

Emmanuel Reformed Church

RETURN

THE MINOR PROPHETS

ADVENT '24

Sunday, December 24, 2023

DIGITAL VERSION

Worship

Prelude: "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"

We Gather

Children's Bell Choir:

"Hark, the Herald Angels Sing"

"O Come, All Ye Faithful" (#145)

(Bells play 1 verse, then we'll sing together verses 1 and 2)

Children's Message: Lighting the Fourth Advent Candle

Special Music

Danielle Wallinga

Prayers of the People

"Whiter Than Snow" (#436)

God Speaks to Us

Malachi, "Return"

Pastor Cody Raak

We Respond

*** "Doxology" (#625)**

*** Prayer for Blessing**

*** Benediction**

*** We stand, as able, to worship our great God!**

This Week @ERC

Sunday, December 24, 2023 *Christmas Eve*

9 AM Christmas Program Practice! See below ☐

Adult class meets downstairs

10 AM Worship Service: Malachi, "Return"

5PM Christmas Eve Program & Candlelight Service

Wednesday, December 27, 2023

No Wednesday Events

Thursday, December 28, 2023

3-5 PM Church Office Open*

Sunday, December 31, 2023 *New Year's Eve*

NO Sunday School today

10 AM Worship Service: Matthew 1:18-23, Luke 1:26-38

***The church office will be open THURSDAY this week from 3:00-5 PM.**

Prayer

This week, pray with the words of the hymn “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing” (Hymn #133).

**“Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate deity,
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emmanuel”**

Wonder at the miracle of the incarnation. The fullness of God “dwells bodily” (Colossians 1:19, 2:9) in this helpless and vulnerable baby, born to a displaced, impoverished couple. What a paradox! This baby is God the Son, the second person of the Trinity, through whom and for whom “all things were created,” who “is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16-17). And all that power is “veiled” (according to the hymn) in this tiny baby.

**“Light and life to all he brings,
Ris’n with healing in his wings”**

This stanza references Malachi 4:2. Pray for Christ’s healing in total: pray for **physical** healing, for those enduring chronic pain or serious illness like cancer this year; pray for **mental-emotional** healing, for those who have suffered depression, anxiety, or grief this year; pray for **relational** healing, for those who have cut off someone from their life or been cut off by someone this year; and pray for **spiritual** healing, for those who have drifted away from God or been pulled into sin. Thank Jesus for his unending mercy.

“Glory to the newborn King.”

Worship and adore the newborn king Jesus. Give thanks and praise for his goodness and mercy, his presence and peace.

Commands of Jesus

“Watch for Jesus’ Return”

— Matthew 24:42-44 —

The Heidelberg Catechism Question & Answer 52 asks how Christ’s return comforts us. The Apostles’ Creed says he will come back “to judge the living and the dead;” do we look for his return with joyful expectation? Or dread?

The catechism answers:

A. In all distress and persecution, with uplifted head I confidently await the very judge who has already offered himself to the judgment of God in my place and removed the whole curse from me. Christ will cast all his enemies and mine into everlasting condemnation, but will take me and all his chosen ones to himself into the joy and glory of heaven.

We do not fear the coming “Day of the Lord” (Joel 2), even though the warnings about it are extreme (Luke 21:25-26). Yes, Jesus will return with the wrath of God against sin and evil once and for all (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10). But our confidence and comfort comes from the promise of forgiveness for our sins, guaranteed in the death and resurrection of Jesus (Titus 2:13-14). Christ is the judge, but he is *not* impartial. *He is for us* (Romans 8:31-34)!!!

Pray for his return! Pray, especially as you see evil working its destruction and deception and division in the world. Pray for Christ to come again when you feel the barbs of sin and death clawing for you or your loved ones. Pray for Christ’s return with joyful, eager watchfulness, knowing that he is coming to rescue and restore you to himself.

Without this confidence, it is hard to “stay awake.” Food, possessions, nostalgia, and the appetites of the flesh all lure us back to spiritual sleep, to apathy and indifference toward evil. Keep your eyes open. Be uncomfortable in this world.

Emmanuel's Mission

“To serve God and share the message of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit.”

Emmanuel Staff

Pastor: Cody Raak (464-4952)
Office Manager: Gwynevere DenHerder (464-7764)

Emmanuel Consistory

Elders

Beth Namminga (*Mission*)

Bryan Nagel (*Worship*)

Lawrence Namminga, Jr. (*Clerk*)

Connie Tjeerdsma (*Hospitality*)

Claudette Heusinkveld

Ginger Pudwill

Deacons

Amy Cooper

Craig Vanderlei (*Treasurer*)

Tom Kolecka

Jeremy Krueger (*Deacon's Secretary*)

Brenda Pudwill

Blane Nagel

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