

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
**Sunday, December 20, 2020**



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With Mary we sing: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (Luke 1:46-47, NIV). Welcome to worship.



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### SOLO

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

P: We praise you, O God, for this wheel of time  
that marks our days of preparation for Christ's advent.  
As we light the candles on this wreath,  
open our eyes to see your presence  
in the lowly ones of this earth.  
Enlighten us with your grace,  
that we may sing of your advent among us  
in the Word made flesh.  
Grant this through Christ our Lord,  
whose coming is certain and whose day draws near.

C: Amen.

## Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah



1	Light one can-dle to	watch for Mes-si - ah:	let the light ban-ish	dark - ness.
2	Light two can-dles to	watch for Mes-si - ah:	let the light ban-ish	dark - ness.
3	Light three can-dles to	watch for Mes-si - ah:	let the light ban-ish	dark - ness.
4	Light four can-dles to	watch for Mes-si - ah:	let the light ban-ish	dark - ness.



He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el, God ful - fills the prom - ise.  
He shall feed the flock like a shep-herd, gent - ly lead them home-ward.  
Lift your heads and lift high the gate-way for the King of glo - ry.  
He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings. Let your lights be shin - ing!

## PASTORAL GREETING

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

C: And also with you.

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

**P:** The Lord be with you.

**C:** **And also with you.**

**P:** Let us pray.

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C:** **Amen.**

## **SOLO**

### **FIRST READING: 2 SAMUEL 7:1-11, 16**

**L:** The First Lesson is from 2 Samuel the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter, beginning at the 1<sup>st</sup> verse:

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>the king said to the prophet Nathan, “See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent.” <sup>3</sup>Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.”

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: <sup>5</sup>Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>6</sup>I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. <sup>7</sup>Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built me a house of cedar?” <sup>8</sup>Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; <sup>9</sup>and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup>And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup>from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. <sup>16</sup>Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

**L:** The Word of the Lord

**C:** **Thanks be to God.**

### **SECOND READING: ROMANS 16:25-27**

**L:** The Second Lesson is from Romans the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter, beginning at the 25<sup>th</sup> verse:

<sup>25</sup>Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages <sup>26</sup>but

is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—<sup>27</sup> to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

L: The Word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God.**

### **GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38**

P: The Holy Gospel according to Luke the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter, beginning at the 26<sup>th</sup> verse:

C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

<sup>26</sup>In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup>But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.

<sup>30</sup>The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup>He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup>The angel said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.

<sup>36</sup>And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>Then Mary said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

P: The gospel of the Lord.

C: **Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **SERMON**

### **HYMN OF THE DAY**

### **APOSTLE'S CREED**

A: God has made us his people through our Baptism into Christ. Living together in trust and hope, we confess our faith:

C: **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 CHURCH

A: God of power and might, fulfill your promise and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths. Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Creator God, you scatter the proud. Everything we have belongs first to you. Bless and protect the seas, mountains, plains, forests, skies, and soils that surround us. Give us humility as we tend them. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Righteous God, you humble the powerful and lift up the lowly. We pray for the leaders of all nations, that they amplify the voices of people in need. Guide all people entrusted with leadership, to create societies in which everyone can flourish. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

P: Compassionate God, you fill the hungry with good things and send the rich away empty. Nourish those who lack access to adequate food and nutrition. Bless the work of advocates, community organizers, and food pantries. Encourage others to provide for their neighbors in need. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

P: Gracious God, watch over and care for all persons who serve in the military..... Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Healing God, you pour out mercy to all who cry out to you. Surround everyone in need of healing in body, mind, or spirit with your tender presence..... Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

A: Eternal God, you are faithful to the promises you made to our forebears. We give thanks for the ministry of Katharina von Bora Luther and other ancestors who organized, planned, dreamed, encouraged, and reached out as they served you. We give thanks for the bold leadership of female leaders in our own time. Inspire others with their steadfast witness. Hear us, O God.

**C: Your mercy is great.**

P: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

## **PEACE**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C: And also with you.**

P: Let us greet one another with a sign of God's peace.

The congregation is invited to greet one another with a gesture of peace (hand shake or hug) using these or similar words – *God's peace be with you.*

## **OFFERING**

### **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

A: Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provided for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray.

**C: Amen**

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom, and teach us to pray:

**C: 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.**

### **DISTRIBUTION**

We welcome you to the Lord's Table to share the Sacrament of Holy Communion with us. Holy Communion is served with both red wine and white apple juice. It is your choice to receive either one.

Empty cups may be placed in the bowl to the left or right as you return to your seat.

### **COMMUNION BLESSING**

**P:** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

**C:** **Amen**

### **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

**A:** Gracious and abundant God, you have done great things for us, and we rejoice. In this bread and cup you give us life forever. In your boundless mercy, strengthen us and open our hearts to the world's needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C:** **Amen**

### **BLESSING**

**P:** The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

**C:** **Amen**

### **SENDING HYMN**

### **DISMISSAL**

**A:** Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

**C:** **Thanks be to God.**

### **POSTLUDE**

## Called into the Future

In Luke's first words about Mary, she sounds unflappable. In most scripture stories, a visit from an angel provokes terror, but when the angel Gabriel appears to Mary, she isn't scared. She's curious. Even when the angel delivers the astonishing news that she will become pregnant with the Son of the Most High God whose glorious kingdom will never end, her response is a simple question: "How can this be?" (Luke 1:34).

The angel reminds her that God's powerful Spirit works in mysterious ways. Anything is possible with God! That's all the explanation Mary needs. "Here I am," she declares. She is God's servant, and she is up for the task. What courage it must have taken to say yes! Parenthood is demanding to begin with. Giving birth to the King of kings must have come with its own unique set of challenges. This moment will change the course of her life.

Mary found strength in the knowledge that she was not alone. The first thing the angel said to her was: "The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). Mary knew that she was held in God's presence even before she understood what lay ahead of her. She was "favored" by God, seen and known and loved. Whatever future she was called into, she could trust the one who led her. That faith is the foundation for Mary's "Yes."

Like Mary, we, too, are servants of the Most High God, who calls us into "ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown" (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, pp. 304, 317). Even when we don't feel quite as composed as Mary, we can trust in the same promise she did: we are loved by the God who makes impossible things possible and goes with us into whatever our futures hold.