

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 15, AD 2024

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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 for children under three years old, there is a nursery available in the basement during service and Bible class.

Out of courtesy to your brothers and sisters, please turn off your cell phone ringer 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. Pre-Kindergarten through seventh grade students meet in the basement, high school students at the parsonage, and adults in the sanctuary.

Serving in Worship Today

Celebrant & Preacher	The Rev. Peter Gregory
Liturgist	Tom Connell
Organist	Mary Gregory
Acolytes	Liam McGuire, Sim Gregory

Advent Note

During Advent, the Divine Service changes. We use a different confession of sin. The Gloria in Excelsis (first sung by the angels to the shepherds when Jesus was born) 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

For joy: O Lord Jesus Christ, the true light who comes into the world to enlighten all people, enkindle in our hearts the fire of Your love that we may receive You with joy and gladness and evermore remain steadfast in the faith; in Your holy name. Amen.

Preparation for Confession

The Third Commandment: Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. *What does this mean?* We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and His Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Questions for self-examination

- Do I use the Word of God and prayer to make my time, work, study, and life holy day by day?
- Am I lazy and bored with the Word of God?
- Have I any fear of God over this neglect?

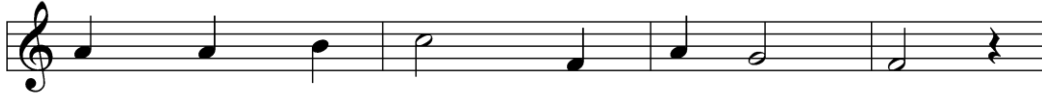
Cover Illustration

St. John the Baptist in Prison Receives Christ's Answer
by Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627–1678)

THE OPENING HYMN – TUNE & TEXT: LSB 355, STANZAS 1-5



1 O Sav - ior, rend the heav - ens wide;
 2 O Fa - ther, light from heav - en send;
 3 O earth, in flow'r - ing bud be seen;
 4 O Fount of hope, how long, how long?
 5 O Morn - ing Star, O ra - diant Sun,



Come down, come down with might - y stride;
 As morn - ing dew, O Son, de - scend.
 Clothe hill and dale in garb of green.
 When will You come with com - fort strong?
 When will our hearts be - hold Your dawn?



Un - lock the gates, the doors break down;
 Drop down, you clouds, the life of spring;
 Bring forth, O earth, a blos - som rare,
 O come, O come, Your throne fore - go;
 O Sun, a - rise; with - out Your light



Un - bar the way to heav - en's crown.
 To Ja - cob's line rain down the King.
 Our Sav - ior, sprung from mead - ow fair.
 Con - sole us in our vale of woe.
 We grope in gloom and dark of night.

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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

Philippians 4:4; Psalm 146:5-8

Gaudete! Rejoice in the Lord always;
again I will say, Gaudete! Rejoice!
Blessèd is he whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD his God,
who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them,
who keeps faith forever;
who executes justice for the oppressed,
who gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets the prisoners free;
the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.

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.

Let us pray.

> Silence for personal prayers. <

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: Zephaniah 3:14–20

After the reading:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

THE PSALM

Psalm 85; antiphon v. 2

You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.

LORD, You were favorable to Your land; You restored the fortunes of Jacob.

You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.

You withdrew all Your wrath; You turned from Your hot anger.

Restore us again, O God of our salvation, and put away Your indignation toward us!

Will You be angry with us forever? Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?

Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?

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.

Steadfast love and faithfulness meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other.

Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky.

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.

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.

You forgave the iniquity of Your people; You covered all their sin.

from the Letters: Philippians 4:4–7

After the reading:

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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

from the Holy Gospel: Luke 7:18–35

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

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| <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>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>2 Startled at the solemn warning,
Let the earthbound soul arise;
Christ, its sun, all sloth dispelling,
Shines upon the morning skies.</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

Luke 3:1–20

**Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Do not cast me out of Your presence, nor take Your Holy Spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and sustain me with a free spirit. Amen.**

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 Prayer of the Church

[1 Timothy 2:1–4]

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: LSB 357, STANZAS 5 & 6

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|--|--|
| <p>1 O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heav’nly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!</p> | <p>2 O come, Thou Dayspring from on high,
And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
And death’s dark shadows put to flight.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel!</p> |
|--|--|

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.

Place your Christmas gift for Missions in the manger as you come forward for Holy Communion and pray that our Lord would accomplish His mission to seek and to save the lost through us and through those whom we support. <

Isaiah 40:1–8 (antiphon v. 8)

DISTRIBUTION HYMN ~ TUNE & TEXT: LSB 346

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| <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> |
|--|--|

- 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'ence 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 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!
- 4 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.
- 5 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.
- 6 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.

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- 1 In Thee is gladness amid all sadness, Jesus, sunshine of my heart.
By Thee are given the gifts of heaven, Thou the true Redeemer art.
Our souls Thou wakest, our bonds Thou breakest;
Who trusts Thee surely has built securely; he stands forever: Alleluia!
Our hearts are pining to see Thy shining,
Dying or living to Thee are cleaving; naught can us sever: Alleluia!
- 2 Since He is ours, we fear no powers, not of earth nor sin nor death.
He sees and blesses in worst distresses; he can change them with a breath.
Wherefore the story tell of His glory with hearts and voices; all heav'n rejoices
In Him forever: Alleluia! we shout for gladness,
Triumph o'er sadness, love Him and praise Him
And still shall raise Him glad hymns forever: Alleluia!

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THE POST-COMMUNION HYMN – TUNE: LSB 442 & TEXT: LSB 334, STANZA 1, AND TLH 58, STANZA 5

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 O Lord, how shall I meet You,
How welcome You aright?
Your people long to greet You,
My hope, my heart's delight!
O kindle, Lord most holy,
Your lamp within my breast
To do in spirit lowly
All that may please You best. | 2 Rejoice, then, ye sad-hearted,
Who sit in deepest gloom,
Who mourn o'er joys departed
And tremble at your doom.
Despair not, He is near you,
Yea, standing at the door,
Who best can help and cheer you
And bids you weep no more. |
|---|---|

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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 give thanks to You, almighty God, that You have refreshed us through this salutary gift, and we implore You that of Your mercy You would strengthen us through the same in faith toward You and in fervent love toward one another; through 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.
Thanks be to God.

[Psalm 103:1]

THE BENEDICTION
The LORD bless you and keep you.
The LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you and † give you peace.
Amen. Amen. Amen.

Numbers 6:24–26

HYMN TO DEPART – TUNE & TEXT: LSB 355, STANZAS 6–7

**6 Sin's dreadful doom upon us lies;
Grim death looms fierce before our eyes.
O come, lead us with mighty hand
From exile to our promised land.**

**7 There shall we all our praises bring
And sing to You, our Savior King;
There shall we laud You and adore
Forever and forevermore.**

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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 30:27–31:9	Revelation 3:1–22
M	Isaiah 32:1–20	Revelation 4:1–11
Tu	Isaiah 33:1–24	Revelation 5:1–14
W	Isa. 34:1–2; 34:8–35:10	Revelation 6:1–17
Th	Isaiah 40:1–17	Revelation 7:1–17
F	Isaiah 40:18–41:10	Revelation 8:1–13
Sa	Isaiah 42:1–25	Revelation 9:1–12

The Lord's Prayer

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

The Introduction

Our Father who art in heaven.

What does this mean? With these words God tenderly invites us to believe that He is our true Father and that we are His true children, so that with all boldness and confidence we may ask Him as dear children ask their dear father.

From the Large Catechism: Before we explain the Lord's Prayer part by part, it is very necessary first to encourage and stir people to prayer. . . . The first thing to know is this: It is our duty to pray because God has commanded it. For that is what we heard in the Second Commandment. . . . In the second place, we should be all the more urged and encouraged to pray because God has promised that our prayer will surely be answered, as He says in Psalm 50:15, "Call upon Me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver you."

Luther's Small Catechism © 1986 Concordia Publishing House, cph.org;
LC III.4–5, 19

Hymn

The hymn stanza may be sung or spoken. LSB 345:3–4

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;
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.

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. 22

Micah 5:2–5a; Psalms 80:1–7 (v. 7) & 111 (v. 9);
Hebrews 10:5–10; Luke 1:39–56