



## Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 2024

*The Good News for Today: Mary was right.*

*Thank you for worshiping with us at St. John's, where we are building a loving, accepting community centered on growing in Christ, and giving people a place to belong at any stage of their journey with God.*

*Please fill out your yellow attendance card and place it in the offering plate when we collect the offering later in the service.*

### Gathering Music

*STAND*

**Hymn: The Magnificat** (*Sung to the Tune of The King Shall Come – ELW 260*)

1 My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord; I sing my Savior's praise!  
You looked upon my lowliness, and I am full of grace.

2 Now every land and ev'ry age this blessing shall proclaim—  
great wonders you have done for me, and holy is your name.

3 To all who live in holy fear your mercy ever flows.  
With mighty arm you dash the proud, their scheming hearts expose.

4 The ruthless you have cast aside, the lowly throned instead;  
the hungry filled with all good things, the rich sent off unfed.

5 To Israel, your servant blest, your help is ever sure;  
the promise to our parents made their children will secure.

6 Sing glory to the Holy One, give honor to the Word,  
and praise the Power of the Most High, one God, by all adored.

### Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, alive in the world, reviving creation, arriving soon.

**Amen.**

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

*Silence is kept for reflection.*

God of mercy,

**we confess that we have sinned. We trust earthly powers and human authority alone. We grow fearful. We cling to false comforts.**

God of might,

**we confess that we have sinned. We have turned away from our neighbors. We have trusted false promises.**

God in our midst,

**we confess that we have sinned. We plead: come to us. Bring your mercy to birth in us.**

A righteous branch springs forth: it is Christ the Lord, our Savior, in whom we have forgiveness, life, and mercy. By the power of the Holy Spirit, receive the grace and forgiveness of God through † Christ Jesus, whose day draws near.

**Amen.**

## Welcome & Greeting

Welcome to St. John's, where we are building a loving, accepting community centered on growing in Christ, and giving people a place to belong at any stage of their journey with God.

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.**

## 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.**

*SIT*

## Hymn: O Come O Come Emmanuel (Verse 1) – ELW 257 (Red Book)

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.

Text: *Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite  
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

# Lighting the Advent Wreath

At every beginning there is a yearning  
for the one who is coming.

O Emmanuel,

**Surprise us by your coming.**

We gather together to let God's good news  
reorient our lives.

O Emmanuel,

**Surprise us by your coming.**

We wait for the day  
when all the world will see the sign  
that God is with us.

O Emmanuel,

**Surprise us by your coming.**

We are shocked by how God comes close,  
even at this very moment.

O Emmanuel,

**Surprise us by your coming.**

Jesus, we welcome your presence now  
with the lighting of these candles,  
whose flames bring warmth to winter  
and fill this place with the glow of hope.

**Amen.**

## Hymn: O Come O Come Emmanuel (Verse 5) – ELW 257 (Red Book)

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

Text: *Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum*, Köln, 1710; tr. composite  
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

## Children's Message

## The Readings

### Micah 5:2-5a

<sup>2</sup> But 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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.

<sup>4</sup> 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,

<sup>5</sup> and he shall be the one of peace.

The Word of the Lord,

**Thanks be to God.**

### Luke 1:46b-55

#### *Refrain*

Em C Bm F Em C B7

You cast down the mighty from their thrones and lift up the lowly.

<sup>46b</sup> My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

<sup>47</sup> my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

<sup>49</sup> you, the Almighty, have done great things for me  
and holy is your name.

<sup>50</sup> You have mercy on those who fear you,  
from generation to generation. *Refrain*

<sup>51</sup> You have shown strength with your arm  
and scattered the proud in their conceit,

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

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

54 You have come to the aid of your servant Israel,  
to remember the promise of mercy,

55 the promise made to our forebears,  
to Abraham and his children forever. *Refrain*

## Hebrews 10:5-10

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, 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.

The Word of the Lord,

**Thanks be to God.**

*STAND*

## Gospel Acclamation:



Pastor Bo Bannister

## Luke 1:39-45

The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter:

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

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

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

*SIT*

Sermon – “She Who Believed” – Pastor Bo Bannister

*STAND*

# Hymn: Filled with Hope and Gratitude – ACS 907



1 Filled with hope and grat - i - tude and filled with ver - y  
 2 God's e - ter - nal mer - cy, meant for all of hu - man -  
 3 Hun - gry peo - ple eat good things and find an hon - ored  
 4 Filled with hope and grat - i - tude and filled with ver - y



God, I sing with soul and spir - it ex - ul -  
 kind, is giv - en as de - liv - 'rance from op -  
 place; the rich are sent a - way though they are  
 God, I sing with soul and spir - it ex - ul -



ta - tion, for God has smiled up -  
 pres - sion. The pow - er - ful and  
 hun - gry. The prom - ise to our  
 ta - tion, for God has smiled up -



on the hum - ble ser - vant who will give her  
 haugh - ty find that they are now cast down, the  
 fore - bears God re - news for us to - day: the  
 on the hum - ble ser - vant who will give her



own sweet milk to Christ, the world's sal - va - tion.  
 low - ly raised be - yond this world's de - ri - sion.  
 world is filled with God's a - bun - dant mer - cy.  
 own sweet milk to Christ, the world's sal - va - tion.

Text: Paul Damico-Carper, b. 1981, based on Luke 1:46-55  
 Text © 2013 Augsburg Fortress

## The Apostles' Creed

With the whole church let us confess our faith.

**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

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

*A brief silence.*

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. 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.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

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

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

Please share a sign of peace with one another.

*SIT*

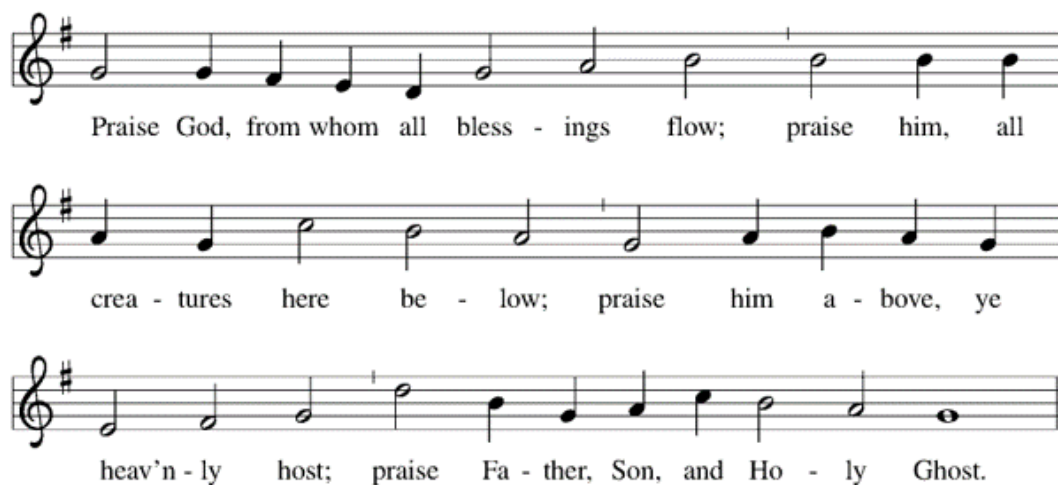
## Announcements

*Printed copies of our weekly announcements are available at the usher's stand in the Narthex, and monthly newsletters are on the Hospitality Table. Please include your email address on your yellow attendance card to receive announcements electronically.*

## Offering

*STAND*

### Offertory Hymn: Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow (ELW 885 / Red Book)



The image shows three staves of musical notation in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are printed below the notes.

Praise God, from whom all bless - ings flow; praise him, all  
crea - tures here be - low; praise him a - bove, ye  
heav'n - ly host; praise Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Ghost.

## 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.**

*St. John's practices open communion; all are invited to the Table. You do not need to be a member of St. John's or any church to receive what Christ has freely given to all. As the ushers dismiss your row, you may come forward through the center aisle. Pre-filled cups contain grape juice, and empty cups will be filled with wine at the rail. Please let us know if you'd like a gluten-free wafer. If you are unable to come to the rail but would like to receive communion, please let the ushers know and we will come to you. It is our general practice that young children who have not yet received their First Holy Communion are invited to come forward for a blessing; however, if parents desire their children to receive communion, they are welcome.*

## 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:

## Sanctus



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and  
God of might, heav - en and earth are full of your  
glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Bless - ed is the one who comes in the name of the  
Lord. Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.  
Ho - san - na, ho - san - na in the high - est.

## Eucharistic Prayer

As the shadows lengthen, we bless you, sheltering God.

We glorify you for the endless, starlit sky, deep with the mystery of your creative labor through all time and space. We praise you for the fertile earth and for the life its darkness holds and births: plants of every variety, animals curled in sleep, humankind you shaped by your own hand. Stay with us as the shadows lengthen.

**Stay with us as the shadows lengthen.**

Through the night you led your people into freedom. At day's end you rained down manna in the wilderness. At sundown your Son brought healing to people in need. In the midday darkness when Jesus died on the cross, life came forth for all. Stay with us as the shadows lengthen.

**Stay with us as the shadows lengthen.**

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.

Our hearts burn within us as we proclaim the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

Like a mother hen, hold us close through the coming night. Watch with those who labor, accompany those who long for peaceful sleep, welcome those whose waking will be only in you. Into our deepest night, come, Lord Jesus.

**Come, Lord Jesus.**

Come, Holy Spirit, make here the body of Christ: in the breaking of the bread, in justice for our broken world, in rest for the weary, come, Holy Spirit.

**Come, Holy Spirit.**

To you, O God, painter of both night and day, guiding star and healing sun, breath of peace and wind of change, be all glory, all honor, all praise this night unto the coming dawn, now and forever.

**Amen.**

Let us pray the prayer Jesus taught us to pray:

## 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.**

*SIT*

## Invitation to Communion

Come in all you who are weary,  
For the night is cold out there.  
Though our lives are very humble,  
What we have, we have to share.  
There is wine here to revive you;  
There is bread to make you strong.  
Come and rest from all your troubles,  
Rest from pain, and rest from wrong.

## Distribution of the Elements

### Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world;  
grant us peace, grant us peace.

*STAND*

### Post-Communion Blessing

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you keep you in his Grace.

**Amen.**

### Prayer after Communion

Generous God, we thank you for the gift of life, for the bread of salvation. We thank you for coming among us, for leading us into peace. We thank you for showering us with mercy, for sending us into the world. Come, Lord Jesus, and go with us as we feed the hungry in your name.

**Amen.**

### 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.**

## Hymn: Canticle of the Turning — ELW 723 (Red Book)

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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## Dismissal

Go in peace. Prepare the way for Emmanuel.

**Thanks be to God.**

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