

ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN CHURCH

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



December 19, 2021

10:00 a.m.

INTRODUCTION

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



+ GATHERING +

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Pastor (P) Blessed be the holy Trinity, ☩ one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

Congregation (C) Amen.

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

Silence is kept for reflection.

P God for whom we wait,

C 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.

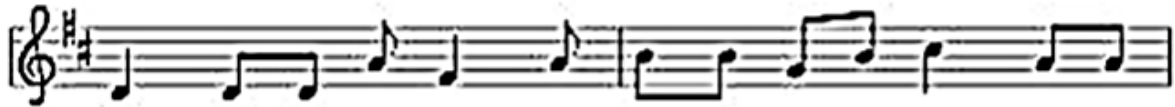
P God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, ☩ your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

C Amen.

The assembly is seated.



To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor
 1 All earth is hope - ful, the Sav - ior comes at last!
 2 Peo - ple of Is - rael, you heard the proph - et tell:
 3 Moun - tains and val - leys will have to be pre - pared;
 4 We first saw Je - sus a ba - by in a crib.



y el sur - co a - bier - to, la ob - ra del Se - ñor; es el
 Fur - rows lie o - pen for God's cre - a - tive task: this, the
 "A vir - gin moth - er will bear Em - man - u - el"; she con -
 new high - ways o - pened, new pro - to - cols de - clared. Al - most
 This same Lord Je - sus to - day has come to live in our



mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad, re -
 la - bor of peo - ple who strug - gle to see how
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth - er, whose birth re -
 here! God is near - ing, in beau - ty and grace! All
 world; he is pres - ent, in neigh - bors we see our



cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad. dar - nos li - ber - tad.
 God's truth and jus - tice set ev - 'ry - bod - y free.
 stores hope and cour - age to chil - dren of this earth.
 clear ev - 'ry gate - way, in haste, come out in haste!
 Je - sus is with us, and ev - er sets us free.

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.**

KYRIE



A Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **C** Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:



A Chri - ste e - le - i - son: **C** Christ, have mer - cy.
Christ, have mer - cy:



A Ky - ri - e e - le - i - son: **C** Lord, have mer - cy.
Lord, have mer - cy:



PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.

C **Amen.**

Come Now, O Prince of Peace

Ososǒ, ososǒ


O - so - sǒ o - so - sǒ, pyong - hwa - ūi - im - gŭm
 1 Come now, O Prince of peace, make us one bod - y.
 2 Come now, O God of love, make us one bod - y.
 3 Come now and set us free, O God, our Sav - ior.
 4 Come, Hope of u - ni - ty, make us one bod - y.



u - ri - ga han - mom i - ru - ge ha - so - sǒ.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile your peo - ple.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.
 Come, O Lord Je - sus, rec - on - cile all na - tions.

Text: Geonyong Lee, h. 1947; tr. Marion Pope
 Music: OSOSŌ, Geonyong Lee, b. 1947
 Text and music © Geonyong Lee.

CHILDREN'S SERMON



+ WORD +

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.

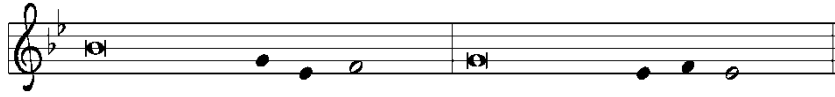
²But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has brought forth; then the rest of his 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; ⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

Reader The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Luke 1:46b-55

We sing the psalm responsively.



Leader ^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,
⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,

C ⁴⁸for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.
From this day all generations will | call me blessed:

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

C ⁵⁰You have mercy on | those who fear you,
from generation to | generation.

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

C ⁵²casting down the mighty | from their thrones
and lifting | up the lowly.

L ⁵³You have filled the hungry | with good things
and sent the rich | away empty.

C ⁵⁴You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel,
to remember the prom- | ise of mercy,

L ⁵⁵the promise made | to our forebears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever.

Spoken after the psalm is sung:

C **Amen.**

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.

3Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; 4in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. 5Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)."6When 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), 7then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. 8And it is by God's will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

Reader The word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?

Al - le - lu - ia. You have the words of e - ter - nal life.

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

GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-45

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.

P The holy gospel according to Luke, the first chapter.

C 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."

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON *We encounter the living word of God in the preaching.*

INTERPRETIVE DANCE *Mary, Did You Know* Rita Ford & Colleen Holdcraft

APOSTLES' CREED

A Let us 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 INTERCESSION

Each petition ends: Hear us, O God.

Congregational response: Your mercy is great.

PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C And also with you.

We greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace.

OFFERING

An offering is gathered for the mission of the church, including the care of those in need.

OFFERING HYMN *Let the Vineyards be Fruitful Lord*

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were
sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life.
Gath-er the hopes and dreams of all; u-nite them with the prayers we
of-fer now. Grace our ta-ble with your pres-ence,
Lord, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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

C **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. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.**

+ SENDING +

BLESSING *We receive the blessings of the triune God.*

P 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.

C **Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SENDING HYMN 257 *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (vs. 1, 2 & 7)*



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap - tive
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all things
 3 O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes on
 4 O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa - tan's



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
 far and night: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
 Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
 tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save.



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
 teach us your will and guide our way. Re - joice! Re - joice!
 in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
 and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

**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**

DISMISSAL

- P We believe out loud that God's mission for us is:
- C to be an active community that welcomes all people to nurture and share their faith and gifts with everyone, according to God's call.
- P Go in peace. Christ is near.
- C Thanks be to God.

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POINSETTIAS ARE GIVEN TO THE GLORY OF GOD BY:

Margaret Bowers (2), dedicated to my brother, Peter Torlucci.

Mark and Sue Canning (2)

Caroline Collins (2), dedicated to my parents.

Bob and Linda Eshleman (2), dedicated to the glory of God for St. Stephen family.

Rita Ford (2), dedicated to my parents, Pastor James and Leela Lochan.

Jan Harrison (2), in memory of loved ones.

Ron and Ruth Hartung (4), in honor of our pastor, our musicians, our sanctuary-revitalization planners and our brave cantors

Jerry and Sandy Ness (2), dedicated to the glory of God.

Martha Marky (1), dedicated to my family.

Andrea Notley (2)

Sharon Simmons (2), in thankfulness for God's many blessings.



**RITA FORD DEDICATES TODAY'S
ALTAR FLOWERS TO THE GLORY OF GOD
AND IN THANKS TO FAMILY AND FRIENDS.**

Calendar for December 19 - 26

Dec. 19	Sun.	10:00 am	Worship, Fourth Sunday of Advent
22	Wed.	noon	Bible study (online)
24	Fri.	4:00 pm	Christmas Eve worship with communion
26	Sun.	10:00 am	Worship, Christmas Lessons and Carols

**The office will be closed on Dec. 27 for Christmas*

SERVING TABLE

Serving	December 19	December 24
Presiding	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
Preaching	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom
Assisting Minister	Rob Schiffer	Rita Ford
Cup Minister	N/A	Caroline Collins
Lector	Judi Duffy	Judi Duffy
Cantors	Susan Hehn Chris Reece	Jake Hartung Susan Hehn
Altar Guild	Beth Alexander Erin Kenney	Judi Duffy Linda Eshleman
Counters	Bob Eshleman Linda Eshleman	
Announcements	Pastor Tom	Pastor Tom

PRAYER REQUESTS

New concerns: Becky Button (cousin of Audrey Post), in critical condition after a car accident; Gladys Kane, recovering from surgery; Isaac (son of Terri Schmitt) for healing (both physical and emotional).

For the sick: Val Sullivan; Margarete Decker (mother of Caroline Collins); Don Dowd; Isabelle Taylor (granddaughter of Bill & Connie Taylor), being treated for rheumatoid arthritis and Primary Immunodeficiency; Theresa Martin (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Dan Graney (friend of Cheryl Stuart); Sarah (friend of Cassandra White).

In treatment for cancer: Stephanie Barber; Cathie Nitti (niece of Sharon Simmons); Jenny (niece of Laura Sullivan & Colin Hackley); Rosalinda Wright; Maggie Soff (friend of Sandy Sampson); James Sablan (brother of Donna Schiffer); Isabell Cintron (friend of Sharon Simmons); Sarah Lucas (friend of Cassandra White); Bruce Blubaum (cousin of Sharon Simmons); Chris Dickman (synod council member), child of Pr. Katrina Foster (friend of Cheryl).

For health and protection: For all affected by coronavirus: those experiencing mental health difficulties due to isolation; those with the disease struggling to recover; those on the front lines fighting, researching and treating the disease (doctors, nurses, medical personnel, EMTs, the millions of unemployed people, etc.; for the unaccompanied children entering the US, including those “unaccounted for”.

For prisoners: Femi and Eddie; all those on death row.

Other concerns: Karen Olson; Blanche White (Melissa Barton).

Church concerns: St. Stephen’s Congregational Council; The Florida-Bahamas Synod Council, all congregations searching for ways to stay connected and proclaim the Good News; Reconciling Works; Grace Lutheran Church; Bishop Pedro Suarez; Bishop Elizabeth Eaton; Our Savior Lutheran Church in Freeport, Bahamas; the ELCA Advocacy offices and ministry; St. Paul Lutheran Church, Pensacola.

World concerns: For all recovering in the Florida Panhandle from Hurricane Michael, including Messiah Lutheran Church; the people of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands continuing to recover from hurricanes; migrants fleeing violence in Central America; all those migrants and asylum seekers imprisoned by the US government; the people of Venezuela (birthplace of Bp. Suarez) and Hong Kong; for the Supreme Court as it considers cases involving the LGBTQ community.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING ENVELOPES FOR 2022: Offering envelopes for next year are available for pick-up in the Fellowship hall.

FLOWER CHART FOR 2021: Do you have an anniversary, birthday or special memory you would like to honor? Celebrate the occasion by sponsoring the flowers for our service and signing up for the 2021 Flower Chart located in the narthex. The cost is \$35, and you can place that in the offering plate.

RSVP FOR NEXT WEEK: Remember to use the Sign-up Genius to reserve your spot for worship service (<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0c45a4a62ea7fbc16-sunday>). The deadline is noon on the Friday before worship. The calendar has dates available throughout the summer.