wisdom, holy word.
Thanks be to God.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
and the ears of the deaf shall be opened;
then the lame shall leap like a deer,
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.
For the waters shall break forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert;
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.

PSALM RESPONSE

Psalm 146:5-10

Happy are they who have the God of Jacob for their help,
whose hope is in the LORD their God;
who made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them;
who keeps promises forever;

who gives justice to those who are oppressed, and food to those who hunger.

The LORD sets the captive free.

The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous.

The LORD cares for the stranger;

the LORD sustains the orphan and widow, but frustrates the way of the wicked.

The LORD shall reign forever,
your God, O Zion, throughout all generations. Hallelujah!

NEW TESTAMENT READING

James 5:7-10

In anticipation of the Lord's coming, Christians are called upon to cultivate patience rather than discontent.

A reading from James.

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. You also must be patient. Strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Brothers and sisters, do not grumble against one another, so that you may not be judged. See, the Judge is standing at the doors! As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Holy wisdom, holy word.

Thanks be to God.

(The Assembly stands.)

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

"Prepare the Royal Highway"

ELW 264, vs.3-4

GOSPEL READING

Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist expects the Messiah to bring God's judgment upon the earth (Matt. 3:11-12). From a prison cell, he wonders whether Jesus is the one who will do this. Jesus' response indicates that God's reign is indeed being fulfilled already through healing and restoration.

The gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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

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? What, then, did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. What, then, did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 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.'

"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, Lord Christ.

SERMON

Rev. Phillip Potaczek

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Hark! A Thrilling Voice is Sounding"

ELW 246

PROFESSION OF FAITH: THE NICENE CREED

With the whole church, let us affirm our faith through the words of the Nicene Creed.

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

After each prayer petition, please respond: ...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.**

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

May the peace of Christ be with you all. **And also with you.**

OFFERING / OFFERING HYMN

OFFERING PRAYER

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.



THE GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE

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.**

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy ... And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join in their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life.....Let us proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming.
Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.
Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever.
Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Modern Version

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we pray as our Savior 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.

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

All who wish to know the love of God in Jesus Christ are invited to Holy Communion. Inform a communion assistant if you need a gluten-free host. Grape juice is located in the center ring of the tray. If you are not receiving the sacrament today, please come forward with your arms crossed over your chest for a blessing.

COMMUNION HYMN

“All Who Are Thirsty”

Brenton Brown

All who are thirsty
All who are weak
Come to the fountain
Dip your heart in the stream of life
Let the pain and the sorrow
Be washed away
In the waves of His mercy
As deep cries out to deep
(We sing)

Chorus (1)
Come Lord Jesus come
Come Lord Jesus come
(Repeat)

Chorus (2)
Holy Spirit come
Holy Spirit come
(Repeat)

Interlude
As deep cries out to deep
As deep cries out to deep
As deep cries out to deep
we sing

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PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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.

RECESSIONAL

“Freedom Has Come”

Jay Beech

We were waiting in the darkness, we were longing for the day;
We'd be toiling in the galleys. Death would be the only way
To find freedom from our bondage. Then we heard somebody call,
“Come be crucified with Jesus, there is new life for you all.”

Chorus

Freedom, freedom has come.
We're no longer slaves, we are daughters and sons.
Freedom, our new life's begun.
We're never turning back now that freedom has come.

We like Abraham and Sarah put our faith in God alone.
We are children of the promise by the seeds which faith has sown.
And the walls that would divide us have been carried on their way
By the flood that raged inside us on that great baptismal day.
(Chorus)

It's the Spirit we will follow not the flesh that we will heed.
By our fruits that world will know us, not by words but by our deeds.
If we learn to be the servants then we'll keep on running well,
And the only law we'll know is, “Love your neighbor as yourself.”
(Chorus)

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SENDING

Our Eucharist has ended.
Now it must be lived.

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

POSTLUDE

“Canticle of the Turning”

ELW 723

*****Trinity at a Glance*****

- As the holiday season approaches, we want to ensure that all families in our congregation have the support they need. **If you or your family are facing challenges this season**, please reach out to Pastor Phil Potaczek or our parish nurse, Carol Wahlstrom. Our Mission and Outreach committees have resources available and are ready to help where possible. You are not alone. Let's walk through this season together!
- **Today, December 14th at Noon, Open Table is hosting a free meal.** 910 Columbus St, Ottawa IL.
- We are decorating the Lounge (Community Room) Christmas tree with Christmas cards. **Please bring one of your Christmas cards or photo postcards to church.** You could also drop cards off at the office during regular business hours. We will announce when the tree has been decorated so that you can stop by to see it!
- Come see **The Prairie Singers, 38th Annual Free Christmas Concert Series "Comfort and Joy" Dec 14, 2 pm** St. Columba Catholic Church, Ottawa IL
- The next **blood drive** at TLC will be on **December 17th, Noon - 5 pm.** Our parish nurse, Carol, needs help hosting the blood drive. Interested volunteers should connect with Carol for more information. Thank you!
- Come join our inter-generational and choral **Christmas program on Sunday, December 21st, during worship, at 10 am.**
- On **Christmas Eve** we are gathering for "**Communion and Carols**" at **5 pm.** All are welcome!
- **Christmas Dinner will be served 11am-1pm at Open Table Ottawa.** Dinner is free and open to all! They will be serving baked ham, potato casserole, cranberry apple sauce, cookies, cheesy corn and fruit.
- Reminder to all committees that annual report information should be sent to the office. You can email it to diane@trinitylutheranottawa.com. Thank you.
- **Sunday January 11th immediately after Service**, we will hold the **Property Committee** Informational meeting.
- ***Why the Christmas Trees Stay Up Through Epiphany***
In the Christian tradition, Christmas is not just a day, it is a season that lasts twelve days, from December 25 through January 5. We keep the Christmas trees up through Epiphany (January 6) to celebrate the full season and to mark the day when Christ is revealed as the Light for all nations. If Epiphany falls midweek, many churches will wait until the following Sunday (the Baptism of Our Lord). During this time immediately after Epiphany, the lights on the trees remind us of the star that led the Magi and of Jesus, the Light of the world. By leaving the trees up through Epiphany and the Baptism of Our Lord, we honor the whole story of Christmas: Christ is born, and Christ is revealed to all people as God's Son.
- **On January 11, 2026**, after the Property Committee Informational meeting, **Trinity will be taking down the decorations and trees** in the Sanctuary. Please come and join us! Help is always appreciated! There is a sign up sheet in Java Junction.
- **Sunday January 18th immediately after Service** we will hold the **Finance Committee** Informational meeting.
- **Freezin' for a Reezin' is a food fundraiser for Ottawa's Community Food Basket.** Each December their volunteers are out on LaSalle & Jackson Streets taking contributions as people drive by. Contributions are taken in from of WCMY radio-they have a radiothon to publicize the event and boost offerings. This year's event was Friday Dec. 4th. **This year Trinity donated \$1,000 to help hungry people! What a positive impact we can have on our community!**

- The tree in Java Junction will be the collection point for **hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, and socks to help out those in need**. All child/youth/adult sizes are accepted. Thank you for your continuing generosity. For more information, contact the Mission/Outreach Team.
- **We have a couple of 2026 calendars left (\$20). Profits go to the Growing Project.** Please contact the office during regular business hours if you would like one. Marj Nelson 815-973-1286 and Kate Reed 815-830-2061 also have copies available.
- Many people in Jamaica and Haiti have been severely impacted by Hurricane Helene. You can give help by giving to Lutheran Disaster Response. At give.ELCA.org/hurricanes, just type in "Lutheran Disaster Response," select Hurricane Helene, make a contribution. Or send a check to: Lutheran Disaster Response, ELCA Gift Processing Center, PO Box 1809, Merrifield VA 22116-8009.
- **TLC Prayer Requests.**
 - . To submit a *public* prayer request to the congregation, please reach out to Diane (diane@trinitylutheranottawa.com).
 - . To submit a *private* prayer request, connect with Pastor Phil (pastorphil@trinitylutheranottawa.com).
 - . When you submit a public prayer request, please include only the information you are comfortable having printed in the bulletin. We will publish the request as written, but may shorten it for clarity and privacy. If you wish to remain anonymous, please specify.
 - . Each request will appear in the bulletin once. We will publish updates as you provide them.
 - . Even when a request is no longer printed, our whole church family is encouraged to add these needs to their personal prayer lists.

Thank you for holding these requests before God with such care. - *Pastor Phil*

- In the Bulletin there is **an update on the Khudaverdiiev family** who were sponsored by Ottawa Neighborhood Support Team for whom Open Table managed finances. The letter is going to any previous donor for whom we have contact information. The family is at present financially self-sufficient and stable. However, given the uncertainty of the future, the Team is again raising funds, not for present expenses but for future inevitabilities - just which inevitability remains to be seen and depends primarily upon the current administration's decisions regarding refugees, the (so-called) peace process between Ukraine and Russia, and the workings of immigration law. The prayers of our faith community are welcomed, especially by those who are most connected in knowing, supporting and loving these three people who came with such hopes. (Watch the local paper for a piece on Parvana, who is Student of the Month at OTHS this month!)
- Have you seen the **ELCA Good Gifts Catalogue**? It's full of **ways to help people in developing countries**. You can: Buy animals: \$10 for chicks, \$50 for a goat, \$20 for honeybees, \$30 for a piglet. Support health & nutrition: \$30 for a water filter, \$30 for a child's vaccinations, \$10 for a mosquito net, \$25 for a hygiene kit. Help in times of crisis: \$10 for a blanket, \$50 to feed a refugee family for a week. Agriculture: \$50 for seeds and gardening tools, \$200 for a community vegetable garden, \$150 to start a fruit tree farm, \$10 for a fruit tree seedling. There's much more! The website is <https://goodgifts.elca.org>.
- **CURRENT FINANCIAL REPORT:**
 - Nov Income = \$21,671.17 (Income YTD = \$215,068.81)
 - Nov Expense = \$21,920.12 (Expense YTD = \$222,034.84)
 - Income Less Expense = -\$248.95 (Income Less Expense YTD = -\$6,966.03)
 - Loan Payment = \$2,943.30
 - Principal Payment = \$1,000.00
 - Left On Loan = \$3,341.24
- **PRAYER REQUESTS:**

Please pray for Donetta Spohr, Sue Williamson & family, the Reinert family, and our friend Julie as she proceeds with a health battle.

● **THIS WEEK @ TRINITY:**

- **Monday (12/15):** 10a Staff meeting
10a Drum Fit (Community Room)
- **Tuesday (12/16):** 10a Sit Fit (Community Room)
7p TRMS Board Meeting (Community Room)
- **Wednesday (12/17)** Noon Blood Drive (Fellowship Hall)
1p Bible Study (Community Room)
6:30p Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)
- **Thursday (12/18):** 10a Sit Fit (Community Room)
1p Trinity Stitchers (Sewing Room)
7p Church Council Meeting (Board Room)
- **Friday (12/19):** 7a Sunrise Rotary (Community Room)
6p Starved Rock Regional Center Children's Christmas Program (Sanctuary)
- **Saturday (12/20):** *Go Caroling Day!*  
- **Sunday (12/21)** *Fourth Sunday of Advent*
9a Sunday Session & Affirmation rehearsal for Christmas Program (Sanctuary)
10a Holy Communion & Christmas Program

WORSHIP ASSISTANT SCHEDULE -

Please sign up using the binder at the back of the aisle.

Sunday, December 14, 2025

Crucifer/Acolyte: *Anna Reed*
Ushers:
Lector: *Anne Lauterjung*
Communion Assistants: *Anne Lauterjung, Jane Goetz & Sue Williamson*
Altar Guild: *Kari Castelli & Diane Wahl*
Advent Wreath Lighters: *The McGrath Family*
Video Tech: *Keith Goetz*
Music Directors: *Matt Makeever & Mary Heider*
Altar Flowers: *In memory of Georgette Wahl from Diane Wahl*

Sunday, December 21, 2025

Crucifer/Acolyte: *Reagan Duffield*
Ushers:
Lector: *Jane Goetz*
Communion Assistants: *Jane Goetz*
Altar Guild: *Anne Lauterjung*
Advent Wreath Lighters: *The Gross Family*
Video Tech: *Keith Goetz*
Music Directors: *Matt Makeever & Mary Heider*
Altar Flowers: *In memory of Paul & Gert Barron from Anne, Brent & Family*