

Welcome to Worship at
Joyful Harvest Lutheran Church
Growing Together for Christ
Rev. Ken Gibson, Interim Pastor
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5050 N. Johnsburg Rd, Johnsburg, IL 60051
www.joyfulharvest.org



December 21st, 2025	Fourth Sunday of Advent
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We worship in-person and on-line at 9:00 am. There is a link on our website to join the on-line Worship Service through Zoom!
Stay safe and God bless!

Gathering

Welcome/Greeting/Announcements

Call to Worship

P: Come, God of Joy:

C: tip-toeing into our lives

like the children on the holiest of nights.

P: Come, God of Grace:

C: prepare our hearts to welcome you,

and all whose hopes have turned to ashes.

P: Come, God of Peace:

C: so we may pour our lives and gifts

into a world in need of reconciliation.

Advent Candle Lighting Liturgy

A: When the people were looking for deliverance, the prophet Micah declared, "But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah...from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient day." (Micah 5:2). But what if Micah is also talking to us, proclaiming, "But you, O Joyful Harvest Lutheran Church, from you shall come forth for me..." What? What might God be calling forth from us?

C: God invites us to receive the promise of God's salvation and the sustenance of God's mercy and grace, enabling us to live the promise as God-bearers to the world. As Christ was born in Bethlehem, so too we answer God's invitation to have Christ born among us today and every day.

A: We light this candle of love as a sign of our commitment to live as people of God's promise, a promise of salvation and flourishing for all people that springs forth from God's love for all creation.

Gathering Songs: Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord
(Please join us in "Sharing the Peace")
Love Came Down at Christmas

Prayer of the Day

Word

FIRST READING: Isaiah 7:10-16

¹⁰ The LORD spoke to Ahaz, saying, ¹¹ "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." ¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." ¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary mortals that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. ¹⁵ He shall eat curds and honey by the time he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. ¹⁶ For before the child knows how.....

PSALM: Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock; shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

² **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh, stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³ Restore us, O God; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

⁴ **O LORD God of hosts, how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

⁵ You have fed them with the bread of tears; you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

⁶ **You have made us the derision of our neighbors, and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

⁷ Restore us, O God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

¹⁷ **Let your hand be upon the one at your right hand, the one you have made so strong for yourself.**

¹⁸ And so will we never turn away from you; give us life, that we may call upon your name.

¹⁹ **Restore us, O LORD God of hosts; let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.**

SECOND READING: Romans 1:1-7

¹ Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, ² which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, ³ the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh ⁴ and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, ⁵ through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the gentiles for the sake of his name, ⁶ including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, ⁷ To all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

P: The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord!

P: ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his...

P: This is the gospel of the Lord!

C: Praise to you, O Christ!

Children's Message

Pastor Ken Gibson

Sermon

Pastor Ken Gibson

Hymn of the Day: In the Midst of Winter's Darkness

Prayers of Intercession

A: "God of grace",C: "Hear our prayer"

Offering: Friends, an offering is an act of Worship, given freely to share God's love through this congregation. Please place your offering in the basket as it is passed around, you may come forward to put your gift in the offering plate, or send your gifts to the church at: **5050 N. Johnsburg Rd., Johnsburg, IL 60051** or give online at www.joyfulharvest.org

Offering Prayer

Meal

Confession & Forgiveness

P: How easy we lost our way on the road to Bethlehem! How quick we are to dismiss the dreams and hopes our God has for us in this holy season! Let us come to the One who approaches, ready to swaddle us in forgiveness and grace, as we pray together, saying,

C: Come now, Reconciler of the nations, for our world, our lives, need your peace more than ever before. Come, Caller to discipleship, for we long to let go of our self-interest and narcissism. Come, Giver of the Word, for we hunger to hear your voice once again, ever always. Come, Servant of the poor, so we notice you in all those we push past in this hectic season.

Come, Holiness of our hearts, and forgive us for turning your compassion into commercials, your joy into jingles, your hope into hollow words, your love into lust for the short-lasting offerings of the world. May we find our way to the One born simply, born gracefully, for us – Jesus, the Child of wonder and life. Amen.

(Silence is kept)

P: We may not notice them there, at the back of the pile of presents, but it is God's hope, God's life, God's mercy, which are the true gifts we receive each and every moment.

C: We give thanks to our gracious God, who has forgiven us and blessed us. Amen!

Lord's Supper

Prayer of Thanksgiving and Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

P: Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus has taught us:

C: 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: *Christ is truly present with us today, especially in the gifts of bread and wine. God's table is open; we invite you to join us at the Lord's Table! After the choir is served, come up the center aisle, from front to back. If you are unable to come forward, please let the pastor or another worship leader know, and we will bring communion to you. If you do not receive communion, you are welcome to come forward for a blessing, simply keep your hands folded. The dark colored liquid is wine, and the light-colored liquid is juice. Please let the pastor know if you need a gluten free wafer. All are welcome!*

Communion Song: I Love You Lord/Love The Lord Your God

Prayer After Communion

Sending

Sending Song: Christmas Day

Sending and Benediction

P: Come, let us go with God to bring healing to the world.

C: Come, let us bring family to the lonely,
comfort to those who grieve.

P: Come, let us go with Jesus to all who are forgotten.

C: Come, let us carry justice to the oppressed,
to feed those who hunger in body and soul.

P: Come, let us go with the faithful Spirit.

C: Come, let us speak the gospel with our lips,
let us share grace with our lives.

Commissioning

P: At Joyful Harvest Church,

C: our mission is growing together for Christ.

P: As disciples of Jesus Christ, we value:

C: Family Worship, Relying on Prayer, Unity in Christ, Instruction in the Word, Telling Others, and Service to God's Community.

P: Go in peace. Keep awake.

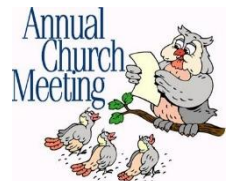
C: Thanks be to God.

Announcements

If you are looking for a place to worship with your family, join us any Sunday at 9:00 am! Thank you for worshipping with us today.

Annual Meeting Sun. Jan 11th @ 10:30 a.m.

Come and hear about all the exciting things happening at Joyful Harvest. Get updates on the call process, new budget, and upcoming events. Your attendance is very important as a quorum of voting members is required to conduct church business.





Joyful Readers Book Club: Do you like to read, are you looking for a way to connect with other women? Consider joining the ladies of Joyful Harvest as they embark in this fellowship opportunity. The next meeting will be Sat, Jan 24th at 9:00a.m. They're reading "*The Lonely Hearts Book Club*" by Lucy Gilmore. Contact Kim DuBois for more info!

Weekly Calendar

Tue. Dec 23	Breakfast Club at Midwest Breakfast	8:00 a.m.
Tue. Dec 23	Food Pantry Service Opportunity	3:00-6:00 p.m.
Wed. Dec 24	Christmas Eve Service	6:00 p.m.
Thur. Dec 25	NO Food Pantry Service – (Christmas Day)	N/A
Sun. Dec 28	Sunday Worship	9:00 a.m.
Sun. Dec 28	Faith Formation Class	10:30 a.m.

Upcoming Events

Wed. Jan 11	Annual Meeting	6:00 p.m.
Wed. Jan 24	Joyful Readers Book Club	9:00 a.m.

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Merry Christmas from Joyful Harvest

DECEMBER 21, 2025
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Advent is a season of love.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Matthew 1:18-25	God is with us
Monday	Isaiah 7:10-16	A son named Immanuel
Tuesday	Romans 1:1-7	A salutation
Wednesday	Luke 2:1-20	The birth of Jesus
Thursday	John 1:1-14	The Word became flesh
Friday	Isaiah 9:2-7	A child is born
Saturday	Psalms 80:1-7, 17-19	Israel’s restoration
Sunday	Matthew 2:13-23	The escape to Egypt

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

“Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,” which means, “God is with us.” **Matthew 1:23 (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Almighty and everlasting God, may the birth of Jesus remind us of your promise of salvation and lead us to trust in you and to serve and love others with thankful hearts. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ, may this food give strength to our bodies and faith, hope, and love to our souls. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the love of God bless you with peace.



WEEKLY MILESTONES



Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS



Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- What do you do to show love for someone?
- How does the birth of Jesus show the love of God for all the world?

DEVOTIONS



Read: Romans 1:1-7.

The birth of Jesus is not about the sweet presence of a smiling baby. It is about the work of God to save the world by entering our experience and being with us (Matthew 1:23). Ours is the God who promised this beforehand through the prophets, who has come in the flesh in the line of King David, who rose from the dead and is recognized as the Son of God. We are the beloved of God and named holy. With the birth of Jesus comes the fulfillment of God's action to change the world of darkness and despair to the dwelling place of God's loving and saving presence for all the world. It includes a divine assignment to love all people with the good news of Jesus Christ. This is what Advent, Christmas, and the Christian faith are all about.

Discuss: How is this kind of love more of an action than a feeling?

Pray: **Dear God, we thank you for entering our world and our lives with hope and love. Help us to love the world you love in the name of Jesus, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

SERVICE



Jesus calls us to serve our neighbor in love. Based on the Daily Bible Readings and theme for this week, how can you share God's love with someone in need?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS



This week light four candles on the Advent wreath: the Candle of Hope, the Candle of Peace, the Candle of Joy, and the Candle of Love. The Candle of Love reflects how God showed love for us by sending Jesus to be with us. During this Advent season we pray for the hope, peace, joy, and love of God through Jesus Christ.

Leader: **This is the fourth week of Advent. Advent means *coming*. We are waiting and watching for the coming of Christ. Let us light the candles of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.** [Light four candles]

All: **"Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."** (Matthew 1:23)

Leader: Let us walk in the light of Christ that gives us love.

Pray: Lord Jesus Christ, we await your coming with hope, peace, joy, and love. May we see with the eyes of faith the work of your kingdom in our lives and world.

Amen.



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