

SOLA SCRIPTURA ✘ SOLA GRATIA ✘ SOLA FIDE

Divine Service



Our Savior Lutheran Church

Westminster, Massachusetts

SCRIPTURE ALONE ✘ GRACE ALONE ✘ FAITH ALONE

1 Hager Park Road
(Junction 140, 2, and 2A)
Westminster, MA 01473

Our Savior Lutheran Church

December 17, 2023

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church: 978-874-2479
www.oursaviorlcms.com

Visitor, you are very welcome here.

Please contact us with questions or prayer requests, and come worship with us again. Our pastor would be very glad to meet with you. May our Lord's Word be a blessing to all who gather in His name.

For those caring for young children or who have difficulty standing for the prayers, hymns, or other parts of the service, please know that you may sit as you find need or comfort.

Don't be embarrassed if your children make noise during worship—all children do. We encourage families to worship together. If needed, there is a nursery available in the basement during service and Bible class.

Out of courtesy to your brothers and sisters, please silence your cell phone and refrain from leaving or entering the sanctuary during the readings and the prayers.

Holy Communion

We welcome to the Lord's Table members of Our Savior and members of sister congregations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Pastor Gregory would be very glad to instruct you so that you can confess Jesus Christ with us and receive His holy body and blood for forgiveness, life, and salvation.

Spiritual Care

Individual confession and absolution, spiritual care, and pastoral counsel are available by appointment. Please contact the church office to schedule a time.

Christian Education

Sunday School and Adult Bible Study follow the service. Children meet in the basement, high school students in pastors' study, and adults in the sanctuary. Coffee and refreshments are served in the basement directly after service.

Serving in Worship Today

Guest Preacher	The Rev. Dr. John Bombaro
Celebrant	The Rev. Peter F. Gregory
Liturgist	Doug Newman
Organist	Anne Bennet
Choir	Michael Morizio, director
Acolytes	Nate Newman, Luis Albert

Advent Note

During Advent, we use a different confession of sin. The Gloria in Excelsis (first sung by the angels to the shepherds at Jesus' birth) waits for Christmas. Hymn stanzas replace the Sanctus and Nunc Dimittis. The liturgy for Holy Communion is shorter. These changes mark this as a season of repentant joy in preparation for the glorious celebration of our Lord's birth beginning on Christmas Eve.

Prayers for Worship

Of repentance: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

For right reception of the Lord's Supper: O Lord, our God, in Holy Baptism You have called us to be Christians and granted us the remission of sins. Make us ready to receive the most holy body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of all our sins, and grant us grateful hearts that we may give thanks to You, O Father, to Your Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Thanksgiving after receiving the Sacrament: Blessed Savior, Jesus Christ, You have given Yourself to us in this holy Sacrament. Keep us in Your faith and favor that we may live in You even as You live in us. May Your body and blood preserve us in the true faith to life everlasting. Hear us for the sake of Your name. Amen.

Cover Illustration

"Ecce Agnus Dei" (Behold, the Lamb of God)
by Rene de Cramer (1876–1951).

THE OPENING HYMN – TUNE: TLH 272 – TEXT: LSB 346

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 When all the world was cursed
 By Moses’ condemnation,
 Saint John the Baptist came
 With words of consolation.
 With true forerunner’s zeal
 The greater One he named,
 And Him, as yet unknown,
 As Savior he proclaimed.</p> <p>2 Before he yet was born,
 He leaped in joyful meeting,
 Confessing Him as Lord
 Whose mother he was greeting.
 By Jordan’s rolling stream,
 A new Elijah bold,
 He testified of Him
 Of whom the prophets told:</p> | <p>3 Behold the Lamb of God
 That bears the world’s transgression,
 Whose sacrifice removes
 The devil’s dread oppression.
 Behold the Lamb of God,
 Who takes away our sin,
 Who for our peace and joy
 Will full atonement win.</p> <p>4 O grant, dear Lord of love,
 That we receive, rejoicing,
 The word proclaimed by John,
 Our true repentance voicing,
 That gladly we may walk
 Upon our Savior’s way
 Until we live with Him
 In His eternal day.</p> |
|--|--|

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Liturgy for the confession of sin is spoken.

THE INVOCATION

Matthew 28:19b; [18:20]

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

Amen.

THE CONFESSION OF SINS

Beloved in the Lord, let us draw near with sincere hearts to confess our sins to God, our Father, and to plead in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ for His forgiveness.

Our help is in the name of the Lord,
who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 124:8

I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,
and You forgave the guilt of my sin.

Psalm 32:5

Silence for reflection on God’s Word and self-examination.

Almighty God, our Maker and our Redeemer, we poor sinners confess unto You that we are by nature sinful and unclean and that we have sinned against You by thought, word, and deed. Wherefore we flee for refuge to Your infinite mercy, seeking and imploring Your grace for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ.

O most merciful God, who has given Your only-begotten Son to die for us, have mercy upon us, and for His sake grant us remission of all our sins; and by Your Holy Spirit increase in us true knowledge of You and of Your will and true obedience to Your Word, so that by Your grace we may come to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

The Declaration of Grace

Mark 16:16; John 1:12

Amen.

THE INTROIT

Psalm 85:7, 8–9, 12–13

Show us Your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us Your salvation.

Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for He will speak peace to His people, to His saints; but let them not turn back to folly.

Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,
that glory may dwell in our land.

Yes, the LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

Righteousness will go before him
and make his footsteps a way.

Sung liturgy

THE GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

THE KYRIE

Mark 10:47

Lord, have mercy on us. Christ, have mercy on us. Lord, have mercy on us.

THE SALUTATION

2 Timothy 4:22

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

THE COLLECT

Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The Reading of God's Word *from the Old Testament: Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11*

After the reading:

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

THE PSALM

Psalm 126; antiphon: v. 5

Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!

When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;

then they said among the nations, "The LORD has done great things for them."
The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad.

Restore our fortunes, O LORD,
like streams in the Negeb!

Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!

He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!

from the Letters: 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24

After the reading:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

HALLELUJAH AND VERSE

Matthew 11:10b

Hallelujah! Behold, I send My messenger before Your face,
who will prepare Your way before You. Hallelujah!

from the Holy Gospels: John 1:6–8, 19–28

Glory be to You, O Lord!

After the reading:

Praise be to You, O Christ!

THE APOSTLES' CREED

Having heard the Word, what do you believe?

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His 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 into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life † everlasting. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY – TUNE: TLH 60 – TEXT: LSB 345

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1 Hark! A thrilling voice is sounding!
“Christ is near,” we hear it say.
“Cast away the works of darkness,
All you children of the day!”</p> <p>2 Startled at the solemn warning,
Let the earthbound soul arise;
Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.</p> | <p>3 See, the Lamb, so long expected,
Comes with pardon down from heav’n.
Let us haste, with tears of sorrow,
One and all, to be forgiv’n;</p> <p>4 So, when next He comes in glory
And the world is wrapped in fear,
He will shield us with His mercy
And with words of love draw near.</p> |
|---|--|

△ 5 Honor, glory, might, dominion
To the Father and the Son
With the ever-living Spirit
While eternal ages run!

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The Sermon

Psalm 126 ~ “Role Reversal”

The Rev. Dr. John Bombaro

The Choral Offertory

Gaudete!..... *Anon. 12th c.*

Gaudete, gaudete!

Christus est natus ex Maria virgine, gaudete!

*Tempus adest gratiæ hoc quod optabamus,
carmina lætitiæ devote redamus.*

*Deus homo factus est natura mirante,
mundus renovatus est a Christo regnante.*

*Ezechielis porta clausa pertransitur,
unde lux est orta salus invenitur.*

Ergo nostra contio psallat iam in lustro;

benedicat Domino:

Salus Regi nostro.

Rejoice, rejoice!

Christ is born of the virgin Mary, rejoice!

*It is now the time of grace that we have desired;
let us sing songs of joy, let us give devotion.*

*God was made man, and nature marvels;
the world was renewed by Christ who reigns.*

*The closed gate of Ezekiel has been passed through;
from where light rises salvation is found.*

Therefore, let our congregation now sing in brightness;

let it praise the Lord:

Greetings to our King.

The Presentation of the Offering

Psalms 116:17; 18:1

I will offer the thanksgiving sacrifice and call on the name of the LORD.

O LORD, my strength, I love You.

The Rite of Admitting to Holy Communion Prior to Confirmation

*Ethan Albert, Riley Albert, Jack Gould, Lazarus Gregory, Andrew Gull,
Elin Henrickson, Liam McGuire, George Newman, Anna Vega*

The Prayer of the Church

after each petition:

Lord, in Your mercy,

hear our prayer.

THE PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Blessed are You, O Lord our God, king of all creation, for You have had mercy on us and given Your only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. In Your boundless mercy You sent Your servant, John the Baptist, to proclaim that in Christ the kingdom of heaven draws near. With thankful hearts we pray, "Come, Lord Jesus," confident that in His body and blood, given us to eat and drink, we receive the forgiveness of sins and so proclaim His death until He comes again in glory.

Hear us as we pray in His name and as He has taught us:

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:9–13

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.

CONSECRATION HYMN—TUNE: TLH 66—TEXT: LSB 349

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1 Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes,
The Savior promised long;
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne
And ev'ry voice a song. | 3 He comes the broken heart to bind,
The bleeding soul to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To enrich the humble poor. |
| 2 He comes the pris'ners to release,
In Satan's bondage held.
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield. | 4 Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav'n's eternal arches ring
With Thy beloved name. |

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The Words of Institution

Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25

THE PAX DOMINI

John 20:19

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

Amen.

THE AGNUS DEI

John 1:29

O Christ, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

O Christ, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

**O Christ, Lamb of God, You take away the sin of the world,
grant us Your peace. Amen.**

Holy Communion

> *Note about Holy Communion: All who receive Holy Communion here must first be instructed. Our pastor will be very glad to instruct you. Please contact the office for an appointment. Those who have not been instructed may come forward with their arms crossed to receive a blessing.* <

Psalm 146 (v. 5)

DISTRIBUTION HYMN – TUNE: LW 28 – TEXT: LSB 347

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 “Comfort, comfort ye My people,
Speak ye peace,” thus saith our God;
“Comfort those who sit in darkness,
Mourning ‘neath their sorrows’ load.
Speak ye to Jerusalem
Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell her that her sins I cover
And her warfare now is over.”</p> <p>2 Yea, her sins our God will pardon,
Blotting out each dark misdeed;
All that well deserved His anger
He no more will see or heed.
She hath suffered many’a day,
Now her griefs have passed away;
God will change her pining sadness
Into ever-springing gladness.</p> | <p>3 Hark, the herald’s voice is crying
In the desert far and near,
Calling sinners to repentance,
Since the Kingdom now is here.
O that warning cry obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
Let the valleys rise to meet Him
And the hills bow down to greet Him.</p> <p>4 Make ye straight what long was crooked;
Make the rougher places plain.
Let your hearts be true and humble,
As befits His holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
Now o’er earth is shed abroad,
And all flesh shall see the token
That His Word is never broken.</p> |
|---|---|

Text: Public domain

- 1 Soul, adorn yourself with gladness,
Leave the gloomy haunts of sadness,
Come into the daylight's splendor,
There with joy your praises render.
Bless the One whose grace unbounded
This amazing banquet founded;
He, though heav'nly, high, and holy,
Deigns to dwell with you most lowly.
- 2 Hasten as a bride to meet Him,
And with loving rev'rence greet Him.
For with words of life immortal
He is knocking at your portal.
Open wide the gates before Him,
Saying, as you there adore Him:
Grant, Lord, that I now receive You,
That I nevermore will leave You.
- 3 He who craves a precious treasure
Neither cost nor pain will measure;
But the priceless gifts of heaven
God to us has freely given.
Though the wealth of earth were proffered,
None could buy the gifts here offered:
Christ's true body, for you riven,
And His blood, for you once given.
- 4 Now in faith I humbly ponder
Over this surpassing wonder
That the bread of life is boundless
Though the souls it feeds are countless:
With the choicest wine of heaven
Christ's own blood to us is given.
Oh, most glorious consolation,
Pledge and seal of my salvation!
- 5 Jesus, source of lasting pleasure,
Truest friend, and dearest treasure,
Peace beyond all understanding,
Joy into all life expanding:
Humbly now, I bow before You;
Love incarnate, I adore You;
Worthily let me receive You
And, so favored, never leave You.
- 6 Jesus, sun of life, my splendor,
Jesus, friend of friends, most tender,
Jesus, joy of my desiring,
Fount of life, my soul inspiring:
At Your feet I cry, my maker,
Let me be a fit partaker
Of this blessed food from heaven,
For our good, Your glory, given.
- 7 Lord, by love and mercy driven,
You once left Your throne in heaven
On the cross for me to languish
And to die in bitter anguish,
To forego all joy and gladness
And to shed Your blood in sadness.
By this blood redeemed and living,
Lord, I praise You with thanksgiving.
- 8 Jesus, bread of life, I pray You,
Let me gladly here obey You.
By Your love I am invited,
Be Your love with love requited;
By this Supper let me measure,
Lord, how vast and deep love's treasure.
Through the gift of grace You give me
As Your guest in heav'n receive me.

This hymn is a versification of the Benedictus (Luke 1:68–79), the Song of Zechariah, father of John the Baptist.



1 Sing praise to the God of Is - ra - el! Sing praise for His
 2 God spoke by the proph - ets long a - go, His prom - ise on
 3 You, child, will go on be - fore the Lord As proph - et, His
 4 O bright, ris - ing Sun, now shine on us In need of il -



vis - i - ta - tion! Re - deem - ing His peo - ple from their sin,
 oath re - call - ing— To A - bra - ham made in for - mer years:
 way pre - par - ing; To speak on be - half of God Most High,
 lu - mi - na - tion; Come scat - ter the shades of sin and death



Ac - com - plish - ing their sal - va - tion, Up - rais - ing a
 Of van - quish - ing foes ap - pall - ing, That those He de -
 His coun - sel of truth de - clar - ing: Rich mer - cy and
 And shat - ter their dom - i - na - tion. Be guid - ing our



might - y horn with - in The house of His ser - vant Da - vid!
 liv - ered from their fears Might glad - ly and tru - ly serve Him.
 grace for all where - by In - iq - ui - ty is for - giv - en.
 foot - steps on the path Of peace, in Your pres - ence dawn - ing!

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THE THANKSGIVING

Psalm 107:1

*Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,
 and His mercy endures forever.*

THE THANKSGIVING COLLECT

Let us pray. We thank You, all-powerful God, for refreshing us with this healing gift, and we pray: Father of mercy, by this holy food make us strong in faith toward You, and in deep love for each other, that through us other beloved sinners may kneel to You and receive with us grace and life in Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE SALUTATION

2 Timothy 4:22

*The Lord be with you.
 And with your spirit.*

THE BENEDICAMUS
Bless we the Lord.

[Psalm 103:1]

Thanks be to God.

THE BENEDICTION

Numbers 6:24–26

The LORD bless you and keep you.

The LORD make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The LORD lift up His countenance upon you and ☩ give you peace.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

HYMN TO DEPART – TUNE: TLH 160 – TEXT: LSB 515, STANZAS 1 & 4

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1 Rejoice, rejoice, believers,
And let your lights appear;
The evening is advancing,
And darker night is near.
The Bridegroom is arising
And soon is drawing nigh.
Up, pray and watch and wrestle;
At midnight comes the cry.</p> | <p>2 Our hope and expectation,
O Jesus, now appear;
Arise, O Sun so longed for,
O'er this benighted sphere.
With hearts and hands uplifted,
We plead, O Lord, to see
The day of earth's redemption
That sets Your people free!</p> |
|---|---|

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God's People at Prayer

For Home Devotions

The sign of the cross may be made in remembrance of Baptism.

In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son
and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Readings from Holy Scripture

*These may be read in the morning and evening, as suggested
here, or in any way that best works with your schedule.*

	Morning Prayer	Evening Prayer
Su	Isaiah 33:1–24	Revelation 5:1–14
M	Isa. 34:1–2; 34:8–35:10	Revelation 6:1–17
Tu	Isaiah 40:1–17	Revelation 7:1–17
W	Isaiah 40:18–41:10	Revelation 8:1–13
Th	Isaiah 42:1–25	Revelation 9:1–12
F	Isaiah 43:1–24	Rev. 9:13–10:11
Sa	Isaiah 43:25–44:20	Revelation 11:1–19

The Sacrament of the Altar

As the head of the family should teach it to his household.

What is the Sacrament of the Altar? It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ under the bread and wine, instituted by Christ Himself for us Christians to eat and to drink.

Where is this written? The holy Evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and St. Paul write: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me." In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

What is the benefit of this eating and drinking? These words, "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins," show us that in the Sacrament forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation are given us through these words. For where there is forgiveness of sins, there is also life and salvation.

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Hymn

The hymn stanza may be sung or spoken.

Behold the Lamb of God
That bears the world's transgression,
Whose sacrifice removes
The devil's dread oppression.
Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away our sin,
Who for our peace and joy will full atonement win.
LSB 346:3

Daily Prayer

Lord, have mercy. Christ, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Prayers for Others and Ourselves

The following topics may guide your prayer each day.

- Su For God's name to be kept holy through pure teaching and holy living
- M For God's kingdom to come and increase through the gift of the Holy Spirit
- Tu For God to hinder every evil plan and purpose of the world, the devil, and the sinful nature
- W For daily bread and contentment in all things
- Th For forgiveness of our sins and of those who sin against us
- F For protection in the midst of temptation
- Sa For rescue from all evils of body and soul and, when our last hour comes, a blessed end

The Lord's Prayer

Collect of the Week

Lord Jesus Christ, we implore You to hear our prayers and to lighten the darkness of our hearts by Your gracious visitation; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Readings for the Fourth Sun. in Advent, Dec. 24

2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16; Psalm 89:1–5 & 19–29 (v. 8);
Romans 16:25–27; Luke 1:26–38