# *First Sunday in Advent*
# *November 29, 2026*




**Immanuel Lutheran Church**

*a Reconciling in Christ congregation*

346 Shrewsbury Street

Holden, Massachusetts 01520

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*our purpose is to gather people, nurture faith, grow in God's love, and serve God's world*

# Welcome to Immanuel!

*We're thankful you're with us this morning! Throughout worship we'll use the red hymnal located on the back of the pew in front of you. Page numbers can be found towards the front of the hymnal at the bottom of the page, with hymns towards the back, beginning with the Psalms. Hearing assist devices are also available – just ask an usher for help.*

*We believe that the Gospel – the Good News that we are loved, forgiven, and free in Christ – is a gift offered to every person, and that God's grace has no limits or conditions. Through Christ, we are made a community that shares God's mission to proclaim grace and peace to all the world.*

**Prelude**

## Gathering

*The Holy Spirit gathers us in unity on the first day of the week, the day of Christ's resurrection.*

*stand*

**Confession and Forgiveness**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who calls out to the weary, whose word endures forever. **Amen.**

A voice cries out in the wilderness, "Make straight the way of the Lord!" We are called to confess our sin and turn back toward God's love.
*Silence is kept for reflection.*

Comforting God,
**we are your people, but we have neglected to call on your name. We are your people, but we have not remembered your ways. We are your people, but we have forgotten your hold on us. We are your people, but now we fade like a leaf, and our sins, like the wind, take us away. Restore us as your people. Cleanse us from our sin and clothe us in your righteousness. Amen.**

"Comfort, comfort my people!" says our God, who has clothed us with the garments of salvation and wrapped us in robes of righteousness. In the name of Christ, your sins are forgiven: Rejoice in the Lord!
**Amen.**

*sit*

**Advent Wreath Lighting** *He Came Down* Hymn 253 v. 1
He came down that we might have love; (repeat 2x) hallelujah forevermore.

**Children's Chat** Pastor Sarah Barnes
(young worshipers through grade 5 are invited to Children's Word)

*stand*
**Hymn of Praise** *This King Shall Come* Hymn 260

**Greeting and Prayer of the Day**
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
**And also with you.**
Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection awaken us to the threatening dangers of our sin and keep us blameless until the coming of your new day, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**
*sit*

## Word

*God speaks to us in scriptures read, sung and preached.*

**First Reading** Isaiah 64:1-9

[1] O that you would tear open the heavens and come down, so that the mountains would quake at your presence— [2] as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil— to make your name known to your adversaries, so that the nations might tremble at your presence! [3] When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect, you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence. [4] From ages past no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who works for those who wait for him. [5] You meet those who gladly do right, those who remember you in your ways.

But you were angry, and we sinned; because you hid yourself we transgressed. [6] We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a filthy cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. [7] There is no one who calls on your name or attempts to take hold of you, for you have hidden your face from us and have delivered us into the hand of our iniquity. [8] Yet, O LORD, you are our Father; we are the clay, and you are our potter; we are all the work of your hand.

9 Do not be exceedingly angry, O LORD, and do not remember iniquity forever. Now consider, we are all your people.
The Word of the Lord.
**Thanks be to God.**

**Second Reading** 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
3 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, 5 for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—6 just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—7 so that you are not lacking in any gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. 8 He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the partnership of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
The Word of the Lord.
**Thanks be to God.**

*stand*
**Gospel Acclamation** p. 151
**Alleluia. Lord, to whom shall we go?**
**You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.**

**Gospel Reading** Mark 13:24-37
The Holy Gospel according to Mark.
**Glory to you, O Lord.**
[Jesus said:] 24 "In those days, after that suffering, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 "Then they will see 'the Son of Man coming in clouds' with great power and glory. 27 Then he will send out the angels and gather the elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. 28 "From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. 29 So also, when you see these things taking place, you know that he is near, at the very gates. 30 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. 31 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away. 32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven nor the Son, but only the Father.

[33] Beware, keep alert, for you do not know when the time will come. [34] It is like a man going on a journey, when he leaves home and puts his slaves in charge, each with his work, and commands the doorkeeper to be on the watch. [35] Therefore, keep awake, for you do not know when the master of the house will come, in the evening or at midnight or at cockcrow or at dawn, [36] or else he may find you asleep when he comes suddenly. [37] And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake."
The Gospel of the Lord.
**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*sit*
**Sermon** Pastor Sarah Barnes

*stand*
**Hymn of the Day** *Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn* Hymn 242

**Apostles' Creed**
**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

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

**Prayers of Intercession**
In hope and expectation, we bring to God our prayers for the church, the world, and all in need.
God, in your mercy,
**receive our prayer.**

# Meal

*God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.*

**Passing of the Peace**
The peace of Christ be with you always.
**And also with you.**

*sit*
**Offertory Music**

*stand*
**Offertory Canticle** *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* Hymn 257 v. 1
O Come, O come, Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel.

**Offering Prayer**
Holy Creator, we are the clay and you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand. Receive these gifts, and shape them and our lives for your purpose, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
**Amen.**

**Great Thanksgiving**
The Lord be with you.
**And also with you.**
Lift up your hearts.
**We lift them to the Lord.**
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**
It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus Christ. You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer, through whom you will also make all things new in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. And so, with all the choirs of angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Sanctus** page 153

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, Lord God of pow'r and might:**
**Heav'n and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**
**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**
**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Thanksgiving at the Table**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life: Blessed are you for the birth of creation. Blessed are you in the darkness and in the light. Blessed are you for your promise to your people. Blessed are you in the prophets' hopes and dreams. Blessed are you for Mary's openness to your will. Blessed are you for your Son Jesus, the Word made flesh.

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth.

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, One God, now and forever.
**Amen.**

**The 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.**

**Invitation to Communion**
The glory of the Lord is revealed! Come and eat at God's table.
The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
*sit*

*All people are invited to receive communion today by coming forward to the front of the sanctuary. First, you'll receive bread, which is the body of Christ given for you. Then move to the next station, where you will find glass cups full of grape juice (lighter-colored) and wine (purple-colored), which is the blood of Christ shed for you. At the last station, return your empty cup to the tray. Gluten-free wafers are also available; to indicate you'd like to receive one, please simply raise your pointer finger when it's your turn to receive.*

**Lamb of God** page 154
**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.**

**Communion Hymns** *Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding!* Hymn 246
*What Feast of Love* Hymn 487

**Prayer after Communion**
Providing God, you feed your flock like a shepherd and gather your people in your arms. We praise you for the care and sustenance you give at this meal and always. As we leave your table, carry us near your heart, and send us with confidence in the way of Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

## Sending

*God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.*

**Announcements**

*stand*
**Blessing**
God our provider, God our feast, God our companion, bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

**Sending Hymn** *Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers* Hymn 244

**Dismissal**
Go in peace. Bring good news to the brokenhearted.
**Thanks be to God.**

**Postlude**

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## Immanuel Lutheran Church

**Ministers** – the people of Immanuel
**Pastors** – Pastor Sarah Barnes
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**Nursery School Directors** – Amy Drzik, Kristine Whittemore
**Gym Coordinator** – Walter Shanahan | gym@immanuelholden.org
**Sexton** – Don Roberts

### We're thankful for these servants in worship today:

**Livestream** – Jon Sprague, Lori Rabeler
**Assisting Minister** – Vickie Muller
**Ushers** – Craig Landquist, Ron Rosenlund
**Greeter** – Marilynn Vaillancourt
**Acolyte** – Alex Sprague
**Children's Word –** Sue & Jeff Swanberg
**Coffee Hour Host** – No Host Today. Sign up in Lawson Hall!
**Altar Service** – Mary Jane Rasku, Heidi Lahey
**Counting Team** – Lisa Sternstrom, Maryann Wood

### Worship, Service, and Fellowship in the week ahead:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Today | 8:00 am | Simple Church (Choir Room) |
| | 9:00 am | Indoor & Livestream worship (Sanctuary) |
| | 10:15 am | Coffee Hour (Gym) |
| | 10:30 am | Singing with Mrs. Claire/ Ornament Making |
| | 5:00 pm | Youth Group! |
| Monday | 8:00 am | Lectio Divina (Zoom) |
| Tuesday | 7:00 pm | CLNS Board Meeting (Room 6) |
| Wednesday | 7:00 pm | Advent Evening Prayer (Sanctuary) |
| | 7:30 pm | Confirmation Class (Room 6) |
| | 7:30 pm | Adult Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room) |
| Thursday | 10:30 am | Thursday Morning Bible Study (Zoom) |
| | 6:30 pm | Memorial Fund Meeting (Room 6) |
| Sunday | 8:00 am | Simple Church (Choir Room) |
| | 9:00 am | Indoor & Livestream worship (Sanctuary) |
| | 10:15 am | Coffee Hour (Gym) |
| | 10:30 am | Learning Hour |

### Daily Bible Readings for the Coming Week:

| | |
|---|---|
| Monday: | Psalm 79, Micah 4:1-5,; Revelation 15:1-8 |
| Tuesday: | Psalm 79, Micah 4:6-13, Revelation 18:1-10 |
| Wednesday: | Psalm 79, Micah 5:1-5a, Luke 21:34-38 |
| Thursday: | Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13, Hosea 6:1-16, 1 Thessalonians 1:2-10 |
| Friday: | Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13, Jeremiah 1:4-10, Acts 11:19-26 |
| Saturday: | Psalm 85:1-2, 8-18, Ezekiel 36:24-28, Mark 11:27-33 |
| Sunday: | Isaiah 40:1-11, Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13, 2 Peter 3:8-15a, Mark 1:1-8 |

## Welcome to Immanuel

**Thanks for joining us in worship today!** Wherever you are, we're glad to have you with us. Remember you can reach out to the church office anytime if you need help, prayer, or someone to talk to.

**Coffee Hour** – All are welcome to coffee hour in the gym following today's worship. We have no host today, please sign-up in Lawson Hall!

**Altar flowers** – The flowers on the altar this morning are given to the glory of God by Heidi & Bill Lahey in loving memory of Liam Michael Lahey & Jennifer Lynn Morse and by Leah & Tara Orton in loving memory of their mother, Joan Orton's birthday. The 2027 Flower Chart is up in Lawson Hall!

**Godly Play & Faith Quest** – Kids of all ages are invited to gather in Room 2 after worship today. Mrs. Claire will lead music for the first ten minutes of learning hour, and then we will practice the Christmas Eve skit. After, all ages are invited to make ornaments.

**Christmas Eve Skit** – At the family Christmas Eve service at 4:30pm, we'll have a skit that all children will be invited to participate. If your child would like a speaking role or assigned part, please contact Pastor Sarah. We'll have a full run through on Sunday, December 13 during Learning Hour.

**Making Ornaments** – In lieu of our regularly scheduled learning hour, there will be simple Christmas ornament crafts during coffee hour in the gym. All skill levels and all ages are welcome to join in the fun!

**Youth Group** – Youth will meet tonight at 5:00pm! During their time together they will taste and judge chili from members of our congregation. Who will have the winning chili? That's for our youth to decide!

**Estimate of Giving Cards** – Thank you to everyone who has returned their "Estimate of Giving" card. If you haven't done so yet, please fill out a card and return it to the office to help us budget for the year ahead. Grab one from the usher's table or use this QR code.

**Servant Connect Forms** – Have you filled out a Servant Connect yet? We're using these simple forms to help us connect people with ministry and mission opportunities that match their gifts and passions. Every member of our church is asked to fill one out! You can get one from the usher table in the back or use this QR code.

**John Street Soup Kitchen** – Thank you to everyone who helped provide and pack the meals for John Street Soup Kitchen. Thank you to Kaylie Harrington and Ron Rosenlund for leading the effort and to the Girl Scouts for providing and packing the non-perishable items this month!

**Altar Guild** – Thank you to everyone who helped the sanctuary transition from Christ the King to Thanksgiving Eve to Advent this week! Heidi & Bill Lahey, Mary Jane & Bill Rasku, Craig Landquist, Don Roberts, and all who lent a hand this busy week- we appreciate the work you do behind the scenes!

**Advent Evening Prayer** – To help mark the season of Advent, you're invited to join us for evening prayer on Wednesdays. December 2, 9, and 16 at 7:00pm. These simple services will last about half and hour and are a way for us to slow down amidst such a busy season and focus our hearts on what matters most: the birth and coming of Jesus. At each service we'll sing through the *Holden Evening Prayer* liturgy and hear a brief reflection.

**Advent Calendar –** Please take an ELCA Good Gifts Advent Calendar for the kids in your life! Each day includes a reading, conversation starter, prayer, or song to prepare our hearts for Christmas day. Many days also include decorating a paper cutout to add to a Christmas village scene!

**Giving Tree** – The Giving Tree is up in Lawson Hall! All are invited to take tags and buy gifts for the ministries we support (Florence House, Kids Express, and Dismas Farm). Gifts are due back on Sunday, December 13. This allows time to get the gifts to everyone.

**Christmas Poinsettias** – All are invited to help decorate our sanctuary with poinsettias this Christmas Eve! Use the insert in today's bulletin to place your order. Cost is $18 each and due in by Sunday, December 13.

**Lectio Divina** – Lectio Divina is now at 8:00am every Monday! Start your day grounded in scripture and prayer. Here is the **new link** to join: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89251738731

**Spirituality for the Home Stretch** – We're not meeting in December due to busy holiday schedules. We'll meet again on Tuesday, January 5.

**Confirmation** – Students and mentors will meet on Wednesday, December 2 at 7:30pm in room 6 after Advent Evening Prayer to discuss The Sermon on the Mount. Thank you to Jim Anderson for leading!

**Thursday Morning Bible Study** – Join us every Thursday at 10:30am on Zoom! We're discussing on the book of Romans and you're invited to the conversation! Link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84825798597

**Monday Night Bible Study** – The Monday Night Bible Study group will gather on Monday, December 7 at 6:30pm in Room 6. All are welcome!

**Kids Express** – Our next date to provide a meal is on Friday, December 12. Be on the lookout for pans to fill! See Brian Welch for details.

**Coffee Hour Cookie Swap –** On December 13, we're swapping cookies at coffee hour! Everyone is encouraged to bring two containers with them – one filled with cookies and an empty container to fill up with other cookies! (All are invited to eat cookies, even if you can't bring a batch!)

**Christmas Caroling** – We're going Christmas Caroling on Sunday afternoon, December 13, 4:00-6:00pm! Everyone is welcome to join us, including friends and neighbors. Be sure to dress warm and in layers. We'll meet in the parking lot at church around 4:00 and team up (people with room in their cars will be asked to help transport). See Kathy Cranson with any questions.

**Adult Forum** – On Sunday, December 6, we will continue our *Leaving Your Legacy* series with a conversation on green burials led by Lori Rabeler. Then on Sunday, December 13, a member of Holden Fire Department will lead a free training on how to use an AED (automatic external defibrillator) to restart a heart in a medical emergency and how to administer Narcan in an event of an opioid overdose.

**Senior Luncheon** - Join us on Tuesday, December 15 at noon for a holiday senior luncheon! Cost is $10 per person. The sign-up sheet is in Lawson Hall. Hope to see you there!

**Book Club** – For December, we're reading and discussing *Ordinary Blessings for the Christmas Season* by Meta Herrick Carlson. Join us for discussion this Thursday, December 17 at 6:00pm in Room 6.

**Receiving New Members** – Our congregation has been blessed with some new visitors and friends in the past months. While we don't yet have a date picked out, if you're interested in becoming a member of our church, please talk to a pastor.

**Positivity Pouches** – Have you shared some positivity with our Youth Group recently? Drop a note of encouragement or some kind words in their pouches in Lawson Hall! Cards and small gifts encouraged!

**Homeless Kits** – You can grab a homeless kit – and small bags of period products – from Lawson Hall for you to hand out to someone in need.

**Communion Kits** – Personal kits are available in the locker outside Lawson Hall. Each kit contains a pre-packaged wafer and grape juice.

**Stephen Ministry** – Stephen Ministers are trained to provide one-to-one, confidential care to those experiencing a difficult time. Please let one of the pastors know if you'd like to connect with one.

**2027 Giving envelopes** – Next year's giving envelopes are available in Lawson Hall.

**Staff Christmas Brunch and Fund**

The Immanuel Lutheran Church Staff & Nursery Schools (ILNS & CLNS) provide vital support to our everyday mission of serving God, our members, and the community at large. Each holiday season, we recognize their hard work with a Christmas Brunch and with a gift from our members.

The **ILC Staff Christmas Fund** is a way for anyone to make a contribution that will be shared with our paid staff. Gifts of any amount are welcome and can make a meaningful difference in what we distribute. An envelope marked "Staff Christmas Gift" is included in your offering envelope box, or you may send a check to the church office clearly marked "Staff Christmas Gift." All gifts received by December 20 will be distributed this year.

While this fund is a collective gift to our staff, we do not discourage making a direct gift to a staff member if that is your desire. Questions regarding the fund can be directed to Greg Mills at (774)-239-8587.

This year's **Staff Christmas Brunch for both church and school staffs will be** on Tuesday, December 22. We welcome any donations of baked goods! (please contact the office if you wish to contribute something). Items can be dropped off on Monday, December 21 between 9:00a and 3:00p or by calling Greg at (774) 239-8587 to arrange another time.

## We are currently collecting:

**Homeless Kits** – We are collecting items to make homeless kits. These items are packaged in Ziplock bags so that we can carry them in our cars to hand out to those in need. The items that we are collecting are:

- warm socks
- granola or cereal bars – chewy bars only
- crackers with peanut butter or cheese
- small package of Kleenex
- ChapStick
- Bottled water – 8 oz

These items can be placed in the hamper in Lawson Hall Lobby or in a box in the back of the sanctuary. Thank you

**Period Products** – Unscented pads and tampons, individually wrapped, of all sizes and brands, handed out at Loaves & Fishes Food Pantry.

**Bras** – Bras in good condition of any size, color, or style, which will be given to veterans in need. Contact Mary Donev (mary@donev.com).

**Wachusett Food Pantry** – Non-perishable, unexpired food items for the Wachusett Food Pantry (serving all Wachusett Towns).

**Little Library** – Book donations for any age welcome!

## In Your Prayers this Week

Adrienne Altobelli, David Alward, Bruce & Janet Axelson, Isaac Barron, David Beams, Mary Beams, Bob, Ron Bertel, Heidi Besse, Tina Bodnar, Lucy & Tom Brennan, Bonnie Colon, Dale, Colleen Davison, Lauren Demerjian, Christina Deyo, Kim, Kevin Duguay, Tom Durant, Jim Eisenlord, Alan Farmer, Tim Fournier, Linda Friedman, Sonja Githmark, Ann Marie Grambo, Victoria Graves, Dolores Hadady, Bill Higgins, Erika, Rich Hopkins, Robin Johns, Dick Johnson, Jan Johnson, Carol Jorgensen, Ray Langevin, Jean Lane, Cristie Marsh, Family of Alwin Masselink, James Mellor, Darin Narum, Joanne Neal, Mark Novak, Don Phaneuf, Shirley, Kay Porter, Jeff, Wylla Rabeler, Rich Reynolds, Ray Rossetti, Shirley Rotti, Arthur Savage, Anita Slater, Marshall Smith, Maria Taylor, Tony, Elaine Vetter, George Vogel, Scott, Liz Wilson, Jim & Nancy Zelesky, and Jill Zitzewitz.

## Christmas Eve Worship schedule

1:00pm - Traditional Christmas Eve worship (also online)

4:30pm - Family Christmas Eve worship

11:00pm - Candlelight Christmas Eve worship

*all services include holy communion*