

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Service of Lessons and Carols

December 23, 2017

5:00



AS WE GATHER

What a letdown when people break their promises! A father tells his ten-year-old son, “I know I promised to be at your soccer game, but something has come up.” Maybe we have been a victim of a broken promise like this, or perhaps we’ve been the one who’s broken a promise. In today’s Gospel, however, we see a promise kept. The angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will conceive and bear a Son. This pledge to Mary is part of the ongoing fulfillment of God’s promises. When we see this promise kept in the coming of Jesus, we have the assurance that we can always trust God that He acts according to His Word. Our heavenly Father never breaks His promises!

PRELUDE

RINGING OF THE BELLS - *We Prepare our hearts and minds for worship*



WELCOME

✦ **PREPARATION** ✦

OPENING HYMN “Of The Father’s Love Begotten”

LSB 384

**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.**

**This is He whom seers in old time Chanted of with once accord,
Whom the voices of prophet’s Promised in their faithful word.
Now He shines, the long expected; Let creation praise its Lord
Evermore and evermore.**

**O ye heights of heav’n, adore Him; Angel hosts, His praises sing.
Pow’rs dominions, bow before Him And extol our God and King.
Let no tongue on earth be silent, Ev’ry voice in concert ring
Evermore and evermore.**

**△ Christ, to Thee, with God the Father, And, O Holy Ghost, to Thee
Hymn and chant and high thanksgiving And unending praises be,
Honor, glory, and dominion, And eternal victory
Evermore and evermore.**

(Please Be Seated)



SACRAMENT OF HOLY BAPTISM OF ARBOR PENELOPE SOPPE *LSB 268*

LIGHTING OF ADVENT CANDLE

Pastor: Jesus Christ is the Light of the world,
People: **the light no darkness can overcome.** [*John 8:12; John 1:5*]

Pastor: Let Your light scatter the darkness
People: **and illumine Your church**

HYMN “We Light the Advent Candle” Love [Tune *LSB 343*]

**We light the Advent candle And share the wondrous Word.
With love, we tell of Jesus Till all around have heard.
God’s love is for all nations Throughout His whole creation.
We wait with growing light Till God makes all things right!**

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(Please Stand)



CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
People: **Amen.**

Pastor: Our help is in the name of the Lord,
People: **who made heaven and earth.**

Pastor: If You, O Lord, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?
People: **But with You there is forgiveness; therefore You are feared.**

Pastor: Since we are gathered to hear God’s Word, call upon Him in prayer and praise, and receive the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in the fellowship of this altar, let us first consider our unworthiness and confess before God and one another that we have sinned in thought, word, and deed, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful condition. Together as His people let us take refuge in the infinite mercy of God, our heavenly Father, seeking His grace for the sake of Christ, and saying: God, be merciful to me, a sinner.

People: **Almighty God, have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins, and lead us to everlasting life. Amen.**

Pastor: Almighty God in His mercy has given His Son to die for you and for His sake forgives you all your sins. As a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen.**

ADVENT VERSE “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” *LSB 357, v. 1-2*

**O come, O come, Emmanuel, And ransom captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here Until the Son of God appear.**

Refrain: **Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel!
Shall come to thee, O Israel!**

**O come, Thou Wisdom from on high, Who ord’rest all things mightily;
To us the path of knowledge show, And teach us in her ways to go. Refrain**

SALUTATION AND COLLECT OF THE DAY

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Let us pray. Stir up Your power, O Lord,

People: **and come and help us by Your might, that the sins that weigh us down may be quickly lifted by Your grace and mercy;**

Pastor: for You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

(Please Be Seated)

✠ LESSONS AND CAROLS ✠

SCRIPTURE READING *Genesis 3:1-15*

¹ Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden?’” ² And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, ³ but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.’” ⁴ But the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. ⁵ For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” ⁶ So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate. ⁷ Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths. ⁸ And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ And he said, “I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself.” ¹¹ He said, “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” ¹³ Then the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this that you have done?” The woman said, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate.” ¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. ¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

HYMN “Savior of the Nations, Come”

LSB 332, v. 1-4

**Savior of the nations, come, Virgin’s Son, make here Your home!
Marvel now, O heav’n and earth, That the Lord chose such a birth.**

**Not by human flesh and blood, By the Spirit of our God,
Was the Word of God made flesh--Woman’s offspring, pure and fresh.**

**Here a maid was found with child, Yet remained a virgin mild.
In her womb this truth was shown: God was there upon His throne.**

**Then stepped forth the Lord of all From His pure and kingly hall;
God of God, yet fully man, His heroic course began.**

SCRIPTURE READING *Isaiah 11:1-9*

¹ There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. ² And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³ And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide disputes by what his ears hear, ⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked. ⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist, and faithfulness the belt of his loins. ⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. ⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. ⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. ⁹ They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

HYMN "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming"

LSB 359

**Lo, how a rose e'er blooming From tender stem hath sprung!
Of Jesse's lineage coming As prophets long have sung,
It came, a flow'ret bright, Amid the cold of winter,
When half-spent was the night.**

**Isaiah 'twas foretold it, The rose I have in mind;
With Mary we behold it, The virgin mother kind.
To show God's love aright, She bore to us a Savior,
When half-spent was the night.**

**This flow'r, whose fragrance tender With sweetness fills the air,
Dispels with glorious splendor The darkness ev'rywhere.
True man, yet very God, From sin and death He saves us
And lightens ev'ry load.**

**O Savior, child of Mary, Who felt our human woe;
O Savior, King of glory, Who dost our weakness know:
Bring us at length we pray To the bright courts of heaven,
And to the endless day.**

SCRIPTURE READING *Isaiah 40:1-11*

⁴⁰ Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. ² Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD's hand double for all her sins. ³ A voice cries: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. ⁴ Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. ⁵ And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken." ⁶ A voice says, "Cry!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. ⁷ The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the LORD blows on it; surely the people are grass. ⁸ The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever. ⁹ Go on up to a high mountain, O Zion, herald of good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem, herald of good news; lift it up, fear not; say to the cities of Judah, "Behold your God!" ¹⁰ Behold, the Lord GOD comes with might, and his arm rules for him; behold, his reward is with him, and his recompense before him. ¹¹ He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

**“Comfort, comfort ye My people, Speak ye peace,” thus saith our God;
 “Comfort those who sit in darkness, Mourning, ‘neath their sorrows’ load.
 Speak ye to Jerusalem Of the peace that waits for them;
 Tell her that her sins I cover And her warfare now is over.”**

**Yea, her sins our God will pardon, Blotting out each dark misdeed;
 All that well deserved His anger He no more will see or heed.
 She hath suffered many a day, Now her griefs have passed away;
 God will change her pining sadness Into ever springing gladness.**

**Hark, the herald’s voice is crying In the desert far and near,
 Calling sinners to repentance, Since the Kingdom now is here.
 O that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God away;
 Let the valleys rise to meet Him And the hills bow down to greet Him.**

**Make ye straight what long was crooked; Make the rougher places plain.
 Let your hearts be true and humble, As befits His holy reign.
 For the glory of the Lord Now o’er earth is shed abroad,
 And all flesh shall see the token That His Word is never broken.**

SCRIPTURE READING *Isaiah 7:10-15*

¹⁰ Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz: ¹¹ “Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.” ¹² But Ahaz said, “I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test.” ¹³ And he said, “Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

**Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;
 There He lay, the Undeclared, To the world a stranger.
 Such a babe in such a place, Can He be the Savior?
 Ask the saved of all the race Who have found His favor.**

**Angels sang about His birth, Wise Men sought and found Him;
 Heaven’s star shone brightly forth Glory all around Him.
 Shepherds saw the wondrous sight, Heard the angels singing;
 All the plains were lit that night, All the hills were ringing.**

**Gentle Mary laid her child Lowly in a manger;
 He is still the Undeclared But no more a stranger.
 Son of God of humble birth, Beautiful the story;
 Praise His name in all the earth; Hail the King of glory!**

SCRIPTURE READING *Micah 5:2-4*

² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to

the people of Israel. ⁴ And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.

HYMN “O Little Town of Bethlehem”

LSB 361

**O little town of Bethlehem, How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth The everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years Are met in thee tonight.**

**For Christ is born of Mary, And, gathered all above
While mortals sleep, the angels keep Their watch of wond’ring love.
O morning stars, together Proclaim the holy birth,
And praises sing to God the king And peace to all the earth!**

**How silently, how silently The wondrous gift is giv’n!
So God imparts to human hearts The blessings of His heav’n.
No ear may hear His coming; But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive Him, still The dear Christ enters in.**

**O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels The great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel!**

SCRIPTURE READING *Isaiah 9:1-7*

⁹ But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish. In the former time he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the latter time he has made glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations. ² The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone. ³ You have multiplied the nation; you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as they are glad when they divide the spoil. ⁴ For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. ⁵ For every boot of the tramping warrior in battle tumult and every garment rolled in blood will be burned as fuel for the fire. ⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. ⁷ Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

HYMN “Where Shepherds Lately Knelt”

LSB 369

**Where shepherds lately knelt and kept the angel's word,
I come in half-belief, a pilgrim strangely stirred;
But there is room, and welcome there for me,
But there is room, and welcome there for me.**

**In that unlikely place I find Him as they said,
Sweet newborn babe, how frail! And in a manger bed.
A still, small voice to cry one day for me,
A still, small voice to cry one day for me.**

**How should I not have known Isaiah would be there;
His prophecies fulfilled? With pounding heart I stare;
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me,
A child, a son, the Prince of Peace for me.**

**Can I, will I forget how Love was born and burned
Its way into my heart -- unasked, unforced, unearned,
To die, to live, and not alone for me,
To die, to live, and not alone for me?**

SCRIPTURE READING *Luke 1:26-38*

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³²He 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 father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

HYMN "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came" *LSB 356*

**The angel Gabriel from heaven came, With wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame;
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary, Most highly favored lady."Gloria!**

**"For know a blessed mother thou shalt be, All generations laud and honor thee;
Thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, Most highly favored lady."Gloria!**

**Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head; "To me be as it pleaseth God," she said.
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name." Most highly favored lady."Gloria!**

**Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born In Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
And Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: "Most highly favored lady."Gloria!**

(Please Stand)



PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Let us come before our Lord in prayer, asking Him to hear our prayer and grant us love. Lord of love, during this season of Advent, prepare our hearts that we would be made ready to receive Your Son as He comes in His incarnation and birth, but also in His body and blood. Make us ever ready for His final coming on the Last Day. Lord, in Your mercy,
People: **hear our prayer and grant us love.**

Pastor: Lord of love, You have called Your Church to bear witness to Christ's redeeming work. Grant that we boldly proclaim the Good News of the One who brings joy to the world through His life, death, and resurrection, that all who hear it may receive the gift of salvation. Lord, in Your mercy,
People: hear our prayer and grant us love.

Pastor: Lord of love, You have instructed us to pray for workers in your harvest field. Raise up faithful and loving teachers of Your Word so that Christ may be proclaimed near and far. Make us Your instruments to encourage and equip individuals for work in Your Church. Lord, in Your mercy,
People: hear our prayer and grant us love.

Pastor: Lord of love, You are the creator and sustainer of all things. According to Your will, grant healing to those who suffer in body and mind. Look with favor upon Your servants, [especially . . .], and if it is Your will, restore them to health, or give them grace to accept tribulation, knowing that Your grace is sufficient for them. Lord, in Your mercy,
People: hear our prayer and grant us love.

Pastor: Into Your hands we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy and Your promise to hear us for the sake of the One in whose name we come, Your Son, Jesus Christ.
People: Amen.

(Please Be Seated)



GATHERING OF OFFERINGS

(Please Stand)

OFFERTORY "Hark the Glad Sound"

LSB 349, v.1

**Hark the glad sound! The Savior comes, The Savior promised long;
Let ev'ry heart prepare a throne and ev'ry voice a song.**



✠ SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE

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 Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE PROPER PREFACE

Pastor: It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. In Him we are truly blessed, and while we await the celebration of His birth and anticipate His second coming, our thanksgiving and praise cannot be contained. Therefore with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven we laud and magnify Your glorious name, evermore praising You and singing:

SANCTUS “Hark the Glad Sound”

LSB 349, v. 4

**Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace, Thy welcome shall proclaim,
And heav’n’s eternal arches ring With Thy beloved name.**

THE LORD’S PRAYER

LSB 209

Pastor: Hear us as we pray in His name as He has taught us:

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.

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

LSB 209

PAX DOMINI *The Peace of the Lord* John 20:19

LSB 209

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: Amen.

AGNUS DEI

LSB 210

**O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.**

**O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ, And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.**

(Please Be Seated)

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS “Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord”
“God Loves Me Dearly”

LSB 352
LSB 392

(Please Stand)

HYMN VERSE “Joy to the World”

LSB 387, v.1

**Joy to the world, the Lord is come! Let earth receive her King;
Let ev’ry heart prepare Him room
And heav’n and nature sing, And heav’n and nature sing,
And heav’n, and heav’n and nature sing.**



BENEDICAMUS and BENEDICTION *Psalm 103:1*

Pastor: Let us bless the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. *Numbers 6:24-26*

People: **Amen.**

**Now sing we, now rejoice, Now raise to heav’n our voice;
He from whom joy streameth Poor in a manger lies;
Not so brightly beameth The sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!**

**Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to Thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
Through Thy grace and merit, Blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
Draw me unto Thee! Draw me unto Thee!**

**Now through His son doth shine The Father’s grace divine.
Death was reigning o’er us Through sin and vanity
Till He opened for us A bright eternity.
May we praise Him there! May we praise Him there!**

**Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav’nly ground?
Where the angels singing With all His saints unite,
Sweetest praises bringing In heav’nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!**

POSTLUDE

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