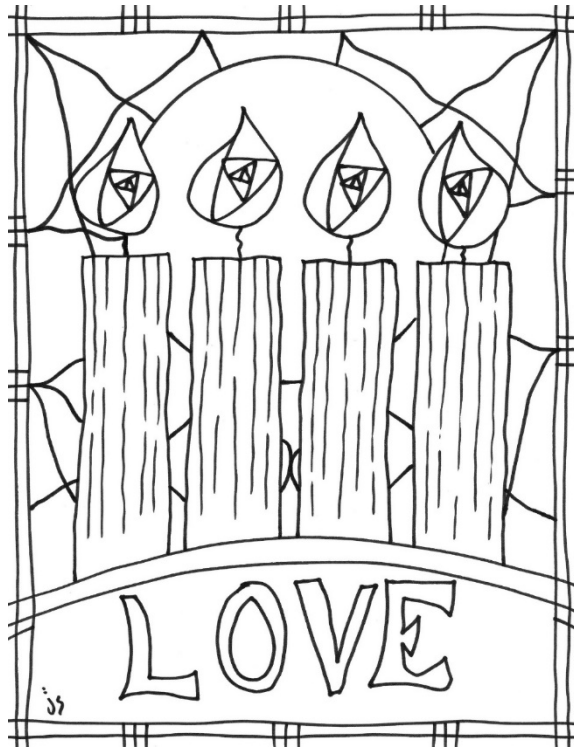


Sunday, December 20 – Advent 4



Gathering

Welcome

Prelude

Confession and Forgiveness

Blessed be the holy Trinity, + one God,
whose forgiveness is sure and whose steadfast love endures forever. **Amen**

With hearts anticipating God's incarnation, we make preparation by confessing our sin:

A moment for silent reflection.

Loving and forgiving God,
we confess that we are held captive by sin.
In spite of our best efforts, we have gone astray.
We have not welcomed the stranger;

**we have not loved our neighbour;
we have not been Christ to one another.
Restore us, O God.
Wake us up and turn us from our sin.
Renew us each day in the light of Christ. Amen**

People of God, hear this glad news:
by God's endless grace your sins are forgiven, and you are free – free from all that holds you back, and free to live in the peaceable realm of God. May you be strengthened in God's love, + comforted in the peace of Christ, and accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Gathering Song *"Saviour of the Nations Come"* **# 263**

Saviour of the nations, come; virgin's son, make here your home.
Marvel now, O heav'n and earth: God has chosen such as birth.

Not by human flesh and blood, but the mystic Breath of God,
was the Word of God made flesh, fruit of woman, blossom fresh.

Wondrous birth – oh, wondrous child – from his throne, a virgin mild!
Very God, and Mary's son, eager now his race to run!

Praise we sing to Christ the Lord, virgin's son, incarnate Word!
To the holy Trinity praise we sing eternally!

Text: Attributed to Ambrose of Milan, 340-397, and **Martin Luther, 1483-1546**; translation © 2006 Augsburg Fortress. Reprinted with permission under ONE LICENSE #A-736296. All rights reserved.

Greeting

P: 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.

Lighting the Advent Wreath

(Written by Pr. Sue Neville)

A: Do you know what time it is?
L: Finally, time to light the last advent candle!
A: That's right! This week is the last Sunday of Advent! That means we are lighting the
candle of LOVE.
L: Don't forget, there's a pandemic happening. No kissing!
A: Well, that's one kind of love. When we talk about the candle of love, we are
remembering God's love for us. God loved us so much that God gave us the greatest gift
of all time: Jesus!

- L:** Jesus *is* an amazing gift because Jesus is the gift that keeps giving. Jesus gives mercy, forgiveness, and grace... all because of love!
- A:** And this love isn't just for you and me. It is for everyone and for all time. This is the promise of Jesus' death and resurrection.
- L:** That's a pretty awesome gift!
- A:** When we light the candle of love, we are lighting up love in our hearts and in our lives so that we can, not just experience God's love, but share it with others, too.
- A:** People need lots of love.
- L:** Because of Jesus, we have lots to give!
- P:** Let us pray: Uplifting God we ask you to continue loving us even when we do things that don't seem very loving. Wrap your arms around us in a loving embrace so that when we need your love the most we can feel you holding us in a holy hug. We pray this in Christ's name. **Amen**

Candle Lighting Song (Sung to the tune of Away in A Manger)

A candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
A candle of HOPE in the winter's long night.
While angels sing blessings from heaven's starry sky
Our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.

A candle is burning a candle of PEACE;
A candle to signal that conflict must cease;
For Jesus is coming to show us the way;
A message of peace humbly laid in the hay.

A candle is burning, a candle of JOY
A candle to welcome young Mary's new boy
Our hearts fill with wonder and eyes light and glow
As joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow

A candle is burning, a candle of LOVE
A candle to point us to heaven above
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
For Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.

Words: Sandra Dean, 1986

First Reading

L: A reading from Psalm 89

- ¹ I will sing of your steadfast love, O LORD, forever;
with my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.
- ² I declare that your steadfast love is established for ever;
your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.
- ³ You said, 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to my servant David:
- ⁴ "I will establish your descendants forever,
and build your throne for all generations." '
- ¹⁹ Then you spoke in a vision to your faithful one, and said:
'I have set the crown on one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people.
- ²⁰ I have found my servant David;
with my holy oil I have anointed him;
- ²¹ my hand shall always remain with him;
my arm also shall strengthen him.
- ²² The enemy shall not outwit him,
the wicked shall not humble him.
- ²³ I will crush his foes before him
and strike down those who hate him.
- ²⁴ My faithfulness and steadfast love shall be with him;
and in my name his horn shall be exalted.
- ²⁵ I will set his hand on the sea
and his right hand on the rivers.
- ²⁶ He shall cry to me, "You are my Father,
my God, and the Rock of my salvation!"

Word of God. Word of Life.

Thanks be to God!

Gospel Acclamation *(sung together)*

page 142

Alleluia, Lord to whom shall we go?
You have the words of eternal life.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Gospel

P: The holy gospel according to Luke, the 1st chapter.
Glory to you, O Lord.

- ²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,
²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's

name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favoured one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. ³¹And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.' ³⁴Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵The angel said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ³⁶And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. ³⁷For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸Then Mary said, 'Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.' Then the angel departed from her.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Hymn of the Day "The Angel Gabriel from Heaven Came"

265

1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
with wings as drifted snow, with eyes as flame:
"All hail to thee, O lowly maiden Mary, most highly favored lady," Gloria!

2 "For know a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honor thee;
thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold, most highly favored lady." Gloria!

3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head;
"To me be as it pleaseth God," she said,
"My soul shall laud and magnify God's holy name." Most highly favored lady, Gloria!

4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born
in Bethlehem all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say: "Most highly favored lady." Gloria!

Prayers

Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

P: Draw near to us, O God, and receive our prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord who teaches us to pray:

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

Sharing of the Peace

Sending

Announcements may be made.

Benediction

(Written by Pastor Katharine Gohm)

P: May God, for whom nothing is impossible
restore you and bless you.

May Christ, in whom is the dawning of grace,
carry you and gently lead you.

May the Spirit, whose song is gladness,
fill you with peace and comfort. **Amen**

Sending Hymn *“Joy to the World”*

267

Joy to the world, the Lord is come!
Let earth receive her king; let ev'ry heart prepare him room
and heav'n and nature sing, and heav'n and nature sing,
and heav'n, and heav'n and nature sing.

Joy to the earth, the Savior reigns!
Let all their songs employ, while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains
repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

No more let sin and sorrow grow
nor thorns infest the ground; he comes to make his blessings flow

far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found,
far as, far as the curse is found.

He rules the world with truth and grace
and makes the nations prove the glories of his righteousness
and wonders of his love, and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders of his love.

Dismissal

A: Go in peace. Prepare the way of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God!**