

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Sunday December 19, 2021 | 4th Sunday of Advent | 9:00 AM

(+ = stand if able; L = Leader / **C = Congregation**)



PRELUDE Diane Dangerfield

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

OPENING HYMN: #241 - O Lord, How Shall I Meet You?

CANDLE LIGHTING – The Candle of Love

L: We walk in darkness

C: And look for the coming light.

L: We await the glorious news of Emmanuel, God-with-us

C: The one who will turn the world upside down and God-side up.

L: We marvel at your graciousness, God Most High, to see your greatness clothed in human flesh, and wrapped in swaddling clothes. Today we light all four candles as our hearts are filled with hope, peace, joy, and love. Let us, pray...God of Mary and Elizabeth,

C: fill us with great love and joy at the news of your coming in Jesus. Deepen our faith in your ability to turn the ordinary into the extraordinary. May the light of this candle comfort us with the knowledge that your light banishes the darkness and that your light and love dwell with us and in us. Amen.

Hymn: #281 *Silent Night* vs. 1 & 3

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

L: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who alone does wonders, who lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things.

C: Amen.

L: Let us confess our sin, trusting in the tender mercy of our God.

Silence is kept for reflection

L: God for whom we wait,

C: in the presence of one another, we confess our sin before you. We fail in believing that your good news is for us. We falter in our call to tend your creation. We find our sense of self in material wealth. We fear those different from ourselves. We forget that we are your children and turn away from your love. Forgive us, Blessed One, and assure us again of your saving grace. Amen.

L: God, in Christ Jesus, has looked with favor upon you! Through the power of the Holy Spirit, your sins are forgiven. You are children of the Most High, inheritors of the eternal promise, and recipients of divine mercy. God strengthens you anew to follow the way of peace.

C: Amen.

GREETING

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

C: And also, with you.

+ KYRIE pg. 138

+ HYMN OF PRAISE pg. 140 "This is the feast..."

PRAYER OF THE DAY

L: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come

C: With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that binds us, that we may receive you in joy and serve you always, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

FIRST READING: 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.

SECOND READING: 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.

+ACCLAMATION (pg. 142)

(sing) Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.

L: The Gospel according to Luke, Chapter 1

C: **Glory to you, O Lord**

GOSPEL: Luke 1:39-55

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."

CHOIR ANTHEM: Ding Dong! Merrily on High

MESSAGE - "The Amazing Christmas Program"

Our program today will include everyone. While we sing our carols together, some will come forward to be our characters. Everyone sharing in the story of Jesus.

- **Mary & Joseph**
 - **#277 Away in a Manger**
- **The Animals**
 - **#296 What Child is This? (vs. 1 & 2)**
- **Angels**
 - **#289 Angels We Have Heard on High (vs. 1&2)**
- **Shepherds**
 - **#290 Go, Tell it on the Mountain**
- **Wise Persons and Star**
 - **We Three Kings (words on screen)**
- **Closing**
 - **"#267 Joy to the World**

RESPONSE TO THE WORD

+ **NICENE CREED** (pg. 104)

THE PRAYERS (pg. 143)

(As the pastor concludes each petition with the words: "Lord in your mercy..." The people respond: **Hear our prayer.**")

OFFERING "Light of the Stable" - (Praise Team)

OFFERTORY #182 Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

MEAL

+ OFFERING PRAYER: God of our waiting and watching, we offer the gifts of our hearts and our lives to the service of all your people. Prepare the way before us as we meet you in this simple meal, through Christ Jesus, our pathway and our peace. Amen.

+THE GREAT THANKSGIVING (pg. 144)

+WORDS OF INSTITUTION.

+ THE LORD'S PRAYER (pg. 145) (right hand column)

+COMMUNION (Praise Team)

+PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION: Most High God, you have come among us at this table. By the Spirit's power, form us to be bearers of your word, sharing gifts of mercy and grace with all, through Christ Jesus, our host and our guest. Amen.

SENDING

COMMUNITY WORD

+BLESSING

L: May the blessing of God our creator, the love of Jesus Christ our redeemer, and the presence of the Holy Spirit the comforter, surround you and sustain you until we gather again.

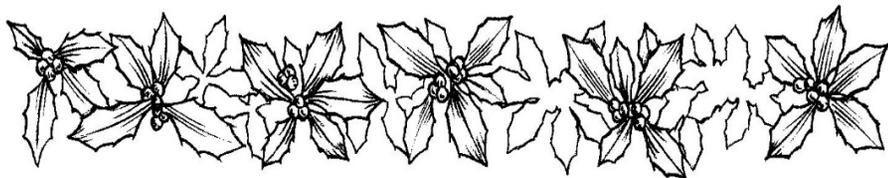
C: Amen.

+HYMN - Lift Up Your Heads (insert and on screen)

+DISMISSAL

L: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.



DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF DECEMBER 19, 2021

SHARE: What was a high point of your day? What was a low point?

READ: Read the following daily readings to deepen your understanding:

Monday, Psalm 113, God the Helper of the Needy
Tuesday, Romans 8:18-30, Our Helper in Weakness
Wednesday, Isaiah 42:10-21, A Hymn of Praise
Thursday, Micah 4:6-8, Promise of Restoration
Friday, Luke 2:1-20, The Christmas Story
Saturday, John 1:1-14, The Word Became Flesh

TALK: Consider some of these ideas:

"And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, ⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior" Luke 1:46

Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, are two women filled with the Holy Spirit and with faith. In Elizabeth's inspired greeting and Mary's song of praise we hear of a saving God who remembers, scatters, lifts up, and fulfills all things.

- Elizabeth and Mary experienced unexpected blessing. When have you had the same? (Luke 1:39-45)
- How does Mary's song reassure you, or make you uncomfortable?
- How does the God who cares for "the little clans of Judah" care for you? (Micah 5:2)

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

BLESS: People of God, you are Christ's body, bringing new life to a suffering world. The holy Trinity, one God, bless you now and forever. Amen.