



St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church
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December 23, 2018
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Cradle and cross are inextricably connected on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Between a lovely tribute to the little town of Bethlehem and the blessed virgin 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 the holy communion—with high delight—"we proclaim the Lord's death."

Greeting

P: From the one who was, who is and who is to come:

Grace and peace be with you all.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: 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 with joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: BLESSED BE THE HOLY TRINITY, ONE GOD,
WHO FORGIVES ALL OUR SIN,
AND WHOSE MERCY ENDURES FOREVER.
AMEN.

**C: THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL RISE
WITH SHINING BEAMS OF HEALING.**

P: LET US GATHER UNDER THE WINGS
OF GOD'S MERCY.

Silence for Reflection:

P: GRACIOUS GOD

**C: WE ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE ARE SINNERS
AND WE CONFESS OUR SINS -- THOSE KNOWN
TO US THAT BURDEN OUR HEARTS AND THOSE
UNKNOWN TO US BUT SEEN BY YOU.
WE KNOW THAT BEFORE YOU NOTHING REMAINS
HIDDEN, AND IN YOU EVERYTHING IS REVEALED.
FREE US FROM THE SLAVERY OF SIN; AND LIBERATE
US FROM THE BONDAGE OF GUILT; WORK IN US THAT
WHICH IS WELL PLEASING IN YOUR SIGHT; FOR THE
SAKE OF JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.**

P: FROM THE HOUSE OF DAVID, GOD RAISED UP A
MIGHTY SAVIOR.

**C: BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, WHO COMES
TO SET US FREE.**

P: REMEMBERING THE COVENANT, GOD DELIVERED
US FROM OUR ENEMIES.

**C: BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, WHO COMES
TO SET US FREE.**

P: BEFORE GOD WE ARE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS, FREE
TO WORSHIP WITHOUT FEAR.

**C: BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL, WHO COMES
TO SET US FREE.**

P: WITH A HEART FULL OF MERCY AND COMPASSION, GOD
SAVES US AND FORGIVES ALL OUR SINS. CHRIST, THE
DAWN
FROM ON HIGH, SHINES UPON US, AND BY THE LIGHT OF
THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES OUR FEET INTO THE WAY OF
PEACE.
AMEN.

We turn to the Word

A reading from Micah 5:2-5a

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.

Psalm 80:1-7

¹ Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.
² **In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**
³ Restore us, O God;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

**⁴O LORD God of hosts,
how long will your anger fume when your people pray?**

⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

**⁶You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
let your face shine upon us, and we shall be saved.

A Reading from Hebrews 10:5-10

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 holy gospel according to Luke 1:39-55

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.

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**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:

Precious Lord, hear our prayer.

Sharing of the Peace

L: The peace of Christ be with you always.

C: And also with you.

We Turn Toward the World

Offering:

We join in God mission to serve the world.

*Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to our Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ.
You comforted your people with the promise of the Redeemer,
through whom you will also make all things new
in the day when he comes to judge the world in righteousness.
And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

“Holy, Holy, Holy”

*Words of Institution

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.

The 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; 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.**

Distribution

Everyone who believes in Jesus is welcome at Christ's table.

Prayer after Communion

God for whom we wait

***You come to us in the broken bread and cup we share.
Make us ready to always welcome Christ into our hearts,
And send us forth to be your people in the world,
Announcing your coming among us in Jesus Christ our
Lord.
Amen***

Blessing:

L: Rejoice that Jesus is Emmanuel,
God with us.
When he comes again in glory,
may he bring you everlasting life.
Almighty God, Father, Son, and
Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

C: Amen

