

Fourth Sunday of Advent



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The Holy Eucharist – Franz Schubert *Deutsche Messe*
St. Paul Lutheran Church – December 19, 2021 – 10:00 A.M.

INTRODUCTION TO THE DAY

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.”

PRELUDE

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland
Prelude on 'Veni Emmanuel'

J. S. Bach
Flor Peeters

Lighting the Advent Wreath: Advent 4

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.
In your Son, Emmanuel,
you have shown us your light
and saved us from the power of sin.
Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.
Increase our longing for your presence,
that at the celebration of Jesus’ birth
your Holy Spirit might dwell anew in our midst,
for Christ is our light and our salvation.
Blessed be God forever. **Amen**

WELCOME

GATHERING

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

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
who alone does wonders,
who lifts up the lowly,
who fills the hungry with good things. **Amen.**

Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

**God for whom we wait,
in the presence of one another,
we confess our sin before you.
We fail in believing that your good news is for us.
We falter in our call to tend your creation.
We find our sense of self in material wealth.
We fear those different from ourselves.
We forget that we are your children
and turn away from your love.
Forgive us, Blessed One,
and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.**

God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you!
Through the power of the Holy Spirit,
✝ your sins are forgiven.
You are children of the Most High,
inheritors of the eternal promise,
and recipients of divine mercy.
God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace. **Amen.**

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear.

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

- 2 O come, O Wisdom from on high,
embracing all things far and nigh:
in strength and beauty come and stay;
teach us your will and guide our way. *Refrain*
- 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might,
as to your tribes on Sinai's height
in ancient times you gave the law
in cloud, and majesty, and awe. *Refrain*
- 4 O come, O Branch of Jesse, free
your own from Satan's tyranny;
from depths of hell your people save,
and give them vict'ry o'er the grave. *Refrain*

Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
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***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.

KYRIE

Kyrie

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Christ, have mer - cy. Christ, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy. Lord, have mer - cy.

Lord, have mer - cy, have mer - cy.

Music: *Deutsche Messe*, Franz Schubert, 1797–1828; adapt. Richard Proulx, b. 1937
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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.

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.

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.

Word of God, Word of Life.

Thanks be to God.

***GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Gospel Acclamation
Celtic Alleluia

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

Verses may be sung by a leader. Then the alleluia is repeated.

Music: Fintan O'Carroll and Christopher Walker

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***GOSPEL**

Luke 1:25-55

The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 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. 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. For nothing will be impossible with God." 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.

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

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,
according 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.

THE SERMON

The Rev. LaDonna Thomas

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*

Text: Rory Cooney, b. 1952, based on the Magnificat
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***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 this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

A brief silence.

Nurturing God, you give us life and care for our every need. Use the church's gifts and ministries for your service, bringing your word to all who seek your transforming grace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creator God, you proclaim your boundless love for all that you have made. Renew barren lands, polluted waters, and melting ice caps. Make us servants of your creation that brings forth abundant life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Righteous God, you bring down the mighty and lift up the lowly. Strengthen those who seek justice. Bless the work of community organizers, activists, journalists, and all who call our attention to imbalances of power. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Compassionate God, you proclaim your love and mercy. Show your lovingkindness to teen parents and those who are pregnant. Comfort any struggling with infertility and those who await test results, are in treatment and hospice care, and others in need, especially those on our prayer list, those whose names we offer now, and those we hold silently in our hearts... Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, you fill the hungry with good things. Bless the feeding ministries of this congregation and community. Guide us to share your bounty with those who hunger or live in poverty. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Faithful God, you stir up the hearts of those who love you. We give you thanks for those who, like Mary, were courageous in their witness. Give us such courage until that day when you fulfill all things. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

***THE EXCHANGE OF PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

***OFFERTORY RESPONSE**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise God, all creatures here below;
Praise God above, ye heav'nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.**

***OFFERING PRAYER**

God of our waiting and watching,
we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives
to the service of all your people.
Prepare the way before us
as we meet you in this simple meal,
through Christ Jesus, our pathway, and our peace. **Amen.**

***THE 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:

Holy, Holy, Holy Great Thanksgiving



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,



heav-en and earth are full, full of your glo - ry.



Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.



Bless-ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.



Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est.

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*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 are yours, Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit, In your holy Church, both 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

Christ has set the table with more than enough for all. Come!

Jesus, Lamb of God



Je - sus, Lamb of God, have mer - cy on us.



Je - sus, bear - er of our sins, have mer - cy on us.



Je - sus, re - deem - er, re - deem - er of the world,



grant us peace, grant us peace.

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- 1 All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!
Furrows lie open for God's creative task:
this, the labor of people who struggle to see
how God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free.
- 2 People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel";
she conceived him, "God with us,"
our brother, whose birth
restores hope and courage to children of this earth.
- 3 Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;
new highways opened, new protocols declared.
Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!
All clear ev'ry gateway, in haste, come out in haste!
- 4 We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live
in our world; he is present, in neighbors we see
our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

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***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. Amen

***BLESSING**

The God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, through Christ Jesus for whom we wait. **Amen**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

*SENDING HYMN

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel vs. 5-8

ELW 257

5 O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heav'nly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery. *Refrain*

Refrain

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.

6 O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer;
O Sun of justice, now draw near.
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night,
and death's dark shadow put to flight. *Refrain*

7 O come, O King of nations, come,
O Cornerstone that binds in one:
refresh the hearts that long for you;
restore the broken, make us new. *Refrain*

8 O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel,
that mourns in lonely exile here
until the Son of God appear. *Refrain*

Text: *Psalteriolum Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite

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***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is near.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland

J. S. Bach

WORSHIP LEADERS TODAY

Preaching and Presiding: Rev. LaDonna Thomas

Eucharistic Minister: Carl Johnson

Reader: Miranda Johnson

A/V: Carl Johnson

Music Director: Ted Stoddard

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ABOUT TODAY'S MUSIC

This morning I am playing two arrangements of the Advent hymn, Savior of the Nations, Come (ELW 263) by J. S. Bach, which show what our new pedal pipes can do. One of the unique features of our organ is that it is possible to have one sound in the left hand and a completely different sound in the right hand, while playing on the same keyboard. For the first Prelude piece, you will hear a soft, accompanimental sound in the left hand and a strong, spicy solo sound in the right hand, over a 'walking' bass played by the feet. The second Bach piece is basically a wild fugue played on the keyboard on full organ, with the hymn tune appearing in the pedals in long notes. Great fun!

I am also playing a rather mysterious arrangement of our gathering hymn, O Come, O Come, Emmanuel, by 20th century Belgian composer Flor Peeters. Soft and mystical, it features the flute sounds of our organ.

Ted Stoddard

NOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1123 Washington St., Gloucester, MA 01930
978-283-6550, office@stpaulcapeann.org

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

If you would like to donate toward flowers for Christmas, please send or drop off your donation to the church with a note of who the flowers are in memory/honor of. A list of donors and names will be maintained and published in the bulletin and FYI on Christmas and the following week. Poinsettias will then be purchased and placed on and around the alter for Christmas. If you have questions, please send an email to office@stpaulcapeann.org or leave a message at 978-283-6550.

ADVENT GROCERY GIFT CARDS

Gift cards received to date will be distributed equally among our four local missions, Open Door, Grace Center, Brown Bag and Family Promise tomorrow, on Monday, December 20. If you still wish to contribute, please place cards in an envelope with your name on the outside and indicate the \$ amount enclosed so the donation can be listed on your giving statement for 2021. It is suggested that cards be dropped into the mail slot of the door to the pre-school.

A NEW TEAM - REFRESH & RE-INVISION

Recently, interest has been expressed in refreshing and re-envisioning the use of the church rooms and to declutter spaces. This team will collaborate to evaluate, design, and communicate a plan for refreshing the usage of our interior space. If you are interested in joining this newly forming team, please contact the church office to become part of the Refresh and Re-envision Team, perhaps the "*In-team*" for short.

ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH CHRISTMAS FAIR

As of printing time on December 15, a total of \$5,639.26 has been received from the Christmas Fair!

PASTOR LADONNA'S OFFICE HOURS

Mondays Noon - 2:00 P.M. and by appointment

Pastor LaDonna can be reached at 717-688-0652 or by email at pastor@stpaulcapeann.org.

COVID PROTOCOL FOR ALL GROUPS MEETING AT ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH, GLOUCESTER MA (revised December 2021)

St Paul Covid Reentry Team continues to assess local infection rates and local guidelines. We continue to do what we can to keep our community safe. In light of the recent uptick in rates and to ensure everyone's comfort, health and safety during this period, the following are required while in the church building:

- Masks must be worn at all times inside the church building. Masks are not required outdoors, though individuals are welcome to wear them if they choose.
- We invite people to share fellowship with one another in the undercroft after church; however we will discontinue refreshments for the time being. Masks must be worn at all times.
- We ask that you sit in every other row, as designated by the signs at the end of each pew, when possible. Sanctuary windows will remain open a crack through the winter months.
- Please refrain from touching other worshippers during the sharing of the peace (except those in your own family or group). Nodding or bowing is a friendly way to greet another person in these circumstances.
- Singing, with masks on, is welcome! We will continue to celebrate Holy Communion with bread and wine. We ask that you use hand sanitizer just prior to walking up to receive the elements.
- If you don't feel well, have experienced any COVID-19 symptoms, or have been in close contact with anyone with COVID-19, please do not attend worship in person. We encourage all eligible persons to get vaccinated, where possible.
- We will continue to live stream and post worship services online.

We are constantly reviewing numbers and will update this protocol accordingly.

PRAYER LISTS

Please keep these people in your prayers for healing throughout the week: Daneen R., Sonny M., Tasha R., Willy G., Brian D., Judith O., Ron F., for a Family in need of prayers, Miles, Kathryn, Bill P., Bob S., Liana W., Bruce G., Jim S., Judy M., John B., Judy R., Roger K., Ellen R., Barbara U., Doug G., Judy K., Dan W., Josh M., Dan W., and John M.

Armed services: Josh Coakley, Stephanie Norberg, Brian Misuraca, Christian DiGregorio, John Korpi III, Danny Hill, Rachel Misuraca Lewin, Zach Hafey, and Tony Favalora