

CREATED, SAVED AND GIFTED BY GOD,
WE SEEK, SERVE AND SHARE JESUS CHRIST.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
DECEMBER 24, 2023
10:30 A.M.

GOOD SHEPHERD LUTHERAN CHURCH
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KETTERING, OH 45429-4688
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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Introduction

God keeps the promise made to David, to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

How Can This Be?

Mary receives a visit from the angel Gabriel, who shares the news that she will give birth to a holy one who will be called the Son of God. Her answer is not surprising: "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" We also hear that Elizabeth has conceived a child in her old age. How can this be?

While not always asked in just this way, the sentiment resounds throughout scripture. Noah is told of a coming flood, Abram and Sarai are promised a child in their old age, Moses is called to lead the people of Israel out from slavery under Pharaoh, and prophets foretell an end to exile. Every time, people wonder, How can this be?

Today we join Mary and Elizabeth in anticipation of the promised coming of the Son of God who will reign forever, and of the prophet-son who will prepare Jesus' way. Mary's question is an Advent question. But as we head through this new church year, it is a question we can return to again and again. It is a Christmas question that could have come from the mouths of the shepherds. It is an Epiphany question brought to mind by the bright light of a star. It is an Easter question from the women at the tomb and the disciples on the road to Emmaus. It is a Pentecost question for those set afire with the Holy Spirit and for those who hear their proclamation about Jesus in their own languages.

If we could make all things new on our own, we would not need God. If we could conquer death and bring reconciliation to the world, we would not need grace. But since nothing is impossible with God, we encounter new life in ways we have not imagined and find ourselves asking, How can this be? In joyous fear and trembling, we too can echo Mary and the others who each in their own way said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord!"

GATHERING

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

PRELUDE

WELCOME

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pr. Jamie Vannoy

** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In remembrance of their baptism, all may make the sign of the cross.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, the parent who rouses us from slumber, the shepherd who gathers us on the holy mountain, the deliverer who sets us free. **Amen.**

Let us come before the living God in confession.

Silence is kept for reflection.

As we wait and watch for the promised day of salvation, **we open our hearts to you, O God. Search us and know us. Reveal all that we keep inside. To you, O God, we confess our sins, known and unknown. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us in your ways of justice and peace. Make us reflections of the radiant love of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Beloved children of the Most High, you are gathered before the righteous judge who has mercy on all. Splash exuberantly in the waters of baptism, where sin is washed away in the river of life. Dwell peacefully in the loving arms of the one who nurtures all creation. Go forth boldly in the assurance that your sins are forgiven in the name of the one who is coming and is already here, † Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

** GATHERING SONG

“Come, Emmanuel” | Chancel Choir

Response, sung during the verses:



Come, O come, Em - man - u - el.

Verse 1

Cantor: O Beloved, all-creating God.
 O Beloved, grieving for us God
 O Beloved, come to court us, God.
 O Beloved, wed to us, O God.

**All: Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.
Come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Refrain: All

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

Verse 2

Cantor: O Beloved, Word made flesh, we cry.
 O Beloved, dwell with us, we cry.
 O Beloved, full of grace, we cry.
 O Beloved, grace on grace, we cry.

**All: Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Refrain: All

Verse 3

Cantor: O Beloved, hear us night and day.
 O Beloved, seek us night and day
 O Beloved, hide us night and day.
 O Beloved, wake us night and day.

**All: Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.
 Come, O come, Emmanuel.**

Refrain: All

**** 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 hinders our faith, that eagerly we may receive your promises, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

**** LIGHTING THE ADVENT WREATH**

Praise to you, O God, who lives with us, sharing our flesh and bones. As Mary waited and Joseph dreamed, so we wait and dream for you. Bless us and let your face shine upon us, more radiant than these candles, and more dear than all else we seek. Restore us when we fail to refuse the evil and choose the good, and banish all our fears. We pray in the name of Emmanuel, your promised child and our Savior. **Amen.**

- Advent Week 1 - December 3 Verse 1
- Advent Week 2 - December 10 Verse 1, 2
- Advent Week 3 - December 17 Verse 1, 2, 3
- Advent Week 4 - December 24 Verse 1, 2, 3, 4**



1. Light one can-dle to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish
2. Light two can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish
3. Light three can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish
4. Light four can-dles to watch for Mes-si - ah: let the light ban ish



dark - ness. He shall bring sal - va - tion to Is - ra - el,
dark - ness. He shall feed the flock like a shep - herd,
dark - ness. Lift your heads, and lift high the gate - way
dark - ness. He is com - ing, tell the glad tid - ings.



God ful - fills the prom - ise.
gent - ly lead them home - ward.
for the King of glo - ry.
Let your lights be shin - ing!

Refrain



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the dark - ness.



Christ, be our light! Shine in your church gath - ered to - day.

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

WORD

*Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets,
Jesus interpreted to them the things about himself in all the scriptures.*

FIRST READING

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Instead of David building a house (temple) for God, God promises to establish David's house (dynasty) forever. Centuries later, after the Babylonian exile, no king sat on the throne. Even then, however, the people of Israel remembered this promise and continued to hope for a king, the messiah, God's anointed.

A reading from the book of Samuel.

Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the 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." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you." But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? I 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. Wherever 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?" Now 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; and 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. And 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, from 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. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

PSALM

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing. (Ps. 89:1)

Your love, O LORD, forever will I sing;
from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.

**For I am persuaded that your steadfast love is established forever;
you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.**

“I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn an oath to David my servant:

**‘I will establish your line forever,
and preserve your throne for all | generations.’”**

You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people:

“I have set the crown upon a warrior and have exalted one chosen out of the people.

**I have found David my servant;
with my holy oil have I anointed him.**

My hand will hold him fast
and my arm will make him strong.

**No enemy shall deceive him,
nor shall the wicked bring him down.**

I will crush his foes before him
and strike down those who hate him.

**My faithfulness and steadfast love are with him,
and he shall be victorious through my name.**

I will set his hand on the sea,
and his right hand on the rivers.

**He will say to me, ‘You are my father,
my God, and the rock of my salvation.**

SECOND READING

Romans 16:25-27

Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.

A reading from Paul’s letter to Romans.

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

Word of God, word of life. **Thanks be to God.**

**** GOSPEL READING****Luke 1:26-38**

In this annunciation, Luke makes clear that God comes with good news for ordinary people from little known places. This king will not be born to royalty in a palace, but to common folk in a stall. Here Luke highlights the role of the Spirit, a special emphasis in this gospel.

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.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

YOUTH MESSAGE**MESSAGE**

Pr. Jamie Vannoy

HYMN OF THE DAY

Awake! Awake, and Greet the New Morn (ELW 242)



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;
 qui - et and free, so warm and gen - tle and car - ing.
 crown you with light, 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.

**** 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 power of the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
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**

With hope and expectation, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all who await God's day of restoration.

A brief silence.

Each intercession concludes: Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Listen to these and all our prayers, O God of hosts, and restore us with your great and everlasting mercy. **Amen.**

MEAL

God feeds us with the presence of Jesus Christ.

OFFERTORY

Please place your offering in the offering plate in the main aisle.

We also ask that you complete an attendance card and place it in the offering plate.

Please gather around the communion rail with your worship bulletin.

** DIALOGUE

Lift up your heads; **we lift them up to God.**

Lift up your voices; **we lift them up to God.**

Lift up your hearts; **we lift them up to God.**

** THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

And so we gather at the table. We come from many different places in life. And as we come together around the table we discover that our differences are not something we just tolerate, but that our differences are indeed a blessing.

So come, children of God, just as you are. Wherever you are on this journey of life and faith, you are welcome here - here in this place, here in this community, here at this table. Come, children of God, come and remember.

Remember the stories that Jesus' friends tell:

Stories of bread broken and shared to feed a multitude; stories of gathering both enemy and friend together around a common table; stories of unlikely guests revealing the face of the sacred. On a night of both celebration and betrayal Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it; gave it to his disciples and said, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

Then Jesus took the cup, blessed it, and gave it to his disciples 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."

And so we pray: Lord, bless this bread and bless this fruit of the vine.

Bless all of us in our eating and drinking that our eyes might be open, and that we might recognize the risen Christ in our midst, indeed in one another.

** LORD'S PRAYER

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together.
Come, take your place at the table. **Amen.**

COMMUNION - *Receiving the Lord's Tangible Presence*

The body of Christ, given for you.
The blood of Christ, shed for you.

Each person may respond **Amen.**

Communion Statement ~ *If you believe in your heart that Jesus Christ is your Savior and Redeemer and would like to receive Holy Communion, then come forward to receive the elements. If you would just like to come forward and receive a blessing, then you may do that also.*

NOTE: We invite everyone to come forward for Holy Communion. If you have a gluten allergy, gluten-free wafers are available upon request when receiving Communion. Also, if you prefer not to take wine at Communion, apple juice is available upon request.

REFLECTION DURING COMMUNION

*As we prepare to receive the sacrament today, may we quietly take this time to center ourselves on Christ, and the amazing gifts of grace and forgiveness that we have been given. As we receive the body and the blood of our Lord, let us reflect upon His sacrifice. Finally, may we take this time to ask the Holy Spirit to enter our hearts, and then to work **in** us and **through** us in the coming days.*

**** COMMUNION HYMN**

Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence (ELW 490)



1 Let all mor - tal flesh keep si - lence, and with fear and trem - bling stand;
2 King of kings, yet born of Mar - y, as of old on earth he stood,
3 Rank on rank the host of heav - en spreads its van-guard on the way;
4 At his feet the six - winged ser - aph, cher - u - bim with sleep - less eye,



pon - der noth - ing earth - ly - mind - ed, for with bless - ing in his hand
Lord of lords in hu - man ves - ture, in the bod - y and the blood,
as the Light of light, de - scend - ing from the realms of end - less day,
veil their fac - es to the pres - ence, as with cease - less voice they cry:



Christ our God to earth de - scend - ing comes full hom - age to de - mand.
he will give to all the faith - ful his own self for heav'n - ly food.
comes, the pow'rs of hell to van - quish, as the dark - ness clears a - way.
"Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia! Al - le - lu - ia, Lord Most High!"

**** TABLE BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bless you and always keep you in God's grace.
Amen.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Generous God, in bread and cup you have revealed your glory for all people to see together.
Nourished by this meal, send us out to proclaim your good news of liberation and release,
brought to birth in Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

SENDING

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

** BLESSING

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit remain upon you now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING SONG

Savior of the Nations, Come (ELW 263)

1 Sav - ior of the na - tions, come; vir - gin's son, make here your home.
2 Not by hu - man flesh and blood, but the mys - tic Breath of God,
3 Won - drous birth—oh, won - drous child—from his throne, a vir - gin mild!
4 From God's heart the Sav - ior speeds, back to God his path - way leads;

Mar - vel now, O heav'n and earth: God has cho - sen such a birth.
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of wom - an, blos - som fresh.
Ver - y God, and Mar - y's son, ea - ger now his race to run!
out to van - quish death's com - mand, back to reign at God's right hand.

5 Now your manger, shining bright,
hallows night with newborn light.
Night cannot this light subdue;
let our faith shine ever new.

6 Praise we sing to Christ the Lord,
virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity
praise we sing eternally!

**** DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Keep awake.

**Created, saved and gifted by God, we seek, serve and share Jesus Christ.
Hallelujah, thanks be to God!**

“W + 2” = Worship Plus Two

**Make a commitment to not only worship each week
but also try to find a way to serve in the congregation
and seek out a way to serve our community.**

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING THE MISSION FIELD

Upcoming Commemorations

Stephen, Deacon and Martyr Tuesday, December 26, 2023

Stephen was a deacon and the first martyr of the church. He was one of those seven upon whom the apostles laid hands after they had been chosen to serve widows and others in need. Later, Stephen's preaching angered the temple authorities, and they ordered him to be put to death by stoning.

John, Apostle and Evangelist Wednesday, December 27, 2023

The son of Zebedee and brother of James, John was one of the twelve disciples and witness to the transfiguration. Tradition has named him also the writer of the Gospel of John, the three New Testament letters bearing his name, as well as Revelation.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs Thursday, December 28, 2023

This day commemorates the young children killed by Herod in Bethlehem in his jealous attempt to murder the baby Jesus, a sobering reminder of the evil that led Christ to be born for our salvation.

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