

December 21-22, 2024

Fourth Sunday in Advent



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www.salemlutheran.org

Fourth Sunday in Advent

A Real Christmas will Lift up the Lowly

Welcome! Thank you for joining us for worship today. In our services we gather before our almighty God to receive his gifts and to offer him our worship and praise. Through God's powerful Word and sacraments he renews our faith and strengthens us to serve in joy.

PRAYER BEFORE WORSHIP: Lord Jesus, our souls wait in eager anticipation for your return to bring us to glory. Help us in this Advent season to prepare our hearts to celebrate also your first coming at Christmas. Bless our prayers and praise today. Amen.

THEME OF THE DAY: By this time of the holiday season, people sometimes feel the guilt of presents that aren't perfect, parties that didn't go as planned, or year-end projects that didn't get done. Added to that, now it dawns on us how little attention we have sometimes given to the spiritual preparation Advent invites. If that is how we feel, perhaps the frenzy of December has done us a favor. We have been stretched to our limits and now realize our shortcomings. We have been humbled. Perfect! Being made aware of our weakness does not disqualify us from God's care - it does the opposite. It prepares us for the work he does best, lifting up the lowly in love.

WORSHIP SERIES: The season of Advent helps prepare us for the real Christmas. Advent is Latin for "coming." In this season, Christians observe the connection between the first time the Son of God came into our world as the Savior and the second time he will come as the Judge. Advent prepares our minds and hearts so we might celebrate a real Christmas focused on God's real love.

A WORD ABOUT HOLY COMMUNION: Our church observes the biblical practice of member communion (also called close communion). In Holy Communion we not only receive forgiveness from God, but we also express the unique relationship our members have with each other. If you are not a member of our congregation, we kindly ask that you not take communion today, but speak with our pastor after the service. We would love to share the sacrament with you in the future.

SERVING GOD, SERVING US:

Preacher: Pastor Ryan Wolfe Piano/Organ: Abigail Ibisch
Soloist: Carolyn Forster, Allison Dorn

Order of Worship

CW Hymnal, Setting Two



Please stand.

Minister: In the name of the Father and of the † Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation: Amen.

CONFESSION OF SINS & ADVENT CANDLE

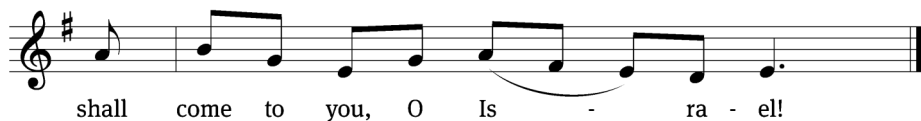
M: When God created the world, he made the crown of his creation—the human race—in his image. Perfect people lived in a perfect world in a perfect relationship with God.

C: **But mankind rebelled against God, bringing sin into the world and death to all. God declared the wages of sin to be death. We too are guilty, and we confess our sinful thoughts, words, and actions.**

M: However, God—who is Love—did not want to be separated from his children forever. He promised a Savior who would bear the punishment for sin, defeat the devil, and break the bonds of death.

Genesis 1:26; Romans 6:23

ALL:



M: When the time had fully come, God sent his Son into the world. Jesus, our Savior, has paid the ransom for your debt; your sins are forgiven. In view of God's mercy, today we light the love candle. This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him.

C: **This is love: that that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.**

Galatians 4:4,5; John 4:9-10

ALL:

O, come, my Love, who gives to me Grace un - de - served, un -
end - ing, free. Help me to share this gift most rare
That all, God's hope and peace, may share. Re-joyce! Re-joyce!
Em-man - u - el Shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

M: In the hope and peace and joy—and love—of God we go to the world—to our friends, relatives, acquaintances and neighbors. We regard no one from a worldly point of view. If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.

C: **God has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. Jesus, who had no sin, became sin for us; in him we have become the righteousness of God.**

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

ALL:

Re-joyce! Re-joyce! Em-man - u - el Shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

THE WORD OF GOD

Prayer of the Day

M: Let us pray.

Stir up your power, O Lord, and come. Take away the burden of our sins, and make us ready for the celebration of your birth, 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.**

Be seated.

First Reading

Micah 5:2-5a

The lowly little town of Bethlehem would be lifted up. There a special son would be born who would bring spiritual peace to the ends of the earth.

²“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times.”

³Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

⁴He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

⁵And he will be our peace

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Second Reading

Hebrews 10:5-10

We could not possibly raise ourselves up to God. So, the Son of God obeyed the law for us and by his sacrifice has made us holy. Christ has lifted up the lowly.

⁵Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me;

⁶with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased.

⁷Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—
I have come to do your will, my God.’ ”

⁸First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law. ⁹Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second. ¹⁰And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

M: The Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

Please stand.

Gospel

Luke 1:39-55

In Spirit-wrought humility, Mary knew she needed a Savior. God lifts her up, making her the mother of that Savior.

³⁹At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴²In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

⁴⁶And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.
⁵⁰His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
⁵¹He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.
⁵²He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.
⁵³He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
⁵⁴He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
⁵⁵to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”

M: The Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise be to you, O Christ!

Be seated.

Children's Devotion

Anthem: Magnificat

Koine

My Soul proclaims. My soul now glorifies, my spirit sings in God my Savior.
For he is mindful of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me blessed.

My soul proclaims, the greatness of the Lord.
For the Mighty One has done great things and holy is his name.
His mercy touches all who live in reverence and fear
from generations to generation.

He has done mighty deeds;
he has scattered those who are proud within their thoughts.
He's brought down rulers from their thrones and lifted up the meek.
He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich are empty.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord.
For he has come to Israel to remember mercy

My souls proclaims, the greatness of the Lord.
For he has come to Israel to remember mercy
the promise made to Abraham to his sons forever.

Sermon

Based on Luke 1:39-55

“Blessed are those who believe”

Please stand after the sermon.

THANKSGIVING

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 in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy Christian 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.**

Be seated.

Offering



 Connect Card

Our members give offerings to support God's work in our church. Offerings can be put in the basket or made online by scanning the code. Visitors may give, but aren't expected to.

We ask members and visitors alike to fill out the connection card and place it in the basket now or as you leave. Please share your prayer requests that we can pray for you.



 Give Online

Please stand.

Prayer of the Church

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Our Lord Jesus has given us a holy supper in which we receive his true body and blood for the forgiveness of sins. The meal also bears witness to the unity and fellowship we share with each other. Therefore, we invite to communion all those who share in our confession by virtue of their membership here or in a sister WELS or ELS congregation. We ask visitors to speak to the pastor before communing.

M: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

M: Lift up your hearts.

C: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

M: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

M: It is truly good and right that we should at all times and in all places give you thanks, O Lord, holy Father, almighty and everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who promised that wherever two or three come together in his name, there he is with them to shepherd his flock until he comes again in glory. Therefore, with all the saints on earth and hosts of heaven, we praise your holy name and join their glorious song:

Holy, Holy, Holy

The musical score is written in G major (one flat) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The lyrics are: Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow - er, God of might. Heav'n and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless - ed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Ho - san - na in the high - est, ho - san - na in the high - est!

Words of Institution

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my + body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my + blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

M: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: **Amen.**

O Christ, Lamb of God

The musical score is written in a single melodic line on a treble clef staff. It consists of nine measures of music. The lyrics are: "O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us. O Christ, Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us your peace. A - men. A - men." The music features a mix of quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. There are several slurs over groups of notes, and a double bar line at the end of the piece.

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

Be seated.

Communion Distribution

For those who cannot have any alcohol for personal or medical reasons we offer white grape juice. You will find cups of white grape juice in the center of each communion tray. Gluten-free wafers are available by request for those medically unable to tolerate gluten.

Communicants may choose to receive the wine by individual or common cup. If you choose the common cup, please allow the individual tray to pass and then assist the minister by helping to tip the common cup.

Hymn: The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came

CW 328



1 The an - gel Ga - bri - el from heav - en came,
2 "I come from heav'n to tell the Lord's de - cree:
3 Then gen - tle Mar - y meek - ly bowed her head;
4 Of her Im - man - u - el, the Christ, was born



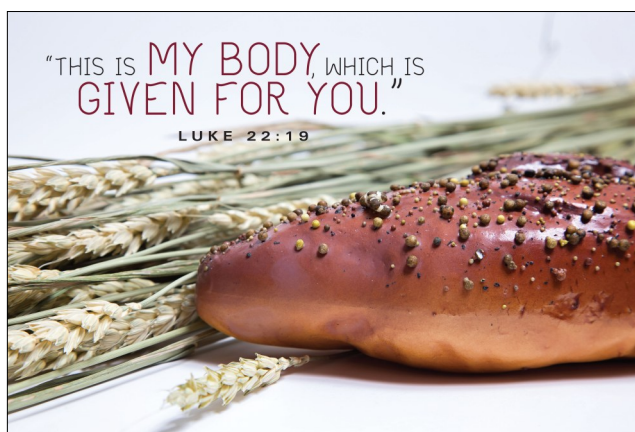
his wings as drift - ed snow, his eyes as flame:
a bless - ed vir - gin moth - er you shall be.
"To me be as it pleas - es God," she said.
in Beth - le - hem, all on a Christ - mas morn,



"All hail," said he to meek and low - ly Mar - y,
Your son shall be Im - man - u - el, by seers fore - told,
"My soul shall praise and mag - ni - fy his ho - ly name."
and Chris - tian folk through-out the world will ev - er say,



"most high-ly fa-vored maid-en." Glo - ri - a!
most high-ly fa-vored maid-en." Glo - ri - a!
Most high-ly fa-vored maid-en, Glo - ri - a!
"Most high-ly fa-vored maid-en." Glo - ri - a!



Hymn: The Infant Priest Was Holy Born

CW 674 sts. 1-4, 7



1 The in - fant Priest was ho - ly born for us un -
2 This great High Priest in hu - man flesh was i - con
3 The ho - ly Lamb un - daunt - ed came to God's own
4 But death would not the vic - tor be of him who
7 With cher - u - bim and ser - a - phim our voic - es



ho - ly and for - lorn; from flesh - ly tem - ple
of God's right - eous - ness. His hal - lowed touch brought
al - tar lit with flame; while weep - ing an - gels
hung up - on the tree. He leads us to the
join the end - less hymn, and "Ho - ly, ho - ly,



forth came he, a - noint - ed from e - ter - ni - ty.
sanc - ti - ty; his hand re - moved im - pu - ri - ty.
hid their eyes, this Priest be - came a sac - ri - fice.
Ho - ly Place with - in the veil, be - fore God's face.
ho - ly" sing to Christ, God's Lamb, our Priest and King.

After the distribution please stand at the pastor's direction.

Response of Thanksgiving

M: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

C: **His mercy endures forever.**

Psalm 118:1

M: Whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup,

C: **We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.**

1 Corinthians 11:26

Closing Prayer

M: We give thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us with this saving gift. We pray that through it you will strengthen our faith and increase our love for one another. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: **Amen.**

Blessing

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look on you with favor and + give you peace.

C: Amen.

Hymn: Let the Earth Now Praise the Lord

CW 315 sts. 1, 4, 6



1 Let the earth now praise the Lord, who has tru - ly
4 Sav - ior, hear my wel - come cry - loud ho - san - nas
6 And, when you shall come a - gain as a glo - rious



kept his word and at last to us did send
lift - ed high! King of glo - ry, en - ter in;
king to reign, I with joy may see your face,



Christ, the sin - ner's help and friend.
cleanse my soul of ev - 'ry sin.
free - ly ran - somed by your grace.

Silent Prayer and Announcements

Christmas Worship Series Video Intro

Fellowship & Spiritual Growth

Sunday morning, all are invited to enjoy refreshments and fellowship in the entry between services. Sunday JAM for children ages 3yrs to 6th grade starts at 9:15am in the sanctuary. Adult Bible study begins at 9:15 in the fellowship hall downstairs

For Worship Next Week

Worship theme: The Gift of God: God Gives Both Substitute and Sacrifice

Bible Readings: Isaiah 50:4-9, Hebrews 2:10-18, Luke 2:41-52

Hymns: 346, 355, 330, 342

PERSONAL PREPARATION FOR HOLY COMMUNION

(Also printed in the hymnal)

Q: What does God tell me about myself in his holy Word?

A: *He says that I am a sinner and deserve only his punishment.*

Q: What should I do if I am not aware of my sins or am not troubled by them?

A: *I should examine myself according to the Ten Commandments and ask how well I have carried out my responsibilities as a husband or wife or single person, as a parent or child, an employer or employee, a teacher or student. Have I loved God with all my heart, gladly heard his Word, and patiently endured affliction? Have I been disobedient, proud, or unforgiving? Have I been selfish, lazy, envious, or quarrelsome? Have I lied or deceived, taken something not mine, or given anyone a bad name? Have I abused my body or permitted indecent thoughts to linger in my mind? Have I failed to do what is right and good?*

Q: When I realize that I have sinned against God and deserve his punishment, what should I do?

A: *I will confess before God all my sins, those which I remember as well as those of which I am unaware. I will pray to God for his mercy and forgiveness.*

Q: How do I receive his gracious forgiveness?

A: *His Word assures me that Jesus led a pure and holy life for me and died on the cross for me to pay the full price for all my sins. Through faith in Jesus, I have been clothed in my Savior's perfect righteousness and holiness.*

Q: What further assurance do I have that Jesus is mine and I am his?

A: *In Holy Communion he gives me his body and blood together with the bread and wine as a truly life-giving food and drink to unite me with him and my fellow believers. By means of this sacrament, Jesus not only forgives my sins but sweeps away all my doubts about his love for me, gives me his own strength to live a God-pleasing life, and grants me a joyful foretaste of heaven.*

Q: How can I be sure that I receive all these blessings in the Lord's Supper?

A: *I have his own word spoken as his last will and testament on the night before he died. There he tells me: "Take and eat; this is my body. Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."*

Q: How will I respond to this priceless gift from Jesus?

A: *I will daily thank and praise him for his love to me. With his help I will fight temptation, do my best to correct whatever wrongs I have done, and serve him and those around me with love and good works.*

Lord Jesus, with joy and gratitude I now come to your table to receive the precious food of your life-giving body and blood. May it strengthen me to remain in you as you remain in me, so that I bear much fruit in devoted service to you and in acts of kindness to others. Amen.

Welcome to worship!

FOR OUR GUESTS

We are glad that you joined us to worship our Savior today. If you have questions about our church or service simply ask an usher or someone near you. We're happy to help. Please take note of a few helpful things:

- † **Restrooms** are located straight down the hall opposite the sanctuary entrance. Both men's and women's restrooms are equipped with **diaper changing tables** for your convenience.
- † Our sanctuary is equipped with an amplified "loop" system for **hearing assistance**. Please set hearing aids to the "T" position.
- † You will find a **connection card** in your pew. We ask members and guests to share their names and contact info, and invite you to share requests for contact or prayers. Cards can be placed in the offering basket or left on the table near the sanctuary entrance.
- † Salem members give an **offering** to support the work we do for the Lord. Guests are not expected to give anything, but if you wish to make a donation you can place it in a basket as it's passed during the service or give online.

FOR THOSE WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

We love to see families worship together and we welcome children to sing and pray and grow with us in our services. Please note these special worship aids and helps for families:

- † Children's bulletins & "*quiet bags*" for your child's use in worship are available in the entry, just to the left of the office hallway. Ask an usher if you need help finding them.
- † If your child needs to be nursed or quieted for a few moments you can use our "*cry room*" down the hallway across from the restrooms. The service is shown live on a TV in the room.
- † Sunday mornings, before the hymn of the day and sermon, children of all ages are invited to come to the front of church for a short devotion on God's Word. Parents may accompany their children as they wish.

**Salem Lutheran Church exists to glorify God
by teaching his timeless Truth, that all may
grow in grace and faith to share tomorrow's eternity.**

