

December 19th, 2021 – Fourth Sunday of Advent

Introduction to the Day

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."

Lighting of the Advent Candle – LOVE has a Home Here

Leader: We light a candle wrapped in God's LOVE.

All: We pray our soul, our lives, proclaim God's greatness to all the earth.

Leader: When life has us worn out

All: May our Spirits rejoice in God our Savior.

Leader: God, let the LOVE that is the Christ child dwell in us.

All: God, let your LOVE have a home in us.

Gathering Song

Prayer of the Day

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.

Lesson – 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

Gospel – Luke 1:39-45

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.”

Message – Choral program

One Silent Night long ago, a birth story began that forever changed the world. Lying in a crude manger was a newborn babe, who would become the source of our Christian faith and our abiding hope. Using the power and simplicity of the event itself, composer and creator Pepper Choplin presents each of the familiar elements of that story through ballad-like recitatives of scripture, surrounded by anthems ranging from outbursts of unbridled joy to moving moments of introspection and gentleness. Weaving familiar carols and songs throughout original music, this timeless tale emerges in a deeply moving presentation that will lift one’s faith and deepen one’s understanding of the profound significance of that *One Silent Night*.

Song of the Day

Apostle’s Creed

Prayers

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God’s presence.

A brief silence.

Nurturing God, you give us life and care for our every need. Use the church’s gifts and ministries for your service, bringing your word to all who seek your transforming grace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Creator God, you proclaim your boundless love for all that you have made. Renew barren lands, polluted waters, and melting ice caps. Make us servants of your creation that brings forth abundant life. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Righteous God, you bring down the mighty and lift up the lowly. Strengthen those who seek justice. Bless the work of community organizers, activists, journalists, and all who call our attention to imbalances of power. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Compassionate God, you proclaim your love and mercy. Show your lovingkindness to teen parents and those who are pregnant. Comfort any struggling with infertility and those who await test results, are in treatment and hospice care, and others in need (*especially Peyton, Kathy Smith, Matt Miller, Bob Hodges, Bob Kries, Jim and Sandy Nelson, Joe Christensen, Bill and Bonnie Kuehn, Steve Bradford, David Gunderson, Cassie Skinner, Keith Franson*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Gracious God, you fill the hungry with good things. Bless the feeding ministries of this congregation and community. Guide us to share your bounty with those who hunger or live in poverty. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Faithful God, you stir up the hearts of those who love you. We give you thanks for those who, like Mary, were courageous in their witness (*especially*). Give us such courage until that day when you fulfill all things. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory 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.

Words of Institution – We invite you to find bread and wine or juice and partake in this Holy Meal.

(Holding the bread) In the night in which we was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread and broke it, gave thanks and gave it for all to eat saying, “This is my body broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”

(Holding the cup) Again after supper he took the cup, and after giving thanks he 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 sins. So often as you do this, remember me.”

Once you’ve taken the elements say, “Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**”

Lord’s Prayer

Communion Prayer

Sending Song

Blessing

The God of hope
fill us with all joy and peace in believing,
so that we may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
through Christ Jesus for whom we wait.

Amen.

Go in peace. Christ is near.

Thanks be to God.

Announcements

Good Shepherd Christmas Tree

We invite you, as you are decorating your own trees at home, to pick one ornament to bring to the Good Shepherd Christmas Tree. You will find the 12-foot tree under one of the skylights in the main entrance. If you would like to somehow attach a card with the meaning of your ornament or simply your name, you may do that. This tree will be festively filled with memories from home to share with your church family.

Hat and Mitten Tree

Bring your hats, mittens and scarves for the Hat and Mitten tree. All items are donated to local schools as well as to the Beacon House, Bolton House and St. Francis Food Pantry. Please have all donations here by the end of the year.

Christmas Worship schedule

Dec. 24 – 2, 4:30, 9 p.m. Candlelight worship

Dec. 25 – NO worship

Dec. 26 – 9 a.m. Lessons and Carols worship

Offering Envelopes

You will find your 2022 offering envelopes in the Gathering Space outside the Fellowship Hall. Be sure to grab your box!

If you don't see a box with your name on it, please contact the church office.

End of the year giving

Please have all of your 2021 donations to the church by 3:30 p.m. on Dec. 30.

The flower chart for 2022 is up!

Sign up to have flowers on the altar for birthdays, anniversaries, or just because! Flowers are \$22 and can be paid for during the month you are signed up for.