



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**

<sup>2</sup>But 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.  
<sup>3</sup>Therefore 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.  
<sup>4</sup>And 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;  
<sup>5a</sup>and he shall be the one of peace.

### **Psalm 80:1-7**

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

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

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

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

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

### A Reading from Hebrews 10:5-10

<sup>5</sup>Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,  
“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body you have prepared for me;

<sup>6</sup>in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup>Then I said, ‘See, God, I have come to do your will, O God’  
(in the scroll of the book it is written of me).”

<sup>8</sup>When 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), <sup>9</sup>then he added, “See, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup>And 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.

<sup>39</sup>In those days Mary set out and went with haste to a Judean town in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the child leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit <sup>42</sup>and exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. <sup>43</sup>And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me? <sup>44</sup>For as soon as I heard the sound of your greeting, the child in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup>And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.” [

<sup>46</sup>And Mary said,  
"My soul magnifies the Lord,  
<sup>47</sup>and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
<sup>48</sup>for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
<sup>49</sup>for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
<sup>50</sup>His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
<sup>51</sup>He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
<sup>52</sup>He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
<sup>53</sup>he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
<sup>54</sup>He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
<sup>55</sup>according 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.**

### **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,  
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**



