

Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 24, 2023

10:15 am

Prelude

Welcome

God keeps the promise made to David to give him an everlasting throne. The angel tells Mary that God will give David's throne to her son Jesus. She is perplexed by Gabriel's greeting and by the news of her coming pregnancy, but she is able still to say, "Count me in." We who know that Jesus is called king only as he is executed still find it a mystery hard to fathom, but with Mary today we hear the news of what God is up to and say, "Count us in."

Announcements

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✚ one God, who opens the heavens and draws near to us with salvation. **Amen.**

God is patient and merciful, desiring all to come to repentance. Trusting this promise of grace, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection

Everlasting God, you love justice and you hate wrongdoing. We confess the fear, greed, and self-centeredness that make us reluctant to work against oppression. We are complicit in systems of exploitation. We choose comfort over courage. We are careless with creation's bounty. Look upon us with mercy. Turn our hearts again to you. Make us glad to do your will and to walk in your ways for the sake of our waiting world. Amen.

Hear these words of assurance: God clothes you with garments of salvation and covers you with robes of righteousness. In the tender compassion of ✚ Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. God's covenant is eternal, and God's blessing rests upon us all. **Amen.**

Gathering Hymn: ELW #251 "My Soul Proclaims Your Greatness"

- 1. My soul proclaims your greatness, Lord; I sing my Savior's praise! You looked upon my lowliness, and I am full of grace. Now ev'ry land and ev'ry age this blessing shall proclaim great wonders you have done for me, and holy is your name.**
- 2. To all who live in holy fear your mercy ever flows. With mighty arm you dash the proud, their scheming hearts expose. The ruthless you have cast aside, the lowly throned instead; the hungry filled with all good things, the rich sent off unfed.**
- 3. To Israel, your servant blest, your help is ever sure; the promise to our parents made their children will secure. Sing glory to the Holy One, give honor to the Word, and praise the Pow'r of the Most High, one God, by all adored.**

(copyright: Public Domain, One-License #M-402357)

Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Special Music: **“On Christmas Night”** Tim, Brian, and Patti

Lighting of the Advent Candle *Readings and Psalms*

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.

¹Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ²the 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." ³Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶I 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. ⁷Wherever 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?" ⁸Now 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; ⁹and 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. ¹⁰And 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, ¹¹from 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. ¹⁶Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

Psalm: Luke 1:46b-55

^{46b}My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, ⁴⁷my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
⁴⁸**for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your lowly servant. From this day all generations will call me blessed:**

⁴⁹you, the Almighty, have done great things for me and holy is your name.

⁵⁰**You have mercy on those who fear you, from generation to generation.**

⁵¹You have shown strength with your arm and scattered the proud in their conceit,

⁵²**casting down the mighty from their thrones and lifting up the lowly.**

⁵³You have filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴**You have come to the aid of your servant Israel, to remember the promise**

of mercy,

⁵⁵the promise made to our forebears, to Abraham and his children forever.

Second Reading: Romans 16:25-27

Paul closes his letter to the Romans by praising God because, in the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, God has revealed the promised, divine plan of salvation for all humanity. Paul proclaims this gospel of Christ in order to bring about the obedience of faith among all nations.

²⁵Now to God who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages ²⁶but is now disclosed, and through the prophetic writings is made known to all the Gentiles, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—²⁷to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever! Amen.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia. Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word. *Alleluia.* (Luke 1:38)

The Holy Gospel according to the book of Luke, beginning with the first chapter. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

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.

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him 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 ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." ³⁴Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" ³⁵The 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. ³⁶And 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. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸Then 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.

The Gospel of our Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

Hymn of the Day: ELW #265

"The Angel Gabriel From Heaven Came"

1. 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!
2. "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!
3. 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!
4. 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!

(copyright: Public Domain, One-License #M-402357)

Apostle's Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

Peace

The peace of the Lord be with you always. **And also with you.**

Offering

Offering Hymn ELW #686 "We Give Thee But Thine Own" 1st verse

1. **We give thee but thine own, whate'er the gift may be; all that we have is thine alone, a trust, O Lord, from thee.**

(copyright: Public Domain, One-License #M-402357)

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.

Prayers of Intercession

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

The 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 the Lord our God. **It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Preface

Thanksgiving at the Table

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.**

Invitation to Communion

In this meal, righteousness and peace meet together.

Come, take your place at the table.

Communion Distribution

Distribution Hymn ELW #253 "He Came Down"

- 1. He came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; he came down that we may have love; hallelujah forevermore.**
- 2. He came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light; he came down that we may have light; hallelujah forevermore.**
- 3. He came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace; he came down that we may have peace, hallelujah forevermore.**
- 4. He came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy; he came down that we may have joy; hallelujah forevermore.**

(copyright: Public Domain, One-License #M-402357)

Post-communion Blessing

Prayer after Communion

Blessing

The God of peace bless you, the love of Christ sustain you in hope, and the anointing of the Spirit ✝ remain upon you now and forever. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: ELW #267 "Joy to the World"

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.
2. Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy, repeat, repeat the sounding joy.
3. No more let sin and sorrow grow nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found far as, far as far as the curse is found.
4. He rules the world with truth and grace and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love, and wonder, wonders of his love.

(copyright: Public Domain, One-License #M-402357)

Dismissal

Go in peace. Keep awake.

Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Calvary Lutheran Church
19216 Rapidan Avenue
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

Pastor David Reedstrom
Ministers: All Members

Church Phone: 507-278-3317

E-mail: office@calvaryrapidan.org

Website: calvaryrapidan.org

Facebook: Calvary Lutheran Rapidan

Portions of the liturgy are from sundaysandseasons.com © 2023 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License #SB141947

New Revised Standard Version Bible, copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Broadcast and other copyright permissions: One License M-401357.