

God's Service Sunday, December 22, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

ELW Holy Communion Setting Ten



WELCOME

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." Let us take a moment to see the impact of Christ's presence here, within his church, and in the world through our participation in larger church organizations such as Lutheran World Relief.

LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

When bombs blew up her childhood, you helped put it back together.

GATHERING

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

GREETING (ELW p. 203)

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.

PRELUDE "Hark, A Thrilling Voice" arr. by Culli

ADVENT WREATH

Children are welcome to gather around the Advent wreath to assist the usher in it's lighting as we sing our gathering song.

GATHERING SONG AND LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

1 Light the Advent candle, one:
Now the waiting has begun;
we have started on our way,
time to think of Christmas day.

Refrain

Candle, candle, burning bright, shining in the cold winter night;
candle, candle, burning bright, fill our hearts with Christmas light.

2 Light the Advent candle, two:
Think of humble shepherds, who

filled with wonder at the sight
of the child of Christmas night.

3 Light the Advent candle, three:
Think of heavenly harmony;
angels singing "Peace on earth"
at the blessed Savior's birth.

4 Light the Advent candle, four:
Think of joy forevermore;
Christ Child in a stable born,
gift of love that Christmas morn.

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KYRIE (ELW p. 203)

**Have mercy on us, Lord, and hear our solemn prayer.
We come to hear your living word; it saves us from despair.
Have mercy on us, Christ, and wash away our sin.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may begin.
Have mercy on us, Lord, make sin and shame depart.
Renew us with your saving pow'r; create in us new hearts!**

PRAYER OF THE DAY (ELW p. 205)

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.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

FIRST 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.

A reading from Micah.

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.

³ Therefore 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.

⁴ And 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.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Luke 1:46b-55

^{46b} My soul proclaims the greatness^l of the Lord,

⁴⁷ my spirit rejoices in^l God my Savior,

⁴⁸ **for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your^l lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will^l call me blessed:

⁴⁹ you, the Almighty, have done great^l things for me
and holy^l is your name.

⁵⁰ **You have mercy on^l those who fear you,
from generation to^l generation. R**

⁵¹ You have shown strength^l with your arm
and scattered the proud in^l their conceit,

⁵² **casting down the mighty^l from their thrones
and lifting^l up the lowly.**

⁵³ You have filled the hungry^l with good things
and sent the rich^l away empty.

⁵⁴ **You have come to the aid of your^l servant Israel,
to remember the prom-^lise of mercy,**

⁵⁵ the promise made^l to our forebears,
to Abraham and his chil-^ldren forever. **R**

SECOND 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.

A reading from Hebrews.

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

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

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

⁸ When 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), ⁹ then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰ And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 205)

Alleluia! Lord and Savior: open now your saving word.

Let it burn like fire within us; speak until our hearts are stirred.

Alleluia! Lord, we sing for the good news that you bring.

GOSPEL: 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.

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

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON (ELW p. 206)

HYMN OF THE DAY “My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness” (ELW 251)

1 My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord;
I sing my Savior's praise!
You looked upon my lowliness,
and I am full of grace.
Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age
this blessing shall proclaim—

great wonders you have done for me,
and holy is your name.

2 To all who live in holy fear
your mercy ever flows.
With mighty arm you dash the proud,
their scheming hearts expose.
The ruthless you have cast aside,
the lowly throned instead;
the hungry filled with all good things,
the rich sent off unfed.

3 To Israel, your servant blest,
your help is ever sure;
the promise to our parents made
their children will secure.
Sing glory to the Holy One,
give honor to the Word,
and praise the Pow'r of the Most High,
one God, by all adored.

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PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

As we prepare for Emmanuel, God-with-us, let us pray for all people and places that long for God's presence.

God our uniter, increase communication and cooperation in our relationships with those of other traditions and religions. Root your church in the radical message of your incarnation, and enable us to pursue your justice in the world. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God our creator, we praise you for the beauty that surrounds us. Awaken in us a renewed sense of care for the wildlife in our communities. Form us into faithful stewards of what you have made. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God our sovereign, Mary proclaims a new way of life that lifts up the lowly and fills the hungry with good things. Nurture in local governments and municipalities a desire to care for all who are overlooked and ignored. Lord, in your mercy,
receive our prayer.

God our beacon, as the northern hemisphere begins its slow turn toward more daylight, remind us that even in the deepest nights, you are there. Comfort the lonely and bereaved. Hold closely the frightened, anxious, depressed, and ill especially Shirley, Anna, Kay, Carolyn, Cheryl,

Gene, Lars, Darla, Jim, Carol, and these we name now in our hearts and with our voices...(pause for names to be spoken. Lord, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God our guide, shepherd the leadership of this congregation. Bless the council and staff in discerning future ministry and open their hearts to the voices of the community. Lord, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

God our life, you remember the promises you have made to your people. In gratitude for those who have died, we praise you for your faithfulness throughout history. Lord, in your mercy,

receive our prayer.

Savior of the nations, come, and receive these prayers and the pleas of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

PEACE (ELW p. 206)

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

SHARING GOD'S ABUNDANCE

In the midst of the darkness that shrouds our world we defiantly light candles and pray for the promised light. We wait in faith, having witnessed the love and generosity of our God knowing God did not withhold even his own self that we might live the abundant life God created for us. As heirs and heralds of God's great abundance and love, may we steward it that all may be bathed in his coming light and nourished to live that abundant life.

If you have offering to share please raise your hand so the ushers may collect it. You may also give online anytime at landerlutherans.com.

OFFERING MUSIC "The Angel Gabriel" arr. by Miller

SETTING OF THE TABLE "Come Now, O Prince of Peace" (ELW 247)

1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

2 Come now, O God of love, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Savior.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.

4 Come, Hope of unity, make us one body.
Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile all nations.

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OFFERING PRAYER

Creator God,
you made the whole world,
even the farthest stars,
and you draw near to feed us.
We praise you for these gifts of bread and wine.
Strengthen us with this food
that we may live in expectation
for the advent of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING

DIALOGUE (ELW p. 206)

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.

PREFACE (ELW p. 207)

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:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 207)

Holy, holy, holy Lord,

**God of power 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,
hosanna in the highest.**

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, the Beginning and the End,
our Salvation and our Hope,
we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.
When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair,
you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.
At this end of the ages
your Son Jesus came to bring us your love
and to heal all the suffering world.
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.
Remembering, therefore,
his life, death, and resurrection,
we await his coming again
in righteousness and peace.
Send your Spirit on us
and on this bread and wine we share:
strengthen our faith,
increase our hope,
and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.
Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (ELW p. 208)

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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

Receive who you are; Become what you receive. Come to this table, you who are strong in faith and you who seek building up. You who have been to this sacrament often, and you who have not been for some time. You who have tried to follow Jesus and you who have failed. Come. It is Christ who bids us to meet him here where God feeds us with tender mercy and there is a place already set just for you at his table. Come and be fed.

COMMUNION (ELW p. 208)

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.
Amen.

COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 208)

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
you suffered death our lives to save: have mercy now, we pray.
O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
you set us free from guilt and grave: have mercy now, we pray.
O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
eternal peace with God you made: give us your peace, we pray.**

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC "Savior of the Nations, Come" arr. by Wold

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION (ELW p. 208)

Let us pray.

God for whom we wait, in this meal you give us a foretaste of that day when the hungry will be fed with good things. Send us forth to make known your deeds and to proclaim the greatness of your name, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

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

SENDING OF COMMUNION

Gracious God, whose mercy endures from generation to generation: As Mary set out to visit Elizabeth before she gave birth to her son, bless those who go forth to share your word and sacrament with our sisters and brothers who are *sick/homebound/imprisoned*. In your love and care, nourish and strengthen those to whom we bring this communion, that through the body and blood of your Son we may all know the hope of your promised coming in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS (ELW p. 209)

BLESSING

God of endings and beginnings,
God in the darkness and the light,
God, our hope for the journey,
✠ bless and keep you now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG “Canticle of the Turning” (ELW 723)

1 My soul cries out with a joyful shout
that the God of my heart is great,
and my spirit sings of the wondrous things
that you bring to the ones who wait.
You fixed your sight on your servant's plight,
and my weakness you did not spurn,
so from east to west shall my name be blest.
Could the world be about to turn?

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring.
Let the fires of your justice burn.
Wipe away all tears, for the dawn draws near,
and the world is about to turn.

- 2 Though I am small, my God, my all,
 you work great things in me,
 and your mercy will last from the depths of the past
 to the end of the age to be.
 Your very name puts the proud to shame,
 and to those who would for you yearn,
 you will show your might, put the strong to flight,
 for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*
- 3 From the halls of pow'r to the fortress tow'r,
 not a stone will be left on stone.
 Let the king beware for your justice tears
 ev'ry tyrant from his throne.
 The hungry poor shall weep no more,
 for the food they can never earn;
 there are tables spread, ev'ry mouth be fed,
 for the world is about to turn. *Refrain*
- 4 Though the nations rage from age to age,
 we remember who holds us fast:
 God's mercy must deliver us
 from the conqueror's crushing grasp.
 This saving word that our forebears heard
 is the promise which holds us bound,
 till the spear and rod can be crushed by God,
 who is turning the world around. *Refrain*

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DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.
Thanks be to God.

Upcoming Commemorations

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr

Thursday, December 26, 2024

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

John, Apostle and Evangelist

Friday, December 27, 2024

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Saturday, December 28, 2024

This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

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