

Lutheran Church of the Holy Comforter

• 216 N. Main Street • Belmont, NC 28012 • Sunday, December 19th, 2021 •

The Fourth Sunday of Advent



GATHERING

WELCOME

PRELUDE: *Lift Up Your Heads* Chamber Choir

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, in remembrance of baptism.

P 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.

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

Silence for reflection.

P 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.

P 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.

GATHERING SONG: *All Earth is Hopeful.* All Stand & Sing



1 All earth is hope-ful, the Sav-ior comes at last!
 2 Peo-ple of Is-rael, you heard the proph-et tell;
 3 Moun-tains and val-leys will have to be pre-pared;
 4 We first saw Je-sus a ba-by in a crib.



Fur-rows lie o-pen for God's cre-a-tive task: this, the
 "A-vir-gin moth-er will bear Em-man-u-el"; she con-
 new high-ways o-pened, new pro-to-cols de-clared. Al-most
 This same Lord Je-sus to-day has come to live in our



la-bor of peo-ple who strug-gle to see how
 ceived him, "God with us," our broth-er, whose birth re-
 here! God is near-ing, in beau-ty and grace! All
 world; he is pres-ent, in neigh-bors we see our



God's truth and jus-tice set ev-'ry-bod-y free.
 stores hope and cour-age to chil-dren of this earth.
 clear ev-'ry gate-way, in haste, come out in haste!
 Je-sus is with us, and ev-er sets us free.

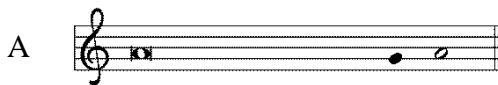
Text: Alberto Taulé, b. 1932; tr. Madeleine Forell Marshall, b. 1946
 Music: TODA LA TIERRA, Alberto Taulé
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GREETING

P 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.

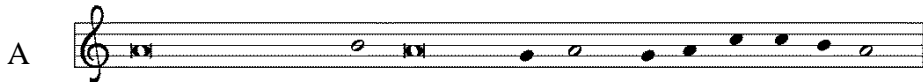
KYRIE



In peace, let us pray to the Lord.



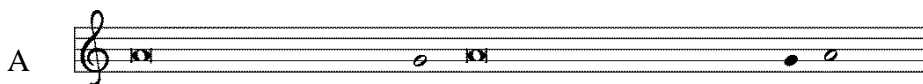
Lord, have mer - cy.



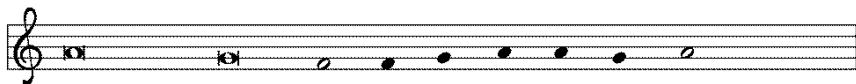
For the peace from a-bove, and for our sal - vation, let us pray to the Lord.



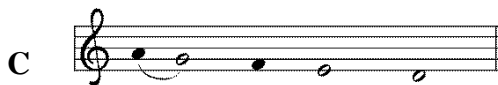
Lord, have mer - cy.



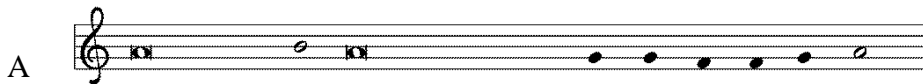
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



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 wor-ship and praise,

Assistant

Congregation



let us pray to the Lord.

Lord have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and de - fend us, gra-cious Lord.

A - men.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE

Refrain

Assisting minister



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.

All



1 Wor - thy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us



free to be peo-ple of God. Pow - er and rich - es and wis - dom and



strength, and hon - or and bless-ing and glo - ry are his.

Refrain



This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God. Al - le - lu - ia.

2 Sing with all the peo - ple of God and join in the

hymn of all cre - a - tion: Bless - ing and hon - or and glo - ry and

might be to God and the Lamb for - ev - er. A - men.

Final refrain

This is the feast of vic-to-ry for our God, for the Lamb who was slain

has be - gun his reign. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

SALUTATION

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P 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.

C Amen.



LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH: The fourth candle represents **LOVE**. Because of his love, all people are saved. Since God's love for us is perfect, may we perfect our answering love by loving one another.

ANTHEM: *Ev'ry child* Church choir

FIRST READING

Micah 5:2-5a

A reading from Micah, the fifth chapter.

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;

⁵and he shall be the one of peace.

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

LESSON ANTHEM: *Hark the Herald Angels Sing* Handbell Choir

SECOND READING

Hebrews 10:5-10

A reading from Hebrews, the tenth chapter.

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.

⁵ Consequently, 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.

A The word of the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go?



You have the words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL

Luke 1:39-55

P The holy gospel according to St. Luke, the first chapter.

C Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

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,

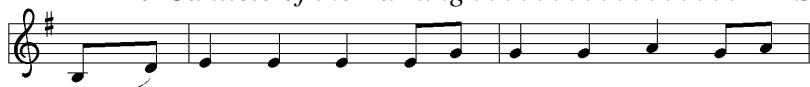
⁵⁵according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

P The gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON Deacon Beka

HYMN OF THE DAY: *Canticle of the Turning* All Stand & Sing



1 My soul cries out with a joy - ful shout that the
 2 Though I am small, my . . . God, my all, you . . .
 3 From the halls of pow'r to the for - tress tow'r, not a
 4 Though the na - tions rage from . . age to age, we re -



God of my heart is great, and my spir - it sings of the
 work great . . things in me, and your mer - cy will last from the
 stone will be left on stone. Let the king be - ware for your
 mem - ber who holds us fast: God's mer - cy must de -



won - drous things that you bring to the ones who wait.
 depths of the past to the end of the age to be.
 jus - tice tears ev - 'ry ty - rant . . . from his throne.
 liv - er us from the con - quer - or's crush - ing grasp.



You fixed your sight on your ser - vant's plight, and my
 Your ver - y name puts the proud to shame, and to
 The hun - gry poor shall . . weep no more, for the
 This sav - ing word that our fore - bears heard is the



weak - ness you did not spurn, so from east to west shall my
 those who would for you yearn, you will show your might, put the
 food they can nev - er earn; there are ta - bles spread, ev - 'ry
 prom - ise which holds us bound, till the spear and rod can be



name be blest. Could the world be a - bout to turn?
 strong to flight, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 mouth be fed, for the world is a - bout to turn.
 crushed by God, who is turn - ing the world a - round.



Refrain
 My heart shall sing of the day you bring. Let the fires of your jus - tice burn.



Wipe a - way all tears, for the dawn draws near, and the world is a - bout to turn.

APOSTLES 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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

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. 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. 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.

PEACE

P The peace of Christ be with you always.

C **And also with you.**

OFFERTORY ANTHEM: *Now The Heavens Start To Whisper* Church Choir

OFFERING PRAYER

A Let us pray.

C **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.**

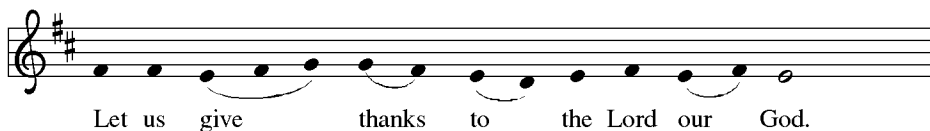
DIALOGUE

Pastor

Congregation



Pastor



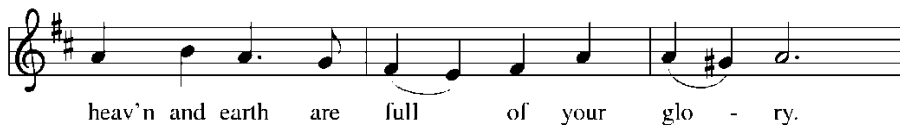
Cong.



PREFACE

P ...we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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

P Come to Christ's banquet. Feast on God's gift of grace.
C Thanks be to God.



COMMUNION

During communion we will be dismissed by rows, starting in the front. You will receive the elements from the table by the door and take them to your car to eat. We will finish the worship liturgy and be dismissed there. You may stand outside your car or be seated inside. You should be able to hear the worship leader through your radio on 89.5 fm.

LAMB OF GOD *All Sing*

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.

POSTLUDE: *Angels From the Realms of Glory* Johnson

P The body and blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ, strengthen you and keep you in his grace.

C **Amen.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

A Blessed Jesus,

C **at this table, you have been for us both host and meal. Now send us forth to extend our tables and to share your gifts until that day when all feast together at your heavenly banquet. Amen.**

BLESSING

P 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.

C **Amen.**

SENDING

P Go in peace. Christ is near.

C **Thanks be to God.**

- The flowers are given by Mark & Rebecca Yount & Luke & Alec Via in loving memory of Heather Mauney Yount.
- A special thanks to our lector, Alan Hyman.

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Holy Doodles



Holy Comforter Lutheran Church

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Greg Cline, Organist /Choirmaster

Sandra Askey, Office Manager