

SAINT MATTHEW LUTHERAN CHURCH

318 Chester Avenue • Moorestown, NJ 08057-2526

Rev. Dr. Eric J. Trozzo, Pastor



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

December 20, 2020 9:30AM

PRELUDE

Savior of the Nations, Come ELW 263

Gathering

The Holy Spirit calls us together as people of God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,
and of the + Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another. (silence for self-reflection)

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.

Amen.

ABSOLUTION

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

KYRIE

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

LIGHTING OF WREATH

In Advent, we look for Christ to come in fullness, so that all may know the peace, goodness and justice of Christ's love in the world. In the lighting of the flame we look to Christ in hope.

Word

God speaks to us in scripture, preaching and song.

CHILDREN'S TIME

FIRST READING 2 SAMUEL 7:1-11, 16

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.

Response after the conclusion: The word of the Lord.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT LUKE 1:46B-55

46bMy soul proclaims the greatness | of the Lord, 47my spirit rejoices in | God my Savior, 48for 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. 50You have mercy on | those who fear you, from generation to | generation. R 51You have shown strength | with your arm and scattered the proud in | their conceit, 52casting 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. 54You have come to the aid of your | servant Israel, to remember the prom- | ise of mercy, 55the promise made | to our forbears, to Abraham and his chil- | dren forever. R

SECOND READING ROMANS 16:25-27

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.



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Response after the conclusion: The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ALL EARTH IS HOPEFUL (ELW 266)

GOSPEL LUKE 1:26-38

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.

Response after the conclusion: The gospel of the Lord.

SERMON

THE REV. DR. ERIC J. TROZZO

HYMN OF THE DAY

The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came ELW 265

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 into hell.
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.



PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Response: Your mercy is great.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERING PRAYER

Let us pray.

God of abundance, we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives.
Teach us patience and hope as we care for all those in need until the coming of your Son, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

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.**

Sending

God blesses us and sends us into the world to serve our neighbor.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.
Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.



Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE

Joy to the World ELW 267

DECEMBER 20, 2020
FOURTH SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

taking
faith
home

God favors the peasant girl Mary.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	Luke 1:26-38	The birth of Jesus foretold
Monday	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	The Lord's message to David
Tuesday	Romans 16:25-27	Paul's closing prayer
Wednesday	Luke 1:46b-55	Mary's song of praise
Thursday	Luke 2:1-20	The birth of Jesus
Friday	John 3:11-16	For God so loved the world
Saturday	Psalms 89:1-4, 19-26	God's promise to David
Sunday	Luke 2:22-40	Jesus presented in the temple

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus." Luke 1:30-31 (NRSV)

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Lord God, just as you favored your servant Mary, grant all of us faith and trust in your power to bring salvation to all through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

With this food we receive your steadfast love, O Lord; with our mouths we proclaim your faithfulness to all generations through Christ our Lord. Amen. (Psalm 89:1)

A Blessing to Give:

May the love of God bless you with the good news of Jesus' birth.

DECEMBER 20, 2020

HYMN OF THE WEEK

Wait for the Lord

taking
faith
home

WEEKLY MILESTONES

Take a moment to tell or think about a recent mountain high and/or valley low in your life.

CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home, small group, or use for personal reflections:

- When have you received special attention from friends or family?
- Think of someone you have valued as a friend. In what ways do you value them?
- The angel Gabriel describes Mary as favored. What does it mean to you that God has given the world our Savior and Lord Jesus through Mary, a young peasant girl?

DEVOTIONS

Read: Luke 1:26-38.

In verses 28 and 30 the angel Gabriel says that Mary is favored, that is, Mary experiences the undeserved kindness of God. In Luke 2:40 and 52 the child Jesus is also described as favored. Divine attention comes to a young virgin to deliver Jesus, the Son of the Most High. The beginning of the Gospel of Luke tells of Elizabeth, a barren woman who gives birth, Mary, a peasant girl who gives birth to the future king in the lineage of David, and of shepherds in the field who will be the first evangelists of the good news of Jesus' birth (Luke 2:18). The message is clear: with God all things are possible, and as with Mary, our faithful response is, "let it be with me according to your word" (v. 38). Mary is the model of the life of faith that acknowledges that God has done great things for her. As we prepare to enter the season of Jesus' birth, we are met with God's favor and blessings for us as well. How has God come to you with divine favor?

Pray: God of undeserved kindness, give us faith to trust that with you all things are possible through Christ Jesus our Lord, Son of the Most High God. Amen.

SERVICE

During this Advent season think of those who are not favored in our society. For example, the homeless are poor, hungry, and in need. In what ways can you show God's love to them through an act of kindness?

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

From your nativity set, hold each piece in silence for a moment. Then place the pieces back in the scene. Have Mary and Joseph arrive first, followed by the shepherds and then the wise men. Wait to place Jesus in the manger until Christmas Eve. On your Advent wreath, light the first candle of hope, the second one of peace, the third one of joy, and the fourth one of love.

Say this Bible verse: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Pray: Lord God, thank you for showing us love even when we are afraid like Mary, the mother of Jesus. Give us hope, peace, joy, and love as we prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus. Amen.