

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 20, 2020 - 10:00 AM

Living Springs Lutheran Church

4224 Hard Scrabble Road, Columbia, SC 29223
www.livingspringscolumbia.org



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."



Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen... since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses... let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus... (Hebrews 11:1-3, 12:1-2)

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

We stand as able

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

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

People: Amen.

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

(Silence for reflection - we kneel as able)

Pastor: Loving and forgiving God,

People: **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 and turn us from our sin. Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen.**

Pastor: 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.

People: Amen.

We focus on the cross as it enters the sanctuary.

GATHERING SONG

"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



Is - ra - el, that mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here
far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;



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



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

*O Come, O Come, Emmanuel; Text: Psalterium Canticum Catholicarum; Music: VENI, EMMANUEL, French processional
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APOSTOLIC GREETING AND PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: 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.

People: **Amen.**

+ ADVENT CANDLE #4 – FORWARD IN PEACE +

All are invited to gather around the Advent Wreath in your home, whatever form it may be.

Pastor: As people called to prepare the way of the Lord in this world, we celebrate and live the truth that the
Holy Spirit moves us forward in faith, God's love is never-ending, and Christ's light shines in our lives for
others.

People: **Come, Lord Jesus! In this Advent Season, move us Forward in Peace!**

Pastor: Let us pray:

People: **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.**

As the four Advent candles are lit in the sanctuary and in our homes, we sing:

Light four candles to watch for Messiah:

let the light banish darkness.

He is coming, tell the glad tidings.

Let your lights be shining!

Pastor: The Spirit and the Church cry out: **People: Come, Lord Jesus!**

Pastor: All who await Christ's appearance pray: **People: Come, Lord Jesus!**

Pastor: The whole creation pleads: **People: Come, Lord Jesus!**

We are seated

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

Rev. Eric Fink

Children, youth, and young at heart are invited for a special message. You may collect your coins or dollars at home for the bucket collection and bring them to in-person worship, to the Parking Lot Communion Distributions, or drop them off at the church office. Current collection is for the Disaster Response Fund.

For-ward in faith! (clap-clap-clap)

For-ward in faith! (clap-clap-clap)

With our eyes on Jesus

WE'RE RUNNIN' THE RACE!

MUSIC FOR REFLECTION

"Of the Father's Love Begotten"

*Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the source, the ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore.*

*Oh, that birth forever blessed,
when the virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race,
and the babe, the world's redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore.*

FIRST READING

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.

Lector: A reading from 2 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. (2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16)

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

People: Thanks be to God.

PSALM: LUKE 1:46B-55

Lector: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

People: for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed:

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

People: You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.

Lector: You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,

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

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

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

Lector: the promise made to our forbears,

People: to Abraham and his children forever.

SECOND READING

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.

Lector: A reading from Romans.

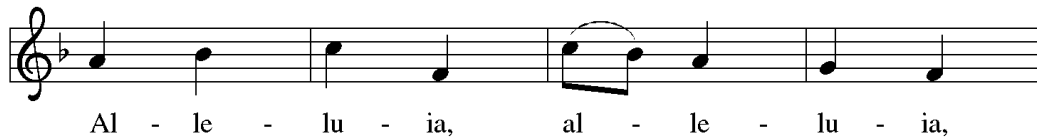
Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen. (Romans 16:25-27)

Lector: Word of God, Word of life.

People: Thanks be to God.

We stand for the reading of the Gospel

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Repeat alleluia



GOSPEL LESSON

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to Luke.

People: 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. (Luke 1:26-38)

Pastor: The Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to you, O Christ.

We are seated

MESSAGE

Rev. Eric Fink



HYMN OF THE DAY

"Canticle of the Turning"

1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .

God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the

won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
depths of the past to the end of the age to be.

You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to

weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the

name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.

Refrain

My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.

Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

Canticle of the Turning; Text: Rory Cooney, based on the Magnificat; Music: STAR OF COUNTY DOWN, Irish traditional Text © 1990 GIA Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE, License #A-727349. All rights reserved.

We stand as able
NICENE CREED

People: 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, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary and became truly human. 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, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who 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

Assist: God of power and might, tear open the heavens and come quickly to this weary world. Hear our prayers for everyone in need.

+ A brief silence +

Assist: Gracious God, all generations call you blessed. In this holy season we pray for our neighbors of other denominations and faiths. Inspire the faith of their people. Cultivate understanding among us and strengthen us in love and service to our community. Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: 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.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: 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.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: 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.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: 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 *Elizabeth Maddox; Dolores Harmon; Rhea Pye; Wendy McKenzie; Gregory Collins; Karl Schmidt; Henrietta Kaiser; Ed Brennan; Margaret Blank; Charles Kauffman; Bunie Talbert; Christopher Girardeau; Anne McDonell; Bob Holmstrom; Pam Deselem; Kelly Koziol; Lila Bell; Wilma Bracey; Charles Levitt; Marie Leicht; Amy; Courtney; and those we name before you now, either silently or aloud...* Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

Assist: 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.

People: Your mercy is great.

Pastor: O God, as we face ongoing uncertainties around coronavirus, we continue to pray for ... Hear us, O God.

People: Your mercy is great.

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

People: Amen.

SHARING OF PEACE

Pastor: The peace of Christ be with you always.

People: And also with you.

We greet one another, with the words that the risen Jesus spoke to his disciples: "Peace be with you."

OFFERINGS ARE GIVEN

Offering may be dropped off at the office during the week or sent through the mail. For those who wish to give electronically, you may use the secure Givelify app.

Google Play



App Store



OFFERING PRAYER

Pastor: Let us pray.

People: Generous God, you have created all that is, and you provide for us in every season. Bless all that we offer, that through these gifts the world will receive your blessing. In the name of Jesus, Emmanuel, we pray. Amen.

GREAT THANKSGIVING AND WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Pastor: Holy, mighty, and merciful Lord, heaven and earth are full of your glory. In great love you sent to us Jesus, your Son, who reached out to heal the sick and suffering, who preached good news to the poor, and who, on the cross, opened his arms to all.

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.

Remembering therefore his death, resurrection, and ascension, we await his coming in glory. Pour out your Spirit of love, O Lord, and unite the wills of all who share this heavenly food, the body and blood of Jesus Christ, our Lord; to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, now and forever.

People: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

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

People: 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

Pastor: Even as we watch and wait, Christ is here. Come, eat and drink.

People: Thanks be to God.

+ THE ELEMENTS ARE SYMBOLICALLY CARRIED OUT OF THE CHANCEL +

DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION

*THIS WEEK: Our worship will continue with **distribution of Holy Communion on Sunday from 11:15 - 12:00 pm** in the Parking Lot. We will utilize sanitary-packaged individual communion elements, which have been consecrated during the worship service. There will be an "usher" in the parking lot to direct vehicles to the distribution altar, and the pastor will be there, wearing mask and gloves (he will change gloves after each vehicle). Everyone please remain in your vehicle throughout the process. Once it's your turn, drive up and put your vehicle in park. The pastor will come to your car window(s) to distribute Holy Communion. AFTER you have consumed the elements, the Pastor will offer a blessing – and then you can pull away. While in the parking lot, everyone should be in prayerful worship-mode, as you represent God's people gathered to continue the worship experience from the morning service. Think of this in the same way you would think about "coming up to the communion rail for distribution" in your vehicle during an ongoing worship service.*

COMMUNION REFLECTION

"Here I Am, Lord"



1 "I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard my peo - ple cry.
2 "I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my peo - ple's pain.



All who dwell in dark and sin my hand will save.
I have wept for love of them. They turn a - way.



I, who made the stars of night, I will make their dark-ness bright.
I will break their hearts of stone, give them hearts for love a - lone.



Who will bear my light to them? Whom shall I send?"
I will speak my word to them. Whom shall I send?"



Refrain

Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord? I have heard you



call-ing in the night. I will go, Lord, if you



lead me. I will hold your peo - ple in my heart.

*Here I Am, Lord; Text: Daniel L. Schutte; Music: HERE I AM, LORD, Daniel L. Schutte
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The elements are symbolically carried back to the altar.

POST COMMUNION BLESSING AND BENEDICTION

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

People: Amen

Pastor: 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.

People: Amen



SENDING SONG

"Joy to the World"



1 Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth re -
2 Joy to the earth, the Sav - ior reigns! Let all their
4 He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the



ceive her king; let ev - 'ry heart pre - pare him
songs em - ploy, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and
na - tions prove the glo - ries of his righ - teous -



room and heav'n and na - ture sing, and heav'n and na - ture
plains re - peat the sound - ing joy, re - peat the sound - ing
ness and won - ders of his love, and won - ders of his



sing, and heav'n, and heav'n and na - ture sing.
joy, re - peat, re - peat the sound - ing joy.
love, and won - ders, won - ders of his love.

Joy to the World; Text: Isaac Watts; Music: ANTIOCH, English melody, arr. Lowell Mason.

DISMISSAL

Assist: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

✠ COMMEMORATIONS FOR TODAY ✠

Katharina von Bora Luther, renewer of the church, died 1552

Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katie eventually took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin.

**Forward in Hope! Forward in Love!
Forward in Peace! Forward in Joy!**



God's Love Shared Through You ...



One Life Deeper in 2020!

Our prayerful goal is that God will work in every LS disciple to have an impact of faith and hope in the life of one person during 2020. **What shoes might they be wearing?** It may be someone you know already—at work, at home, at school, in the neighborhood, in your daily life. It may be a stranger whom God will bring to you this year. How will the Spirit work through you to bring someone deeper in 2020? **Deeper in Christ, Deeper in Grace, Deeper in Love!**

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS: inviting, involving, mentoring, discipling relationships 1 person at a time!

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS: for the work of God's kingdom in our community and world!

SHARING GOD'S LOVE: with those who are hurting, alone, marginalized, or feeling unloved!

SHARING GOD'S STORIES: so we do not remain silent about God's ongoing work in the world!

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT:

Called into the Future

In Luke's first words about Mary, she sounds unflappable. In most scripture stories, a visit from an angel provokes terror, but when the angel Gabriel appears to Mary, she isn't scared. She's curious. Even when the angel delivers the astonishing news that she will become pregnant with the Son of the Most High God whose glorious kingdom will never end, her response is a simple question: "How can this be?" (Luke 1:34).

The angel reminds her that God's powerful Spirit works in mysterious ways. Anything is possible with God! That's all the explanation Mary needs. "Here I am," she declares. She is God's servant, and she is up for the task. What courage it must have taken to say yes! Parenthood is demanding to begin with. Giving birth to the King of kings must have come with its own unique set of challenges. This moment will change the course of her life.

Mary found strength in the knowledge that she was not alone. The first thing the angel said to her was: "The Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28). Mary knew that she was held in God's presence even before she understood what lay ahead of her. She was "favored" by God, seen and known and loved. Whatever future she was called into, she could trust the one who led her. That faith is the foundation for Mary's "Yes."

Like Mary, we, too, are servants of the Most High God, who calls us into "ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown" (Evangelical Lutheran Worship, pp. 304, 317). Even when we don't feel quite as composed as Mary, we can trust in the same promise she did: we are loved by the God who makes impossible things possible and goes with us into whatever our futures hold.

December Books of the Month: Joel-Zechariah-Malachi