

Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 24, 2023
10:00 a.m.



Prelude *Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme* ~ J.S. Bach

Welcome and Announcements

Lighting the Advent Wreath

I knew joy, but when I heard the laugh of my child,
Suddenly, joy was overflowing.

I knew love, but when I held my beloved's hand
Suddenly, love was overflowing.

I knew God, but when you showed me grace, when you forgave me, when you loved me,
when you encouraged me,
Suddenly, God was overflowing.

So, let us worship Holy God together
Let us remember that God is here and we are never alone.

This is community.

This is the body of Christ.

All are welcome here in love.

As we draw near to Christmas day, we light the candle of love. May we be filled with God's love so that it flows into this community and the world around us.



He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; he



came down that we may have love; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er more.



He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light; he



came down that we may have light; hal-le - lu - jah for-ev - er more.

May this light burn bright as a reminder that God is here and God is love.

We are not alone. Thanks be to God for a love like that. Amen.

Gathering Hymn *People, Look East ~ ELW 248*

Greeting and Prayer of the Day

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

Holy God, you have always found a way to show up in our midst, particularly on our fearful or lonely days. **So today as we worship, we ask that you would move again. Stir in us. Speak to us. Fill us with the Holy Spirit. And if we are not able to hear your Word clearly, give us Elizabeths who will point out your presence in delight and joy. Here and now, Creator God, we are listening. Amen.**

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.

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 for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever.

Word of God, word of life
Thanks be to God

Psalm Psalm 89: 1-4, 19-26

The cantor will sing the first two verses, and the congregation will sing the remaining verses in unison.



Your love, O LORD, forever | will I sing;
from age to age my mouth will pro- | claim your faithfulness.
For I am persuaded that your steadfast love is estab- | lished 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 Da- | vid 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 Da- | vid my servant;
with my holy oil have I a- | nointed him.

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

Gospel Reading Luke 1:26-45

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 image shows a musical score for a hymn. It consists of four staves of music in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are: 'Come thou long ex - pect - ed Je - sus, born to set thy peo - ple free;'. The second staff starts with a '5' above the first measure. The lyrics are: 'from our fears and sins re - lease us; let us find our rest in thee.'. The third staff starts with a '9' above the first measure. The lyrics are: 'Is - rael's strength and con - so - la - tion, hope of all the earth thou art,'. The fourth staff starts with a '13' above the first measure. The lyrics are: 'dear de - sire of ev - 'ry na - tion, joy of ev - 'ry long - ing heart.'.

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, favoured 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 favour 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 for ever, 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.

In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and

exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leapt for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.

The gospel of the Lord
Praise to you, O Christ

Sermon

Hymn of the Day *Love Has Come ~ ELW 292*

Affirmation of Faith

**We believe that this world is hard — harder than it has to be.
When the world falls apart around us,
We believe in listening for the angels that say, “Do not be afraid,”
And in seeking out the Elizabeths in our lives—
Those who laugh with joy at our arrival,
And offer encouragement and care.
We believe that healthy relationships can offer healing,
Through the laughter of cousins,
The joy shared between siblings,
And the home found in partnership.**

**Therefore, we believe in church families,
In chosen families,
And in the love that extends beyond family.
We believe in friendships, in neighbors,
And in leaning on each other when the going gets tough.**

**We believe in the Triune God—
Lover, Beloved, and Love itself—
Inherently relational, always connected, and never alone.**

**We believe that that same belovedness exists for us.
We believe that we are loved and claimed,
Never alone.**

Thanks be to God for a love like that.

Prayers

*Each portion of the prayers concludes, Merciful God,
and you may respond, **receive our prayer***

Peace

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

The people may greet one another with a sign of Christ's peace, and may say, "Peace be with you," or similar words. Some may wish to shake hands, bump elbows, or simply nod to one another with the greeting; please be sensitive to varying preferences as we share the peace of Christ in preparation for Holy Communion.

Musical Offering *Abide with Us, Emmanuel ~ Marty Haugen*

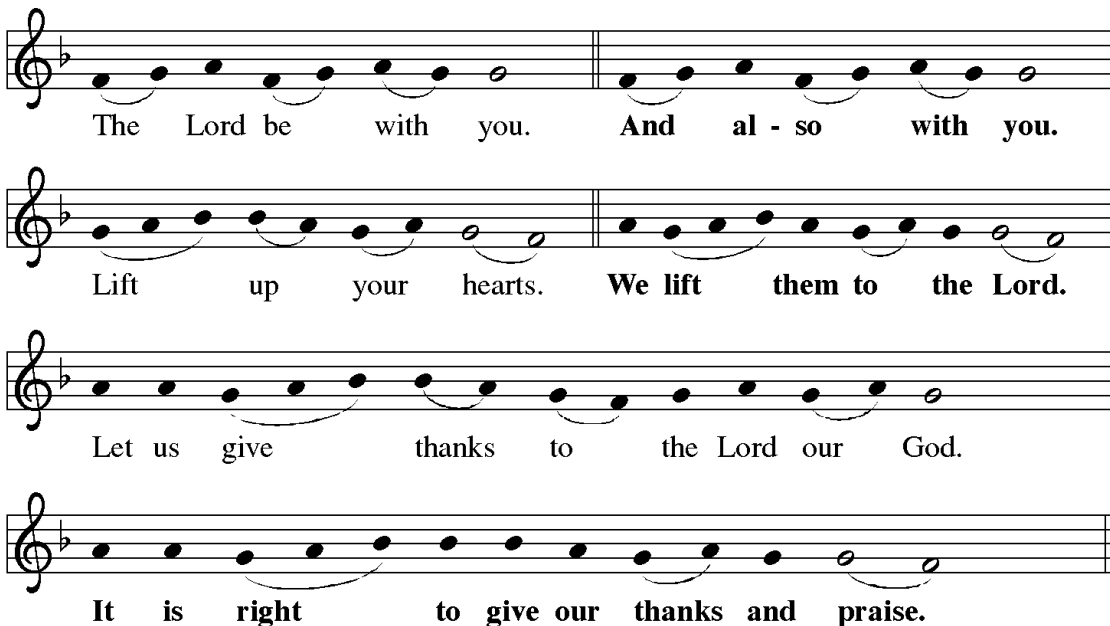
We are not passing the offering plate; instead, the plate is sitting near the door to the worship space to receive financial gifts which support our ministry. You can also give using the Vanco App. on your digital device.

Offering Hymn *Come Now, O Prince of Peace ~ ELW 247 (vs. 1,2)*

Offering Prayer

God our provider, **by your merciful hand abundance springs up from the earth. Receive and bless these gifts of your own bounty. Let them be a sign of your steadfast love and faithfulness for all people, through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.**

Holy Communion



The Lord be with you. And al - so 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.

It is indeed right . . . Join their unending hymn:



My soul pro-claims Your great-ness, Lord; I sing my Sav-ior's praise!



You looked up - on my low - li - ness, and I am full of grace.



Now ev - 'ry land and ev - 'ry age this bless - ing shall pro - claim:



great won-ders you have done for me, and ho - ly is Your name.

Holy one ...

We look with hope for his coming.

Come, Lord Jesus.

Holy God, we long for your Spirit...

Bring the gift of peace on earth.

Come, Holy Spirit.

All praise and glory are yours, O God, now and forever

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.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil

for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,

forever and ever. Amen.

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

Communion Hymn *Comfort, Comfort Now My People ~ ELW 256*

Blessing after Communion

Prayer after Communion

Faithful God, you come to us in the broken bread and the cup we share. As we wait for the day when all your promises will be fulfilled, sustain us and strengthen us by this holy mystery; in Jesus' name. Amen.

Benediction

The God of peace bless you,
 the love of Christ sustain you in hope,
 and the inspiration of the Spirit remain upon you
 now and forever

Amen

Sending Hymn *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling ~ ELW 631*

Dismissal

Wait for the Lord in faith and hope

Thanks be to God

Postlude *Trio Sonata in E-flat: III. Allegro ~ J.S. Bach*

