

Prince of Peace
Evangelical Lutheran Church



Christmas
TREES

Christmas Trees:
The Tree of Life

Midweek Advent 3

December 18, 2024



“Learning and sharing the gospel of Christ the Prince of Peace.”

Prince of Peace
Evangelical Lutheran Church
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WELCOME!

Welcome to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. We pray that the time spent here in God’s house helps you to appreciate how dearly God loves you! He invested the life blood of his one and only Son into your salvation and offers the blessings of that sacrifice to us through Word and Sacrament! May God bless our worship today!

THEME FOR TODAY

It is the most widely recognized symbol of the season—the Christmas tree. Other religions had used evergreen branches as ceremonial decoration to represent eternal life. However, in the 16th century, the Lutherans of Germany took the next step of bringing freshly cut evergreen trees indoors for the holidays. They decorated the trees with red ornaments, symbolizing the blood of Christ, and with candles, symbolizing the light of Christ. They would top the tree with a star or angel, both important in the story of Jesus’ birth. The Christmas tree is a treasured part of our Christmas tradition. In our midweek Advent services, we will look at some Christmas trees. They are not evergreens, nor decorated with tinsel or garland or bright lights. Rather, we will look at some of the trees in the Scripture that point us to the Christ. These Christmas trees, more than the decorative ones, remind us of why the birth of Jesus Christ is so important and worthy of celebration.

Pick an apple off its tree, and you have a great source of antioxidants and fiber. Pluck an orange and you get a nice supply of vitamin C. Different trees with different fruits provide different tastes and different health benefits. Image a tree that produced a fruit that enabled you to live forever. Such a tree once existed. It stood in the middle of the Garden of Eden. When mankind fell into sin, tainting all creation with the stain of death, God banned access to that tree. He did not want us to live forever in a world as broken as this one. But today, we see that through the work of Christ, access to that life-giving tree has been restored. We conclude our series on Christmas Trees by looking into paradise restored. There we find the Tree of Life, given to us once again by our gracious God.

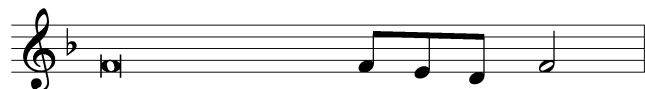
December 4 th	—	The Tree of Rebellion
December 11 th	—	The Tree of Promise
December 18th	—	The Tree of Life

Evening Prayer

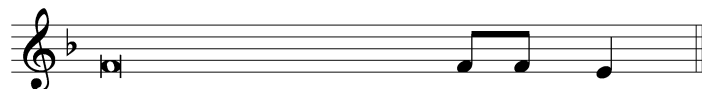
Stand

Opening Sentences

CW 215



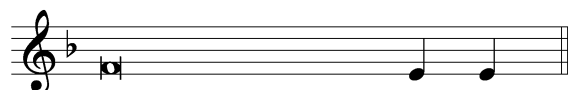
Jesus Christ is the light of the world,



the light no darkness can o - ver - come.



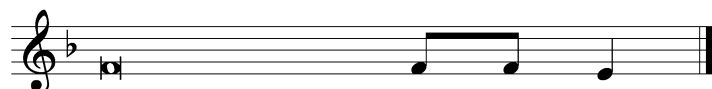
Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening,



and the day is almost o - ver.



Be our light and scat - ter the darkness,



and hear our evening prayer and praise.

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Hymn of Light

CW 216



1 Glad - d'ning light of pur - est glo - ry, shin - ing
2 In the fad - ing light of eve - ning, as the
3 For your gift of life un - end - ing, joy - ful



down from heav'n on high, from the ev - er -
set - ting sun de - parts, Fa - ther, Son, and
voic - es ev - er sing hymns of praise that



liv - ing Fa - ther— hail, most bless - ed Je - sus Christ!
Ho - ly Spir - it— we a - dore you, Lord our God.
right - ly hon - or, Son of God, your sav - ing name.

Text: Michael D. Schultz

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Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who led your people Israel with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Enlighten our darkness by the light of your Christ. May his Word be a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, for you are merciful and you love your whole creation. We, your creatures, glorify you—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Be seated

Psalm 141

CW 217



Let my prayer rise be - fore you as in - cense, the lift - ing up
of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice. O Lord, I
call to you; come to me quick - ly; hear my voice when I
cry to you. Let my prayer rise be - fore you as in - cense,
the lift - ing up of my hands as the eve - ning sac - ri - fice.

Tune: David SchackTune: © 1978 Lutheran Book of Worship. Used by permission: OneLicense no. 708875

Let the incense of our prayers rise before you, O Lord, and let your mercy descend on us, that we may sing your praises with the Church on earth and forever in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Psalm

Psalm 27

¹The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?

²When the wicked advance against me
to devour me,

it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.

³Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;

though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.

⁴One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

⁵For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.

⁶Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

⁷Hear my voice when I call, LORD;
be merciful to me and answer me.

⁸My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, LORD, I will seek.

⁹Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.

Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Savior.

¹⁰Though my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will receive me.

¹¹Teach me your way, LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.

¹²Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.

¹³I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.

¹⁴Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.

Lord God, grant us your Holy Spirit that we may hear and believe your Word. Cleanse our minds and renew our hearts that we may live for you here and hereafter; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

304 What Hope! An Eden Prophesied

CW 304

Reading

Revelation 22:1–5

¹Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ²down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. ³No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Sermon

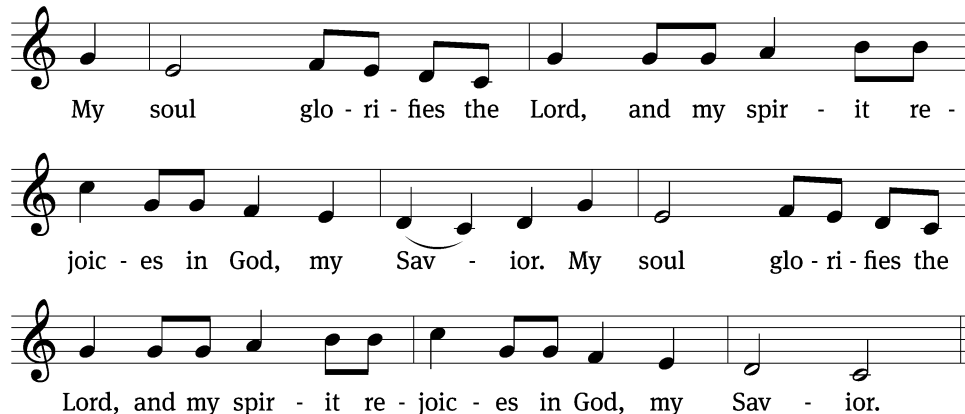
The Tree of Life

Revelation 22:1–5

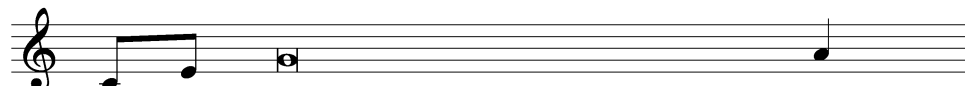
Song of Mary

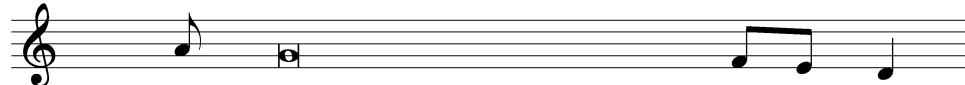
CW 218

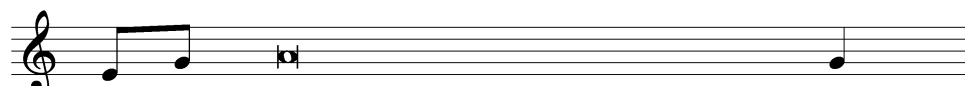
Refrain

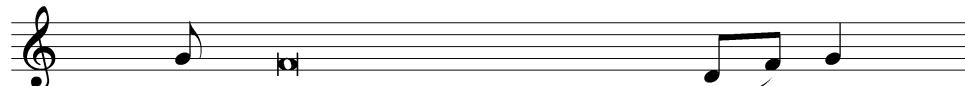


My soul glo - ri - fies the Lord, and my spir - it re -
joic - es in God, my Sav - ior. My soul glo - ri - fies the
Lord, and my spir - it re - joic - es in God, my Sav - ior.

- 
- 1 For _____ he has been mindful
 - 2 For the Mighty One has done great things for me—
 - 3 He has per - formed mighty deeds with his arm;
 - 4 He has filled the hungry with good things

- 
- 1 of the humble state of his ser - vant.
 - 2 and holy is his name.
 - 3 he has scattered those who are proud in their in - most thoughts.
 - 4 but has sent the rich away emp - ty.

- 
- 1 For in - deed from now on
 - 2 His _____ mercy extends to those who fear him,
 - 3 He has brought down rulers from their thrones
 - 4 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful

- 
- 1 all generations will call me bless - ed. v. 2
 - 2 from generation to gener - a - tion. *Refrain*
 - 3 but has lifted up the hum - ble. v. 4
 - 4 to Abraham and his descendants for - ev - er. *Refrain*

Tune: Paul Grime; David Schack
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Offering

Stand

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works come from you. Give to us, your servants, that peace which the world cannot give, that our hearts may be set to obey your commandments. Defend us also from the fear of our enemies, that we may live in peace and quietness, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Savior, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

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.

Benedicamus



Let us praise the Lord.



Thanks be to God.

Blessing



The grace of our Lord + Je - sus Christ and the love of God



and the fellowship of the Holy Spir - it be with you all.



A - men.

Be seated

783 Abide with Me

CW 783 sts. 1-3, 7

Acknowledgments

Evening Prayer from Christian Worship

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