

TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 19, 9am



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."

Today's service is being livestreamed. If you do not wish to appear on camera, please stay in the rear half of the sanctuary, and alert an usher to receive communion at your seat. Please also be mindful that the microphone near the organ is on during the music, including during the distribution of communion, and may pick up nearby conversations.

Gathering

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, who alone does wonders,
who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things. **Amen.**
Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

God for whom we wait,
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.

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. **Amen.**

***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**

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.**

Word

FIRST READING

Micah 5:2-5a

The book of Micah was written when Jerusalem was surrounded by an invading army. While the situation was bleak, Micah reminds the people of the promise made to David (whose home town was Bethlehem): his dynasty would not fail, and God would provide a righteous king and peace.

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; ^{5a}and he shall be the one of peace.

The word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

The Advent Wreath helps us mark the time until Christmas Eve. Each week, an additional candle is lit. We sing Wait for the Lord one time, then after the prayer is read, we sing the verse a second time as the candles are lit.

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Advent 4

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.**

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:5-10

One of the themes of Hebrews is that Jesus has fulfilled and replaced Israel's Temple and sacrificial system as the meeting-place of God and humans. The "body you have prepared for me" is an appropriate reference to the Gospel reading's description of Christ's coming in the flesh.

⁵Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, "Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; ⁶in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. ⁷Then I said, 'See, God, I have come to do your will, O God' (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)." ⁸When 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), ⁹then he added, "See, I have come to do your will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. ¹⁰And 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.**

***GOSPEL READING**

Luke 1:39-55

While she and her husband are aged, Elizabeth has miraculously become pregnant with the child who will become John the Baptist. In the meantime, in Nazareth, her cousin Mary has received a visit from the angel Gabriel, who offers her the opportunity to become the mother of Jesus. Mary travels to Jerusalem to meet Elizabeth.

The holy gospel according to Luke. **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."

⁴⁶And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; ⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. ⁵⁰His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. ⁵¹He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the

thoughts of their hearts. ⁵²He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; ⁵³he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. ⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”

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

SERMON

*HYMN OF THE DAY

Savior of the Nations, Come

ELW 263

- 1 Savior of the nations, come;
virgin's son, make here your home.
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth:
God has chosen such a birth.
- 2 Not by human flesh and blood,
but the mystic Breath of God,
was the Word of God made flesh,
fruit of woman, blossom fresh.
- 3 Wondrous birth—oh, wondrous child—
from his throne, a virgin mild!
Very God, and Mary's son,
eager now his race to run!
- 4 From God's heart the Savior speeds,
back to God his pathway leads;
out to vanquish death's command,
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!

***NICENE CREED**

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

*The congregation is invited to respond to each petition with **hear our prayer.***

MUSICAL OFFERING

During worship, we have an opportunity to share some of what God has first given us – for mission and ministry in this place, and for the care of our neighbors near and far. For

the time being, we are not passing the offering plates during worship. Plates are available as you enter or exit worship, on the table in the rear of the sanctuary or in Pfeifer Chapel/the area outside the office.

***OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray: God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace. **Amen.**

Meal

***DIALOGUE**

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.

***THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

Holy One, the beginning and the end, the giver of life...Let us proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

With this bread and cup we remember your Word dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. We remember our new birth in his death and resurrection. We look with hope for his coming. **Come, Lord Jesus.**

Holy God, we long for your Spirit. Come among us. Bless this meal. May your Word take flesh in us. Awaken your people. Fill us with your light. Bring the gift of peace on earth. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

All praise and glory are yours, Holy One of Israel, Word of God incarnate, Power of the Most High, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

***LORD'S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, we 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.**

COMMUNION

This meal of forgiveness and grace is for all the baptized. Communion will be served at the base of the chancel steps in a continuous line. Beginning with the pulpit side, come forward at the usher's direction, take an empty glass from the gold tray, receive the bread and wine, and return to your seat by the side aisle. Grape juice and wafers are available by request. Please alert an usher if you would like to receive communion at your seat.

***BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

***PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Let us pray: Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. **Amen.**

Sending

***BLESSING**

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. **Amen.**

***HYMN**

All Earth is Hopeful

WOV 629 / ELW 266

- 1 All earth is hopeful, the Savior comes at last!
Furrows lie open for God's creative task:
this, the labor of people who struggle to see
how God's truth and justice set ev'rybody free.

- 2 People of Israel, you heard the prophet tell:
"A virgin mother will bear Emmanuel";
she conceived him, "God with us,"
our brother, whose birth
restores hope and courage to children of this earth.

- 3 Mountains and valleys will have to be prepared;
new highways opened, new protocols declared.
Almost here! God is nearing, in beauty and grace!
All clear ev'ry gateway, in haste, come out in haste!
- 4 We first saw Jesus a baby in a crib.
This same Lord Jesus today has come to live
in our world; he is present, in neighbors we see
our Jesus is with us, and ever sets us free.

Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is near.

Thanks be to God.

Advent Concert

Join us this afternoon 4pm for an Advent Concert, featuring Ellen Dell and Albert Dell on piano and organ.

Christmas Eve Worship

Christmas Eve worship will be held on Friday, December 24 at 7pm. All of our usual safety precautions for worship will remain in place.

Altar Flowers

Today's altar flowers are given by Donna Welsh, in memory of Loved Ones.

Worship Leaders

Presiding minister
Assisting minister & reader
Advent Wreath
Musician
Livestream operator

Pastor Kerri Clark
Ginny Beecher
The Yuhouse Family
John Ivey
Chandler Daugherty