

ONE IN CHRIST LUTHERAN PARISH

◆Bethany ◆Immanuel ◆Lunder ◆Silver Lake ◆Winnebago



As soon as I heard the sound of your greeting,
the child in my womb leaped for joy.

Luke 1:44, NRSV

Advent 4

December 19, 2021



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Advent 4

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COME, BABY JESUS!

We joyfully welcome all who join us this morning as we prepare for the celebration of Christ's birth and anticipate our Lord's promised and glorious return. A special welcome to all guests and visitors. John the Baptist prepared us for a baby, now we must prepare the world for a King.

COME, LORD AND KING!

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Hymns are from the Green Hymnal.

(Stand as you are able)*

Prelude

Welcome and Announcements

✠ **GATHERING** ✠

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the People of God

*LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLES

A prophet speaks peace;

God speaks love;

Jesus lives both;

we await his birth with joy.

Today is the fourth Sunday in Advent - our preparations are almost complete for the coming of Jesus.

We light a candle each week to remind us that Jesus brings light into the dark places of the world.

Today we are reminded that God so loved the world that a Child was given...Love incarnate.

We light the candle ...

...of hope to proclaim that God's light is coming into the world.

A candle is lit

We light the candle ...

...of peace to proclaim that God's promises will be fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ - Prince of Peace .

candle is lit

We light the candle ...

...of joy to celebrate that God's saving power is coming into the world.

A candle is lit

We light the candle ...

...of love to proclaim that God's love is revealed in the Child born in Bethlehem.

A candle is lit

God of hope, peace, joy and love, we eagerly await the birth of Jesus, Prince of Peace, Emmanuel, God-with-us.

*ADVENT PRAYER

God of love, we praise and adore you. Through the birth of Christ, your love for the world - your love for us, is affirmed and reaffirmed. You have indeed done great things for us and holy is your name. As you

have made your love known to us in such a personal way, may we be ongoing revelations of that love as we do great things in your name.

Your blessings astound us, your glory inspires us, your love renews us as we prepare for the birth of Jesus – Emmanuel - truly God-with-us. Amen

*** CONFESSION**

Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, cried out to Mary “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.” Blessed are we, O God, for we too have been filled with the Holy Spirit and we have indeed been blessed by the fruit of Mary’s womb, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Gracious and loving God, when we have allowed seasonal weariness to obscure the blessings of Christmas, and allowed Christmas festivities to crowd out the wonder of Christ’s birth:

forgive us

And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...” When we magnify the prospect of winter holidays and activities more than we praise you, O God:

forgive us

When our rejoicing excludes those who at this time feel rejected... unwanted... lonely..

forgive us.

And Mary said, “The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.” When our words and deeds offend the holiness of your name, O God:

forgive us.

When our busy-ness leads us to forget the great things you have done for us, Mighty God, especially this great revelation of your love for us in Jesus Christ:

forgive us.

Mary spoke of God lifting up the poor and defenseless people of this world and bringing down those who are proud and arrogant and who abuse their positions of power. When we fail to bring love and mercy to birth in people’s lives because of our pride and our arrogance:

forgive us.

When we fail to condemn any power which leaves others powerless, or when we fail to confront and denounce any person who profits through the weakness or ignorance of others:

forgive us.

Mary spoke of the hungry being fed with good things and the rich being sent away empty. When our affluence blinds us to the plight of people in this country and in countries round about, who lack food and the basic necessities of life:

forgive us

May our rejoicing over Christ’s birth lead to our being generous to others, as God has been generous to us.

In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen

EEXPERIENCING GOD’S GRACE – THE GOOD NEWS

Our rejoicing is certainly based on the generosity of God as we read in Hebrews that “It is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” (Hebrews 10:10) Rejoice then over this great good news that in Jesus Christ we are loved and we are forgiven.

Thanks be to God!



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
 3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
 work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

***APOSTOLIC GREETING**

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.

***SHARING THE PEACE**

***KYRIE**



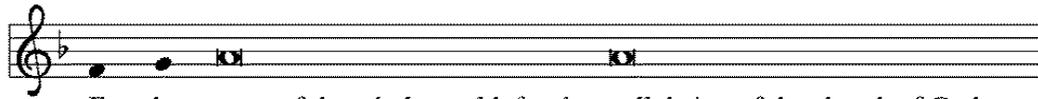
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer-cy.



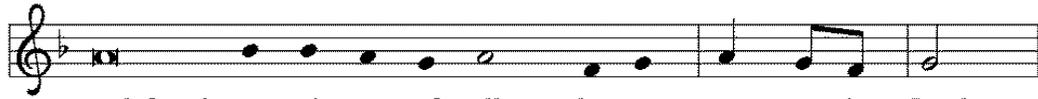
For the peace from above, and for our sal-va-tion, let us



pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer-cy.



For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the u-ni-ty of all, let us pray to the Lord.



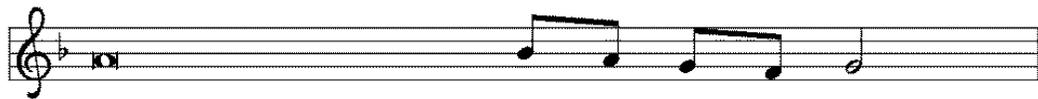
Lord, have mer-cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their wor-ship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer-cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de-fend us, gra-cious Lord.



A - men.

*PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

✠ WORD ✠

God speaks to us in scripture, reading, preaching, and song

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and Mary's magnificent song of praise, the letter to the Hebrews reminds us in no uncertain terms that Christ's advent is for "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." It is the kind of tension in which the church always lives as when in holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."

SCRIPTURE READING

Micah 5:2-5a

The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.

²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,
who are one of the little clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to rule in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

³Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in labor has brought forth;
then the rest of his kindred shall return
to the people of Israel.

⁴And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great
to the ends of the earth;

^{5a}and he shall be the one of peace.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

NEW TESTAMENT READING

Hebrews 10:5-10

The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.

⁵Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,
"Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,
but a body you have prepared for me;

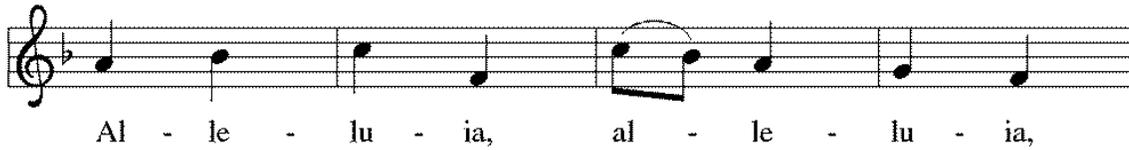
⁶in burnt offerings and sin offerings
you have taken no pleasure.

⁷Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God'
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."

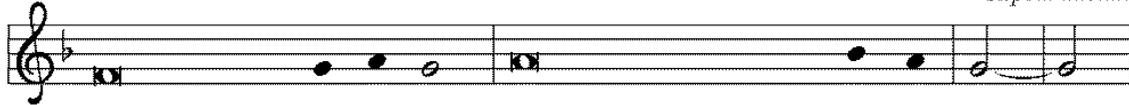
⁸When he said above, "You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), ⁹then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

*Gospel Acclamation



Repeat alleluia



Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

*GOSPEL READING

Luke 1:39-45 [46-55]

Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

The holy gospel according to Luke. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

³⁹In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, ⁴⁰where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit ⁴²and exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. ⁴³And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? ⁴⁴For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord."

[⁴⁶And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me,

and holy is his name.

⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,

and lifted up the lowly;

⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things,

and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,

in remembrance of his mercy,

⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,

to Abraham and to his descendants forever."]

The gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON

Harlan Nyhus

*Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
 Let earth receive her king;
 let ev'ry heart prepare him room
 and heav'n and nature sing,
 and heav'n and nature sing,
 and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.*

*Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
 Let all their songs employ,
 while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
 repeat the sounding joy,
 repeat the sounding joy,
 repeat, repeat the sounding joy.*

*No more let sin and sorrow grow
 nor thorns infest the ground;
 he comes to make his blessings flow
 far as the curse is found,
 far as the curse is found,
 far as, far as the curse is found.*

*He rules the world with truth and grace
 and makes the nations prove
 the glories of his righteousness
 and wonders of his love,
 and wonders of his love,
 and wonders, wonders of his love.*

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748

***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 THE COMMUNITY**

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.
 ...Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

***THE LORD'S PRAYER**

✠ SENDING ✠

God blesses us and sends us in mission in the world

***BLESSING**

***THREE-FOLD AMEN**

***RINGING OF THE BELL**

***SENDING SONG**

“O Come, All Ye Faithful”

45

*O come, all ye faithful,
joyful and triumphant!
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem;
come and behold him,
born the king of angels:*

*Refrain O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
O come, let us adore him,
Christ the Lord!*

*The highest, most holy,
light of light eternal,
born of a virgin, a mortal he comes;
Son of the Father
now in flesh appearing! Refrain*

*Sing, choirs of angels,
sing in exultation,
sing, all ye citizens of heaven above!
Glory to God
in the highest: Refrain*

*Yea, Lord, we greet thee,
born this happy morning;
Jesus, to thee be glory giv'n!
Word of the Father,
now in flesh appearing: Refrain*

Text: attr. John Francis Wade, 1711-1786; tr. Frederick Oakeley, 1802-1880, sts. 1, 3-4; tr. unknown, st. 2

***THE DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

✠ THANKSGIVING ✠

God invites us to respond to His grace

OFFERING

Please place your gifts in box, send them to the parish office, or use [Tithe.ly](https://tithe.ly) (electronic giving).

Postlude



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A Companion in the Waiting

It is possible that not everyone who found out Mary was pregnant was as supportive as her cousin Elizabeth in our reading today. Since receiving the angel’s message, Mary likely felt uncertain, worried, scared, and alone plenty of times. So, when she visited her cousin Elizabeth and received Elizabeth’s blessing in words that echoed the angel Gabriel’s announcement, it must have been comforting to Mary. Hearing Elizabeth’s words of affirmation was a reminder to Mary that she was not alone in her journey and that God really was at work in her life.

At one point or another, we all need a reminder like this in our lives. It is not always easy to recognize God’s presence or to see just how God is at work in and through us. And sometimes much waiting is required until we see the fulfillment of God’s promises. That’s why we need people in our lives who will believe with us when we feel less than certain, walk with us through uncharted terrain, and support and pray for us along our journey.

Our gospel presents us with two unlikely mothers. Their experiences remind us that knowing God is with us—and even that we have received God’s favor—does not mean our lives will be without hardship. We will still encounter challenges, experience grief, and have our hearts broken. But it does mean that in our waiting, and in our struggles, we are not alone. Through those who wait with us, and through the promise of Advent, we are reminded that Emmanuel is here, and has been with us all along.