

St. Paul Lutheran Church of Stillwater, Minnesota



Sunday, December 19, 2021

Welcome to St. Paul Lutheran Church. We are grateful to God you are here.
We pray that you will feel the Spirit and warm welcome of this faith
community. We look forward to seeing you again.

4th Sunday of Advent

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."



Gathering

Prelude

Suite for Christmas Day

Welcome

Gathering Hymn

ELW 275: Angels, from the Realms of Glory

**Angels, from the realms of glory,
wing your flight o'er all the earth;
once you sang creation's story,
now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.**

**Shepherds, in the fields abiding,
watching o'er your flocks by night,
God with us is now residing,**

**yonder shines the infant light.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.**

Lighting of the Advent Wreath

Reader One: One thing we have learned on our Advent journey is that it is better not to go alone. We live in a do-it-yourself culture that celebrates the individual. But faith is not something that we can do on our own. We need companions on the journey; we need others to support us and strengthen us and encourage us. We put our journey in the hands of many people around us; and although it is a risk, we are better for it. We learn to trust that someone has our back, as we make this journey of faith.

Reader Two: Matthew reminds us that when God chose to come to earth the first time, God chose to trust in people to help make it happen. God trusted in Mary, and God trusted in Joseph. In turn, we trust in God to be faithful to the promise and to sustain us through many others as we continue our journey of faith.

Reader One: We light the candles of peace, hope, joy, and trust, as our circle is complete. (Light four candles on the wreath.)

Reader Two: Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, that God may teach us the ways of peace, hope, joy, and trust.

Gathering Hymn, Continued

ELW 275: Angels, from the Realms of Glory

**Sages, leave your contemplations,
brighter visions beam afar;
seek the great desire of nations,
you have seen his natal star.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.**

**All creation, join in praising
God, the Father, Spirit, Son,
evermore your voices raising
to the eternal Three in One.
Come and worship, come and worship,
worship Christ, the newborn king.**

Confession and Forgiveness

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

All: Amen.

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

**All: God for whom we wait,
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.
All: Amen.

Special Music

Sunday School

The Word

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

Prayer of the Day

P: 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.

All: 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.

P: Word of God, Word of Life.

All: Thanks be to God

Gospel Acclamation



Gospel Reading

Luke 1: 46-55

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.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Message

Pastor Carole Lundell

Special Music

God Rest Ye Merry, Chancel Choir

Prayers of Intercession

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

P: Hear us, O God.

All: Your mercy is great.

The Meal

Holy Communion is a sacred and mysterious manifestation of God's love and grace for us. In Holy Communion the Father, Son and Holy Spirit invite us to share in the bond of peace and love they share with each other through repentant hearts and humble faith. All are invited to share in this gift of grace.

Great Thanksgiving

P: The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts,

All: We lift them to the Lord.

P: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

**All: 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

All are Welcome to Share in this Meal

As the prophets of old knew, so may we also know: When we live by the Spirit, we will inherit the kingdom of God. The Spirit of love and forgiveness grows on the tree of life. This Spirit is available to all who seek it. Eat of this fruit, for it is the body of Christ, given for you.

Post Communion Prayer

P: 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.

All: Amen.

Sending

Announcements

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.

All: Amen.

Sending Hymn

ELW 289: *Angels We Have Heard on High*

**Angels we have heard on high,
sweetly singing o'er the plains,
and the mountains in reply,
echoing their joyous strains.**

Refrain

**Gloria in excelsis Deo;
gloria in excelsis Deo.**

**Shepherds, why this jubilee?
Why your joyous strains prolong?
What the gladsome tidings be
which inspire your heav'nly song? Refrain**

**Come to Bethlehem and see
him whose birth the angels sing;
come, adore on bended knee
Christ the Lord, the newborn king. Refrain**

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Christ is near.

All: Thanks be to God.

Thank you for celebrating God's love with us today.

