



December 24, 2023

The Fourth Sunday in Advent

Rev. Ken Bersche

Janis Lapham, Organist
Maggie Kent, Secretary

Prelude

Processional Hymn *Please Stand*

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”

♪ Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King;
Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!”
Joyful, all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies;
With th’ angelic host proclaim, “Christ is born in Bethlehem!”
~Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!”

♪ Christ, by highest heav’n adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord,
Late in time behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin’s womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail th’ incarnate Deity!
Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! ~Hark!...

♪ Hail, the heav’n-born Prince of Peace! Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!
Light and life to all He brings, Ris’n with healing in His wings.
Mild He lays His glory by, Born that man no more may die,
Born to raise the sons of earth, Born to give them second birth. ~Hark!....

Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 380 -Text: Charles Wesley 1707-88; Tune: Felix Mendelssohn 1809-47;
Setting: William H. Cummings 1831-1915; Public Domain; LSBHymnLicense.net #100012386.

Invocation

The LORD says to my Lord:

Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool,

The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter.

Rule in the midst of your enemies.

Your people will offer themselves freely on the day of Your power in holy garments;

From the womb of the morning the dew of your youth will be yours.

The LORD has sworn and will not change His mind,

You are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

The Lord is at your right hand;

He will shatter kings on the day of His wrath.

He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses;

He will shatter chiefs over the wide earth.

He will drink from the brook by the way;

Therefore He will lift up His head.

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Psalm 110

Matthew 28:19b

Confession and Absolution

So that we may experience the peace of sins forgiven, let us come before our Lord with humble hearts as we confess together:

Gracious Father, we all have sinned and fallen short of Your glory. By what we have done and by what we have failed to do, we have broken Your commands and have not accomplished Your plans for our lives.

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, You alone give us the redemption and the restoration, the absolution and the ability to follow Your Word. Through the work of Jesus, the Word made flesh, do for us what is impossible apart from You.

Forgive us, renew us, and lead us so that we may follow Your plan for our lives and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen. *A Time of Silence*

In the mercy of our gracious Father, Jesus came into this world, journeying from the crib to the cross, from the tomb and to His throne of glory in order to secure our forgiveness according to God's plan of salvation. Receive His assurance of pardon this day as we celebrate Jesus' coming to save us. As a called and ordained servant of Christ and by His authority, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Prayer

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come and help us by Your might, that we may experience the peace of knowing all things are possible with You; for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Hymn of Praise *Please Be Seated*

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

♪ O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.
~Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel Shall come to thee, O Israel!

♪ O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, Who ord' rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show, And teach us in her ways to go. ~Rejoice...

♪ O come, O come, Thou Lord of might, Who to Thy tribes on Sinai's height
In ancient times didst give the Law In cloud and majesty and awe. Rejoice...

♪ O come, Thou Branch of Jesse's tree, Free them from Satan's tyranny
That trust Thy mighty pow'r to save, And give them vict'ry o'er the grave. ~Rejoice...

♪ O come, Thou 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. ~Rejoice...

♪ O come, Thou Dayspring from on high, And cheer us by Thy drawing nigh;
Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, And death's dark shadows put to flight. ~Rejoice...

♪ O come, Desire of nations, bind In one the hearts of all mankind;
Bid Thou our sad divisions cease, And be Thyself our King of Peace. ~Rejoice....

Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 357-Text: Latin 12th cent.; Psalterium Cantionum Catholicarum, Koln 1710; tr. John Mason Neale 1818-66; Tune: French 15th cent.; Setting: C. Winfred Douglas 1867-1944; Public Domain; LSBHymnLicense.net #100012386.

Old Testament Reading

2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16

¹Now when the king lived in his house and the LORD had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies, ²the king said to Nathan the prophet, “See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.” ³And Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you.”

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, ⁵“Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? ⁶I 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 for my dwelling. ⁷In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, ‘Why have you not built me a house of cedar?’” ⁸Now, 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, that you should be prince over my people Israel. ⁹And 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. ¹⁰And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹from 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.

¹⁶And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

The Epistle

Romans 16:25–27

²⁵Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— ²⁷to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Gradual Hymn

“On Jordan’s Bank the Baptist’s Cry”

- ♪ On Jordan’s bank the Baptist’s cry Announces that the Lord is nigh;
Awake and hearken, for he brings Glad tidings of the King of kings!
- ♪ Then cleansed be ev’ry life from sin; Make straight the way for God within,
And let us all our hearts prepare For Christ to come and enter there.
- ♪ We hail Thee as our Savior, Lord, Our refuge and our great reward;
Without Thy grace we waste away Like flow’rs that wither and decay.
- ♪ Lay on the sick Thy healing hand And make the fallen strong to stand;
Show us the glory of Thy face Till beauty springs in ev’ry place.

Please Stand

- ♪ All praise, eternal Son, to Thee Whose advent sets Thy people free,
Whom with the Father we adore And Holy Spirit evermore.

Holy Gospel

Luke 1:26–38

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

Glory to You, O Lord.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He 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 father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

Apostles' Creed

Children's Message *Please Be Seated*

Handbell Choir

"A Christmas Medley"

The Hymn

"A Great and Mighty Wonder"

- ♪ A great and mighty wonder, A full and holy cure:
The virgin bears the infant With virgin honor pure!
~Proclaim the Savior's birth: "To God on high be glory And peace to all the earth!"
- ♪ The Word becomes incarnate And yet remains on high,
And cherubim sing anthems To shepherds from the sky. ~Proclaim...
- ♪ While thus they sing your Monarch, Those bright angelic bands,
Rejoice, O vales and mountains, And oceans, clap your hands. ~Proclaim...
- ♪ Since all He comes to ransom, By all be He adored,
The infant born in Bethl'em, The Savior and the Lord. ~Proclaim...
- ♪ All idols then shall perish And Satan's lying cease,
And Christ shall raise His scepter, Decreeing endless peace. Proclaim...

Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 383-Text: Germanus c.634-734, tr. John Mason Neale 1818-66
Tune: Alte Catholische Geistliche Kirchengeseng, Koln, 1599.; Public Domain; LSBHymnLicense.net #100012386.

Proclamation of the Word

“Reign”

Psalm 110:1–7

Offering and Musical Offering

Prayer of the Church *Please Stand*

Each petition is concluded with the following:

The LORD sends forth from Zion your mighty scepter.

Rule in the midst of your enemies.

Benediction

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

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

Numbers 6:24–26

Amen.

Recessional Hymn *Please Be Seated*

“It Came Upon the Midnight Clear”

- ♪ It came upon the midnight clear, That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth To touch their harps of gold:
“Peace on the earth, goodwill to all, From heav’n’s all-gracious king.”
The world in solemn stillness lay To hear the angels sing.
- ♪ Still through the cloven skies they come With peaceful wings unfurled,
And still their heav’nly music floats O’er all the weary world.
Above its sad and lowly plains They bend on hov’ring wing,
And ever o’er its babel sounds The blessed angels sing.
- ♪ All you, beneath your heavy load, By care and guilt bent low,
Who toil along a dreary way
With painful steps and slow: Look up, for golden is the hour, Come swiftly on the wing,
The Prince was born to bring you peace; Of Him the angels sing.
- ♪ For lo, the days have come to pass By prophets seen of old,
When down into the circling years Came Christ as was foretold.
His word of peace shall to the earth God’s ancient promise bring,
And all who take this gift will hear The song the angels sing.

Lutheran Service Book, Hymn 366-Text: Edmund H. Sears 1810-76;
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Postlude