

Growing Together through Faith, Love, and Fellowship.

4th Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

The asterisk () indicates to please rise in body or spirit.*

Silent Prayer of Preparation

God, our light and our salvation, you bring hope and peace to the lowly and oppressed. Let us see the world through your eyes, that we may love the widow and orphan, that we may work for justice, that our lives may bear witness to the good news of the kingdom at hand and our vocation serve to draw people to your salvation. Through your Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray. Amen.

Gathering Music

The Gathering of God's People

Prelude - a time to prayerfully prepare oneself for worship

"Of the Father's Love Begotten"

arr. Gilbert M. Martin

"The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

arr. Anna Laura Page

Welcome and Announcements

Introit

"Christ Is Coming"

William Owen, 1852

Christ is coming! let creation from its groans and travail cease;

Let the glorious proclamation hope restore and faith increase:

Christ is coming. Come, thou blessed Prince of Peace!

Lighting of the Advent Candles

Steve and Cherie Watters

Reader 1: We light the first candle as a symbol of the hope we have in the promise of the Lord's coming.

Reader 2: We light the second candle as the symbol of peace for the purity of heart only God can bring.

Reader 3: We light the third candle as a symbol of the joy to be found in

your kingdom on earth.

Reader 4: We light the fourth candle as a symbol of God's love for us and our love for one another.

(lighting of the candles)

Reader 5: For the Lord rejoices over us with gladness and renews us in his love. He exults over us with singing and turns our shame to praise.

People: Come, Lord Jesus, come!

***Hymn** "My Soul Gives Glory to My God" (verses 1-4) #99

The Confession of Sin and Assurance of Pardon

***Call to Confession**

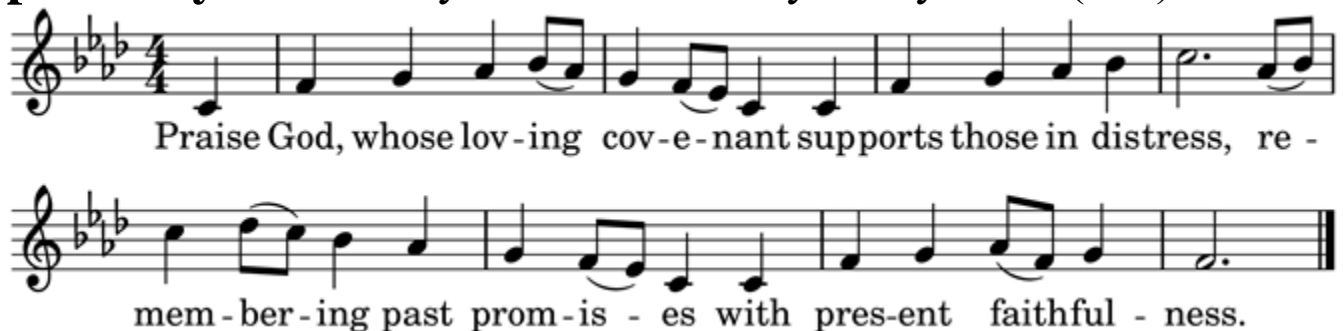
***Prayer of Confession** *(in unison)*

God our Savior, we ask for your mercy. Though we have heard Mary's song, we still seek security in pride and power and possessions. Though we know your story, we resist the costs of following you. We pass by those considered lowly in this world. We turn away from hungry people who still wait to be filled. Forgive us, we pray. Help us to work for the justice you intend. Make us messengers of the peace you bring. As we wait for you, turn our apathy into acts of love and service. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Emmanuel. Amen.

(Silent prayer of confession.)

***Assurance of Pardon**

***Response Hymn** "My Soul Gives Glory to My God" (v. 5) #99



Praise God, whose lov-ing cov-e-nant supports those in distress, re -
mem-ber-ing past prom-is - es with pres-ent faithful - ness.

Ministry of the Word

Prayer for Illumination

Children's Sermon

First Scripture Reading

Psalm 146:5-10

Choir Anthem "Magnificat"

John Lloyd, b.1938

My soul doth magnify the Lord,
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
For he hath regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For he that is mighty has magnified me, and holy is his name;
And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm.
He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat
And hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things.
And the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel
As he promised to our forefathers, Abraham, and his seed forever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost;
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
World without end. Amen.

Second Scripture Reading

Luke 1:46b-55

Pastor: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

Sermon

Dr. Mark A. Johnson

The Response to the Word

***Affirmation of Faith**

The Confession of Belhar (10.7)

We believe that God has revealed God's self as the one who wishes to bring about justice and true peace among people;

We believe that God, in a world full of injustice and enmity, is in a special way the God of the destitute, the poor and the wronged;

We believe that God calls the church to follow God in this; for God brings justice to the oppressed and gives bread to the hungry;

We believe that God supports the downtrodden, protects the stranger, helps orphans and widows and blocks the path of the ungodly;

We believe that the church as the possession of God must stand where the Lord stands, namely against injustice and with the wronged;

We believe that in following Christ the church must witness against all the powerful and privileged who selfishly seek their own interests and thus control and harm others.

***Hymn**

“My Soul Cries Out with a Joyful Shout”

#100

Prayers of the People and the Lord’s Prayer

Leader: Remember your mercy, O Lord, and help us,

People: according to the promise of your steadfast love.

Leader: We pray for ...

Leader: Let all generations see your blessing,

People: for your name is holy and your mercy is great.

Leader: We pray for ...

Leader: Show the strength of your hand,

People: and lift the burdens of the poor.

Leader: We pray for ...

Leader: Work wonders for the humble,

People: and scatter the plans of the proud.

Leader: We pray for ...

Leader: Look with favor on the lowly,

People: and cast down tyrants from their thrones.

Leader: We pray for ...

Leader: Fill the hungry with good things,

People: and empty and the hands of the greedy.

Leader: We pray for ...

Leader: Lastly, we pray for ...

People: Amen.

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 debts as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Invitation to Offering

***Response**

“Savior of the Nations, Come” (v. 4)

#102

Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin's son, in - carnate Word!
To the ho - ly Trin - i - ty praise we sing e - ter - nal - ly.

Text: Attr. Ambrose of Milan, 4th cent.; German para. Martin Luther, 1523;
English trans. stanza 4, *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, 2006 © 2006 Augsburg Fortress
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***Prayer of Dedication**

The Sending of God's People

***Closing Hymn**

“Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming”

#129

***Charge and Blessing**

***Congregational Response “Advent Song”**

We're waiting for the day, we're waiting for the day, we're waiting for the
day for the ba-by to be born. Jesus is that ba-by boy, born on Christmas
Day. Je-sus is that ba-by boy born on Christmas Day. Yea!

Words and Music: Thomas & Joyce Lloyd

***Postlude**

“From Heaven Above”

arr. Wilbur Held

Pastors: Dr. Mark A. Johnson
Rev. Désirée M. Youngblood

Liturgist: Joyce Lloyd

Music Director: Thomas Lloyd

Organist: Carol Welk

Trumpet Soloist: Sheila Winland

Joyce Lloyd and her husband, Tom, moved from Pittsburgh, PA, to London, OH, in 1974. They had just graduated from college and were newlyweds. Joyce and Tom were anxious to start their new life together and to start new jobs. London turned out to be a very welcoming town. They were able to find new friends and a new church family.

Joyce has a twin sister, an older sister, and an older brother, who live across the US, giving them a chance to visit some beautiful cities. Joyce is fortunate to have her brother-in-law, John, and sister-in-law, Margaret, living nearby.

Retirement is the best job Joyce has ever had, allowing her to enjoy more time with Tom, their dog, Sasha, and their cat, Meow Mix. Even in retirement there never seems to be enough time to be involved in as many volunteer projects as she would like. Joyce enjoys her time with friends, and being outside walking the dog or working in the yard. Goal in life: “Make me an instrument of your peace.”