



“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.”

Luke 1:41-42

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 20, 2015

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Rev. Robert Zimmerman, Pastor

Jacob Gordon, Director of Music

*We welcome you to St. John Lutheran Church. We are delighted to have you worship with us this morning. Should you have no permanent church-home in this community, why not consider making this one your own? Please sign the guest book as you leave worship today or the attendance pad in the pew. You are most welcome here at St. John! Most elements of our service can be found in the bulletin, everything else is in the hymnal. Page refers to the numbered pages towards the front of the hymnal, hymns are bold and towards the back. Please rise when there is an *, congregational responses are in **bold**, and underlined elements of the service are found in the hymnal.*

HOLY COMMUNION

Fourth Sunday of Advent – December 20, 2015

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."

Katharina von Bora Luther

Born to an impoverished nobleman, Katie eventually took vows as a nun, but around age twenty-four she and several other nuns who were influenced by the writings of Martin Luther left the convent. Six children were born to Katie and Martin.

PRELUDE: *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel* – Robert J. Powell

ANNOUNCEMENTS

***LIGHTING THE CANDLES OF ADVENT**

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, ruler of the universe.

In your Son, Emmanuel,

you have shown us your light

and saved us from the power of sin.

Bless us as we light the candles on this wreath.

Increase our longing for your presence,

that at the celebration of your Son's birth

his Spirit might dwell anew in our midst,

for he is our light and our salvation.

Blessed be God forever.

Amen.

***ADVENT SONG #240: Light One Candle to Watch for Messiah**

***CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,

the Lord of Israel who comes to set us free,

the mighty Savior who comes to show mercy,

the Dawn from on high who guides us into peace.

Amen.

Let us come before God in confession.

Silence for reflection.

To you, O God,
we lift up our souls.
You know us through and through;
we confess our sins to you.
Remember not our sins;
remember us with your steadfast love.
Show us your ways;
teach us your paths;
and lead us in justice and truth,
for the sake of your goodness
in Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.

Sisters and brothers, come with joy
and draw water from the well of salvation.
Remember the gift of baptism:
your sin is washed away in the name of + Jesus;
you belong to Christ;
you are anointed to serve.
Stand up and raise your heads!
The reign of God is near.
Amen.

***GATHERING SONG #257: O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

The stanzas are sung as indicated below; all sing each refrain.



All: O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap-
Women: O come, O Wis - dom from on high, em - brac - ing all
Men: O come, O come, O Lord of might, as to your tribes
Cantor: O come, O Branch of Jes - se, free your own from Sa-
Women: O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and o - pen wide
Men: O come, O Day - spring, come and cheer; O Sun of jus-
Cantor: O come, O King of na - tions, come, O Cor - ner - stone
All: O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and ran - som cap-



- tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in low - ly ex - ile here
things far and nigh: in strength and beau - ty come and stay;
on Si - nai's height in an - cient times you gave the law
- tan's tyr - an - ny; from depths of hell your peo - ple save,
our heav'n - ly home; make safe the way that leads on high,
- tice, now draw near; Dis - perse the gloom - y clouds of night
that binds in one: re - fresh the hearts that long for you;
- tive Is - ra - el, that mourns in low - ly ex - ile here



un - til the Son of God ap - pear.
teach us your will and guide our way.
in cloud, and maj - es - ty, and awe.
and give them vic - t'ry o'er the grave. Re - joice! Re - joice!
and close the path to mis - er - y.
and death's dark shad - ow put to flight.
re - store the bro - ken, make us new.
un - til the Son of God ap - pear.



Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el.

***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.

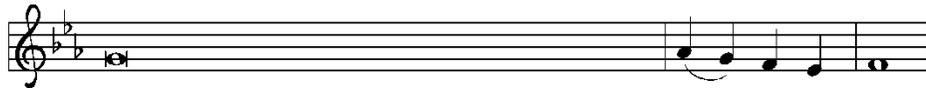
***KYRIE**



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



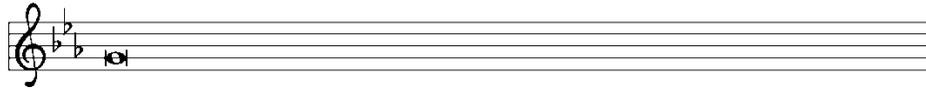
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord.



A - men, a - men.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us 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.

FIRST READING: Micah 5:2-5a

The prophet Micah, having pronounced judgment upon Judah, speaks of a future shepherd-king who, like David, will come from the small town of Bethlehem. (Ephrathah refers to the area around Bethlehem.) This king will restore Israel and bring peace. New Testament writers understood this passage to be referring to Jesus.

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.



CANTICLE: The Song of Mary (Luke 1:46b-55)

*The cantor sings the Refrain and all repeat it.
The cantor sings verse 1; verses 2 and 3 are sung by all.*

Refrain

My soul pro-claims the great-ness of the Lord, my
spir - it re - joic - es in God my Sav - ior.

1 My soul proclaims the great-ness of the Lord,
2 You have mer - cy on those who fear you,
3 You have filled the hun - gry with good things

my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
from generation to gen - er - ation.
and sent the rich a - way empty.

for you, Lord, have looked with favor on your low - ly servant.
You have shown . . strength with your arm
You have come to the aid of your ser - vant Is - ra - el,

From this day all generations will call me bless'd:
and scattered the proud in their con - ceit,
to remember the prom - ise of mercy,

you, the Almighty, have done great things for me
casting down the might - y from their thrones
the promise made to our . . . fore - bears,

Refrain
and holy is your name.
and lifting up the low - ly.
to Abraham and his chil - dren for - ev - er.

SECOND READING: Hebrews 10:5-10

The author of Hebrews uses the image of religious sacrifice to convey the significance of Christ's coming. Through obedient acceptance of God's will, Christ allows his own body to become the greatest sacrifice of all, one through which we are made a holy people.

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.

The Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



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

*GOSPEL READING: Luke 1:39-45

We are presented with Elizabeth, John's mother, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, 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.

The holy gospel according to Luke.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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."

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S SERMON

SERMON

***HYMN OF THE DAY #263: Savior of the Nations, Come**

***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 OF INTERCESSION**

Emmanuel has come, is here, and is coming soon. Let us join in prayer for the church, the earth, and those who are in need, that all receive what God promises to give.

O God our Wisdom, give to all the baptized knowledge of your truth and the power of your presence. Inspire worship leaders and church musicians toward ever-deepening praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

O God, Lord of might, hold the cosmos in your care. Give the earth both darkness and light, cold and warmth. Protect the mountains from exploitation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

O God, King of nations, bring peace and justice to all the countries of the world. Guide all leaders toward honest and merciful rule. Raise up those who are poor. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

O God, King of nations, bring peace and justice to all the countries of the world. Guide all leaders toward honest and merciful rule. Raise up those who are poor. We pray especially for Frieda, Jim, Raymond, Wanda Jean, Francis & Grace, Kathryn, Fred & Jane, David & Ellen, and all those we remember aloud or in our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

O God, Tree of Jesse, nurture our community. Give us joy in one another, and make us servants of all in need. Bless our holy day celebrations with your Spirit. Hear us, O God. Your mercy is great. **Your mercy is great.**

O God, Dayspring, we remember all who have died and now live in your light especially Katharina von Bora Luther. Gather us to yourself and teach us to sing together Mary's song of praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Receive our prayers, merciful God, and make us ready to receive you when you come through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

***PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

OFFERING

OFFERTORY HYMN #723: *Canticle of the Turning*

(Please stand for the final stanza as the gifts are brought forward.)

***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.**

***DIALOGUE**

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.

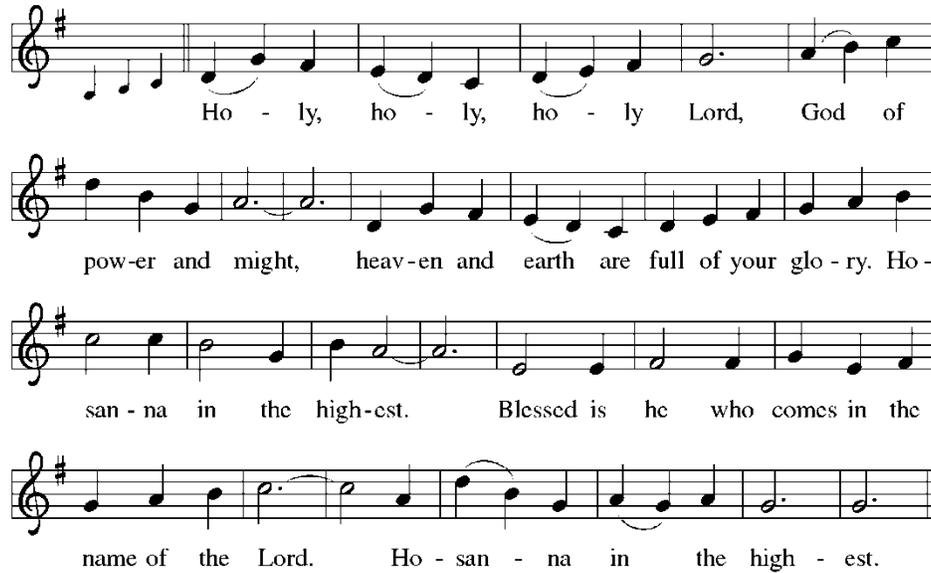
***PREFACE**

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



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of
pow-er and might, heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho -
san - na in the high-est. Blessed is he who comes in the
name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est.

*THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

Holy God, the Beginning and the End,
our Salvation and our Hope,
we praise you for creating a world of order and beauty.

When we brought on chaos, cruelty and despair,
you sent the prophets to proclaim your justice and mercy.
At this end of the ages
your Son Jesus came to bring us your love
and to heal all the suffering world.

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.

Remembering, therefore,
his life, death, and resurrection,
we await his coming again
in righteousness and peace.
Send your Spirit on us
and on this bread and wine we share:
strengthen our faith,
increase our hope,
and bring to birth the justice and joy of your Son.

Through him all glory and honor is yours,
Almighty Father, with the Holy Spirit,
in your holy Church,
both now and forever.

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.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

God fills the hungry with good things.
Taste and see that the Lord is good.

In response to Jesus' invitation, all are welcome to come forward and experience the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine of communion. Through this meal, we know forgiveness, life and salvation as the blessings of God's sacramental grace. All are invited forward for communion or a blessing. The area of cups bordered by green tape has grape juice.

COMMUNION

The body of Christ, given for you. **Amen.**
The blood of Christ, shed for you. **Amen.**

COMMUNION SONG: *Lamb of God*

Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a -
way the sin of the world; grant us peace, grant us peace.

COMMUNION HYMN #265: The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

***POST-COMMUNION BLESSING**

The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in grace.
Amen.

***POST-COMMUNION PRAYER**

Let us pray.
Holy One, we give you thanks
that in this bread and cup
we have feasted again on your endless love.
Let that love overflow more and more in our lives,
that we may be messengers to prepare your way,
harvesters of justice and righteousness,
and bearers of your eternal Word,
our Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

***BLESSING**

May Almighty God, by whose providence our Savior Christ came among us in great humility,
sanctify you with the light of his blessing and set you free from all sin. **Amen.**

May he whose second Coming in power and great glory we await,
make you steadfast in faith, joyful in hope, and constant in love. **Amen.**

May you, who rejoice in the first Advent of our Redeemer,
at his second Advent be rewarded with unending life. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son +, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you forever. **Amen.**

***SENDING SONG #267: Joy to the World**

***DISMISSAL**

Go in peace. Christ is with you.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE: Joy to the World – Franklin D. Ashdown

The flowers this week are given by Jane & Bruce Bevilacqua in loving memory of Bruce's daughter, Nicole, and Jane's father, Jerry.

8:00 am

Assisting Minister: Christine Dishong
Communion Assistant: Ruth Ann Tully
Acolyte: Danielle Dishong
Lector:
Usher: Robert Dishong
Attendance Last Week: 60
Weekly Budgeted Need: \$ 2,755.44
YTD Budgeted Expenses: \$ 135,016.67
YTD Actual Expense: \$ 130,327.86

10:30 am

Assisting Minister: Sally Foster
Communion Assistant: Denise Hager
Acolyte: Gio Sunseri
Lector: Valerie Cardinal
Usher: Carolyn Jarrett
Attendance Last Year: 78
Last Week's Giving: \$ 3,005.00
YTD Receipts: \$ 133,709.05

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