DECEMBER 20TH, 2020
FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT
HOLY CROSS LUTHERAN CHURCH

As We Gather

Today marks the fifth and final week of our series titled "People of ADVENTure!" As followers of Jesus, we live "between the Advents," called to be his disciples on a journey of faith full of risk and reward. We are people who live in "the now and the not yet," people who are simultaneously saint and sinner, living in and through the redemptive power of Jesus to his glory and for the good of our neighbor. We celebrate Christmas but we long for him to return and bring all things into unity under his power. Come Lord, Jesus, come quickly! Welcome to all who worship with us today, on-site or on-line

PRELUDE *"Lift Up Your Heads, You Mighty Gates"* *Jan Bender*

WELCOME AND GREETING *Pastor Tom*

Please note: This morning our service begins with the Advent Litany. You are invited to participate. The congregation reads the portion printed in bold and will sing the last portion printed in bold.

ADVENT RESPONSIVE LITANY

WE WAIT IN HOPE *Soloist, Kent Schreyer; Pianist, Joan Kruse*
Hand bells; Marge and Dennis Simmons
Reader: John Pruser

Soloist: All creations lies in waiting, in the stillness of the night, With hope anticipating the Advent of Eternal Light.

R Advent is a time to praise.
C Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.
R During Advent we remember God's past faithfulness.
C Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.
R During Advent we remember God's present goodness.
C Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.
R During Advent we remember God's future promises.
C Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Candle Lightning

Reader: This morning we light four candles. The **first candle** reminds us that during Advent we wait upon the promises of the Lord. The **second candle** reminds us to watch for God's presence with expectant eyes and anxious hearts. The **third candle** reminds us to prepare ourselves to receive the gift of the promised Savior. As we light the **fourth candle**, we are reminded that Advent is a time to give praise for what God has done, for what God will bring to completion. As the light of Advent grows brighter, it reminds us that we move closer to receiving the gift of a Savior.

C (sung) We praise in hope for the morning Light,
For the love of Christ to illuminate the night.
We praise with joy for the Savior's birth;
We praise in hope for peace on earth.

**Please remain standing for the Invocation and Confession on page 3.*

CONFESSION AND ASSURANCE OF GOD'S LOVE

P In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

C Amen!

P If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

C But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

P Let us then confess our sins to God our Father.

ALL Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

P In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C Amen! Thanks be to God!

(Please be seated. Thank you.)

OPENING HYMN *"All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name"* *LSB 549*

1 All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.
Bring forth the royal diadem
And crown Him Lord of all.

3 Ye seed of Israel's chosen race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him who saves you by His grace
And crown Him Lord of all.
Hail Him who saves you by His grace
And crown Him Lord of all.

4 Hail Him, ye heirs of David's line,
Whom David Lord did call,
The God incarnate, man divine,
And crown Him Lord of all.
The God incarnate, man divine,
And crown Him Lord of all.

7 Oh, that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song
And crown Him Lord of all.
We'll join the everlasting song
And crown Him Lord of all.

Text: Public domain

RESPONSIVE PSALM *I Will Sing of the Steadfast Love of the Lord* *Psalm 89:1-5*

R [1] I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;
with my mouth I will make known your faithfulness to all generations.
C [2] For I said, "Steadfast love will be built up forever;
in the heavens you will establish your faithfulness."
R [3] You have said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
C [4] 'I will establish your offspring forever,
and build your throne for all generations.'"

ALL [5] Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD,
your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!

R This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God!

Reading *The Lord's Covenant with David* *2 Samuel 7:4-11,16*

4 .....the word of the LORD came to Nathan, **5** "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build me a house to dwell in? **6** I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. **7** In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"' **8** Now, therefore, thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel. **9** And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. **10** And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, **11** from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. **16** And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.'"

R This is the Word of the Lord.
C Thanks be to God!

MUSIC MINISTRY *The First Noel*
Mary Sorensen and Jonathan Malone

Praise

GOSPEL READING *Birth of Jesus Foretold* Luke 1:26-38

[26] In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, [27] to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. [28] And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" [29] But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. [30] And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. [32] He 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 father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." [34] And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" [35] And the angel answered 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 called holy—the Son of God. [36] And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. [37] For nothing will be impossible with God." [38] And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

P This is the Gospel of the Lord! **C Thanks be to God.**

MESSAGE *The Gospel and the Unplanned*
Luke 1:26-38
Pastor Tom

Today's text has a secondary lesson added to it's "full-bodied" Gospel presentation. It reminds us that the Lord's ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8), or, as the Yiddish proverb has it, "Man plans. God laughs." Either way, we are reminded that the journey of life brings unplanned diversions or stops along the way. Yes, it's important to plan, but it is just as important to be flexible with those plans, recognizing our own limitations in controlling the present or future. Think about some of the diversions or stops (good and bad) you've experienced in your journey of faith. How has the Lord led you through these times? What have you learned about His love and provision for you? Where has your thinking about Jesus been challenged by your experience? Share with someone today your story of faith and how the Lord has worked in your life during the "unplanned" stops along the way.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.
On the third day He rose again.
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, and for all people according to their needs.

Pastor Tom will lead the congregation in prayer.

P Into Your hands, eternal God, we offer our prayers, trusting Your love through, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom, and teach 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.

SERVICE OF THE SACRAMENT ~ SETTING FOUR, *pp. 208-212*

PREFACE

P The Lord be with you.
C And also with you.
P Lift up your hearts.
C We lift them to the Lord.
P Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.
C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

SANCTUS *LSB, p. 208*

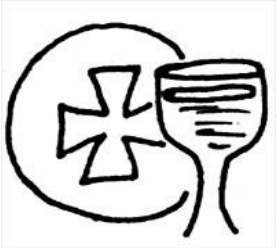
C Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of Sabaoth adored;
Heav'n and earth with full acclaim shout the glory of Your name.
Sing hosanna in the highest, sing hosanna to the Lord;
Truly blest is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

P Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

PAX DOMINI



P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
C Amen.

LAMB OF GOD *LSB, p. 209*

O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, Have mercy on us, Lord, we pray.
O Jesus Christ, true Lamb of God, You take the sin of the world away;
Have mercy on us, Jesus Christ, And grant us peace, O Lord, we pray.

DISTRIBUTION MUSIC "Away in a Manger"
Mary Sorensen and Jonathan Malone

BLESSING

P Almighty God, Father, + Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.
C Amen

CLOSING HYMN *"Glory Be to God the Father"* *LSB 506*

1 ***Glory be to God the Father,***
Glory be to God the Son,
Glory be to God the Spirit:
Great Jehovah, Three in One!
Glory, glory
While eternal ages run!

2 **Glory be to Him who loved us,**
Washed us from each spot and stain;
Glory be to Him who bought us,
Made us kings with Him to reign!
Glory, glory
To the Lamb that once was slain!

3 **Glory to the King of angels,**
Glory to the Church's King,
Glory to the King of nations;
Heav'n and earth, your praises bring!
Glory, glory
To the King of glory sing!

4 **Glory, blessing, praise eternal!**
Thus the choir of angels sings;
Honor, riches, pow'r, dominion!
Thus its praise creation brings.
Glory, glory,
Glory to the King of kings!

Text: Public domain

POSTLUDE *"Ye Sons of Men, Oh, Hearken"* *J.S. Bach and J.C. Bach*

**If you have not already done so, offering may be deposited in the offering plate as you exit the sanctuary. Or, take advantage of our easy on-line giving option by visiting www.hcdallas.org. Thank you for your continued prayers and financial support during 2020!*