



# Christmas

## TREES

A MIDWEEK ADVENT SERIES

**The Tree of Life**  
**December 18, 2024**

# Welcome to Worship

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If you are a visitor to our church, we extend you a warm welcome. We are happy you are here. Please fill out a Connect Card to let us know how we might continue to serve you.

## Service Notes

Pick an apple off its tree, and you have a great source of antioxidants and fiber. Pluck the fruit of an orange tree. It provides the daily supply of vitamin C. If you are fortunate to live in a climate where avocado trees grow, you get to eat that tasty fruit packed with healthy fats, B6, and potassium. Different trees with different fruits and different health benefits.

Imagine 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. Eat up!



## Those Serving in Worship

Pastor Paul Tullberg; Accompanist Kristi Perry

## Acknowledgments

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# Vespers

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## Hymn

318 Hark! A Thrilling Voice Is Sounding

## Opening Sentences

CW 215

Jesus Christ is the light of the world,  
**the light no darkness can overcome.**

Stay with us, Lord, for it is evening,  
**and the day is almost over.**

Be our light and scatter the darkness,  
**and hear our evening prayer and praise.**

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## 27C The LORD Is My Light and My Salvation

Psalm 27C

*We place our confidence in the LORD waiting to live with him in the land of the living.*

*Refrain*

The LORD is my light and my sal - va - tion - of  
whom shall I be a - fraid, of whom shall I be a - fraid?

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

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

Do not reject me or for- / sake me,  
God my / Savior. *Refrain*

Though my father and mother for- / sake me,  
the LORD will re- / ceive me.

I remain confi- / dent of this:

I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the / living.

Wait / for the LORD;

be strong and take heart and wait / for the LORD.

**Glory be to the Father and / to the Son  
and to the Holy / Spirit,  
as it was in the be- / ginning,  
is now, and will be forever. / Amen. Refrain**

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## Reading

Genesis 3:16–24

*To prevent Adam and Eve from living forever in a broken world, full of pain and sorrow, God lovingly blocks their access to the Tree of Life.*

<sup>16</sup>To the woman he said:

I will greatly increase your pain in childbearing.  
With painful labor you will give birth to children.  
Your desire will be for your husband,  
but he will rule over you.

<sup>17</sup>To Adam he said:

Because you listened to your wife's voice  
and ate from the tree about which I commanded you,  
“You shall not eat from it,”  
the soil is cursed on account of you.  
You will eat from it with painful labor all the days of your life.

<sup>18</sup>Thorns and thistles will spring up from the ground for you,  
but you will eat the crops of the field.

<sup>19</sup>By the sweat of your face you will eat bread  
until you return to the soil,  
for out of it you were taken.  
For you are dust,  
and to dust you shall return.

<sup>20</sup>The man named his wife Eve because she would be the mother of all the living. <sup>21</sup>The LORD God made clothing of animal skins for Adam and for his wife and clothed them.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD God said, “Look, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil. Now, so that he does not reach out his hand and also take from the Tree of Life and eat and live forever—” <sup>23</sup>the LORD God sent him out from the Garden of Eden to work the soil from which he had been taken. <sup>24</sup>So he drove the man out, and in front of the Garden of Eden he stationed cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned in every direction to guard the way to the Tree of Life. (EHV®)

## Reading

Revelation 22:1–5

*Through the work of Christ the curse of sin has been removed and access to the tree of eternal life has been restored.*

<sup>1</sup>The angel showed me the river of the water of life, which was as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and the Lamb. <sup>2</sup>In the middle of the city's street and on each side of the river was a tree of life that yielded twelve kinds of fruit. The tree yields its fruit every month, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations.

<sup>3</sup>There will no longer be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city. His servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup>They will see his face. His name will be on their foreheads. <sup>5</sup>There will no longer be any night or any need for lamplight or sunlight, because the Lord God will shine on them. And they will reign forever and ever. (EHV®)

## Reading

John 20:30–31

*The gospel is written so that we might have faith in Jesus Christ and, through faith in him, obtain eternal life.*

<sup>30</sup>Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, did many other miraculous signs that are not written in this book. <sup>31</sup>But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (EHV®)

## Hymn

567 *What Adam's Disobedience Cost*

## Sermon

Stand

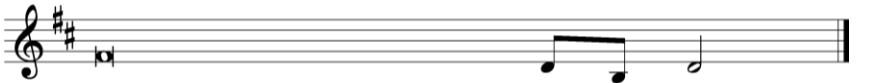
### Song of Zechariah

CW 212

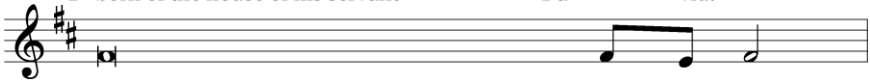
1 Praise be to the Lord, the God of Is - ra - el;

1 he has come to his people and set them free.

1 He has raised up for us a mighty Sav - ior,



1 born of the house of his servant Da - vid.

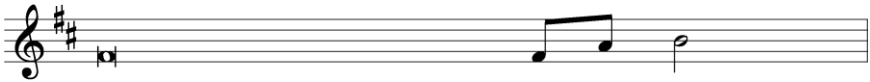


2 Through his holy prophets he promised of old  
that he would save us from our en - e - mies,

3 This was the oath he swore to our father A - bra - ham:

4 You, my child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,

5 In the tender compassion of our God,

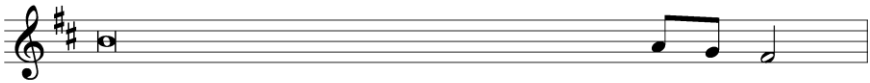


2 from the hands of all who hate us.

3 to set us free from the hands of our en - e - mies,

4 for you will go before the Lord to pre - pare his way,

5 the dawn from on high shall break up - on us,

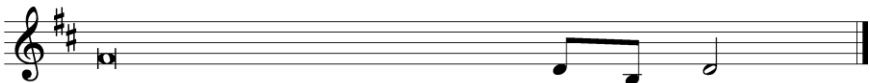


2 He promised to show mercy to our fa - thers

3 free to worship him with out fear,

4 to give his people knowledge of sal - va - tion

5 to shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shad - ow of death



2 and to remember his holy cov - e - nant.

3 holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.

4 by the forgiveness of their sins.

5 and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

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*Be seated*

## Offering & Connect Card

## **Lord, Have Mercy**

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For favorable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

For our deliverance from all affliction, wrath, danger, and need, let us pray to the Lord:

**Lord, have mercy.**

## **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 in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

Let us praise the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Blessing**

The grace of our Lord  $\text{T}$  Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**Amen.**

## **Hymn**

*343 Once in Royal David's City*



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