



*The Evangelical Lutheran Church
Of the Good Shepherd
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A congregation of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod
of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

*"We are a caring family of God nourished by the Word, guided by the Holy Spirit to
share the love of Jesus Christ."*

Service of the Word – December 20, 2020 – 10:30 am.

“Fourth Sunday of Advent”

Please be considerate to those around you and observe silence during the prelude and service. This time is designed for personal meditation.

When you see the following symbol “+”, please stand.

PRE-SERVICE MUSIC

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE (Silent Meditation Time)

+ CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be God, Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit, whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever. **Amen.**

Together let us honestly and humbly confess that we have not lived as God desires.

Loving and forgiving God,

We confess that we are held captive by sin. In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray. We have not welcomed the stranger; we have not loved our neighbor; we have not been Christ to one another. Restore us, O God. Wake us up from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen

People of God, hear this glad news:

By God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free – free from all that holds you back and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, † comforted by Christ's peace, and accompanied with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

+ LIGHTING OF THE FOURTH ADVENT CANDLE

(THE VERSE WILL BE SUNG BEFORE THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE AND THEN AGAIN AFTER THE ADVENT PRAYER).

“O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL”

Verse 4

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel

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 nigh: 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,

Refrain
un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
teach us your will and guide our way. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
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.

Text: Psalteriolaw Curatorum Catholicorum, Köln, 1710; tr. composite
Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional, 15th cent.
Text sts. 2, 6, 7 © 1997 Augsburg Fortress.

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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. **Amen.**

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn



1 A - wake! A - wake, and greet the new morn, for
2 To us, to all in sor - row and fear, Em -
3 In dark - est night his com - ing shall be, when
4 Re - joice, re - joice, take heart in the night, though



an - gels her - ald its dawn - ing. Sing out your joy, for
man - u - el comes a - sing - ing, his hum - ble song is
all the world is de - spair - ing, as morn - ing light so
dark the win - ter and cheer - less, the ris - ing sun shall



soon he is born, be - hold! the Child of our long - ing.
qui - et and near, yet fills the earth with its ring - ing;
crown you with light, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing,
be strong and lov - ing and fear - less.



Come as a ba - by weak and poor, to bring all hearts to -
mu - sic to heal the bro - ken soul and hymns of lov - ing -
Then shall the mute break forth in song, the lame shall leap in
Love be our song and love our prayer and love our end - less



geth - er, he o - pens wide the heav'n - ly door and
kind - ness, the thun - der of his an - thems roll to
won - der, the weak be raised a - bove the strong, and
sto - ry; may God fill ev - 'ry day we share and



lives now in - side us for - ev - er.
shat - ter all ha - tred and blind - ness,
weap - ons be bro - ken a - sun - der.
bring us at last in - to glo - ry.

Text: Marty Haugen, b. 1950

Music: REJOICE, REJOICE, Marty Haugen

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+ APOSTOLIC 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.**

+PRAYER OF THE DAY

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. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the 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.” ³Nathan said to the king, “Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you.”

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live 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 and a tabernacle. ⁷Wherever 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?” 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 to 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 live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers 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. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Luke 1:46b-55

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord,

⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior,

⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your | lowly servant.**

From this day all generations will | call me blessed:

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

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

⁵¹You 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.**

⁵³You 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 prom- | ise of mercy,**

⁵⁵the promise made | to our forbears,
to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. **R**

SECOND READING: Romans 16:25-27

²⁵Now 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 ²⁶but 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—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-38

The holy gospel according to St. _____, the _____ chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him 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 ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The 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. ³⁶And 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.

³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸Then 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.

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ.

HOMILY

+ **HYMN OF THE DAY** *“IT CAME UPON A MIDNIGHT CLEAR”* **ELW 282**

It Came upon the Midnight Clear

1 It came up - on the mid - night clear, that glo - rious song of old,
2 Still through the clo - ven skies they come with peace - ful wings un - furled,
3 And you, be - neath life's crush - ing load, whose forms are bend - ing low,
4 For lo! The days are has - t'ning on, by proph - ets seen of old,

from an - gels bend - ing near the earth to touch their harps of gold:
and still their heav'n - ly mu - sic floats o'er all the wea - ry world.
who toil a - long the climb - ing way with pain - ful steps and slow;
when with the ev - er - cir - cling years shall come the time fore - told,

“Peace on the earth, good will to all, from heav'n's all - gra - cious king.”
A - bove its sad and low - ly plains they bend on hov - 'ring wing,
look now, for glad and gold - en hours come swift - ly on the wing;
when peace shall o - ver all the earth its an - cient splen - dors fling,

The world in sol - emn still - ness lay to hear the an - gels sing.
and ev - er o'er its ba - bel sounds the bless - ed an - gels sing.
oh, rest be - side the wea - ry road and hear the an - gels sing!
and all the world give back the song which now the an - gels sing.

**OFFERING
OFFERTORY**

+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.**

*Or, "he descended into hell," another translation of this text in widespread use.

+PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

A brief silence.

Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths (*Nearby churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues may be named*). Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

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.

Your mercy is great.

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.

Your mercy is great.

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.

Your mercy is great.

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 (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

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.

Your mercy is great.

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

Amen.

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.

+ BENEDICTION

The Creator of the stars bless your Advent waiting, the long-expected Savior fill you with love, the unexpected Spirit guide your journey, † now and forever. **Amen.**

+ SENDING HYMN

“THE FIRST NOEL”

ELW 300

The First Noel

1 The first No - el the an - gel did say was to
 2 They look - ed up and saw a star shin - ing
 3 And by the light of that same star three
 4 Thus star - drew near to the north - west, o'er
 5 Then en - tered in those wise men three, full

cer - tain poor shep - herds in fields as they lay; in fields where
 in the east be - yond them far; and to the
 wise men came from coun - try far; to seek for a
 Beth - le - hem it took its rest; and there it
 rev - erent - ly up - on their knee, and of - fered

they lay, keep - ing their sheep, on a cold win - ter's
 earth it gave their great light, and so the con -
 king was their in - tent, and to fol - low the
 did both stop and stay right o - ver the
 there in his pres - ence their gold, and

night that was so deep, No - el, No - el, No -
 tin - ued both day and night, it went, No - el, No - el, No -
 star where - ev - er it went, No - el, No - el, No -
 place where Je - sus lay, in - cense,
 myrrh, and frank - in - cense,

el, No - el! Ho - en is the King of Is - ra - el.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

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