



Morning Prayer
The Fourth Sunday of Advent
December 20, 2020 9 am

Comfort, comfort my people, says our God. [Isaiah 43:1]

Ministers of the Liturgy

The Rev. Dr. Judith Lee

Members of the Vestry

Ginny Starkis & Susan Edmondson, Wardens
Steve Ketcham, Gayle Ruscitti, Lisa Ruggiero,
Wayne Stochaj, Peach Warren,

Musicians: Randolph Bloom, Mary Johnson, Jeff Lukas

Organ Prelude

Lighting the Advent Wreath

Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent, the Sunday of Love. Jesus shows us God's perfect love in human form. Those who believe in him and live in him, live in love. Love transforms and perfects all things. It never ends. We light this candle today to remind us that God is love. We thank God for the hope he gives us, for the peace he bestows, for the joy he pours into our hearts, and for the love that redeems us and shows us the way.

O God of Love, Emmanuel, send your light into our hearts at this time. Help us to be ready for the time of Christ's appearing. Grant that he may so dwell in us that his perfect love fills our entire being. Make our worship a time in which we celebrate your love and are made ready to show that love to the whole world, both today and for evermore. **Amen.**

Advent Hymn *O come, O come, Emmanuel* Hymnal #56

*O come Desire of nations, bind in one the heart of all mankind
Bid thou our sad divisions cease, and be thyself our King of Peace
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to thee O Israel!*

Opening Sentence

Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

² *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;*

*and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
when you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you*

³ *For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. [Isaiah 43:1-3]*

The Confession

Ann Rowthorn

Renew in us this day the image of your love, O God; renew in us in the likeness of your mercy.. May any refusal to forgive that lingers with us, any bitterness of soul that hardens our hearts, be softened by your graces. Renew us in the image of your love, O God, renew us in the likeness of your mercy. **Amen.**

Absolution

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through the grace of Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

The Invitatory and Psalter

Come, come, O Christ, and stand in our midst

Peace to each one who comes in joy.

Peace to the creatures,

Peace in our hearts,

Come, come, O Christ, stand in our midst as you did stand in the midst of your disciples, and speak to us words of peace.

Peace to each one who comes in need.

Peace to each man, woman, and child.

Peace to the nations.

Peace in our world.

Invitatory Psalm 141:1-3,8ab

O LORD, I call to you; come to me quickly; * hear my voice when I cry to you.

Let my prayer be set forth in your sight as incense, *

the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Set a watch before my mouth, O LORD, and guard the door of my lips; *

let not my heart incline to any evil thing.

My eyes are turned to you, Lord GOD; * in you I take refuge.

Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26

1 Your love, O Lord, for ever will I sing; *

from age to age my mouth will proclaim your faithfulness.

2 For I am persuaded that your love is established for ever; *

you have set your faithfulness firmly in the heavens.

3 "I have made a covenant with my chosen one; *

I have sworn an oath to David my servant:

4 'I will establish your line for ever, * and preserve your throne for all generations.'"

19 You spoke once in a vision and said to your faithful people: *

"I have set the crown upon a warrior and have exalted one chosen out of the people.

20 I have found David my servant; * with my holy oil have I anointed him.

21 My hand will hold him fast * and my arm will make him strong.

22 No enemy shall deceive him, * nor any wicked man bring him down.

23 I will crush his foes before him * and strike down those who hate him.

24 My faithfulness and love shall be with him, *and he shall be victorious through my Name.

25 I shall make his dominion extend *from the Great Sea to the River.

26 He will say to me, 'You are my Father, *my God, and the rock of my salvation.'

A Reading from the Second Book of Samuel [7:1-11, 16]

When the king was settled in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the Lord is with you."

But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan: Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? 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 and a tabernacle. Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" 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 to be prince over my people Israel; 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. And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 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. Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God**

A Song of the Wilderness

Isaiah 35:1-7,10

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, * the desert shall rejoice and blossom;

It shall blossom abundantly, * and rejoice with joy and singing.

They shall see the glory of the Lord, * the majesty of our God.

Strengthen the weary hands, * and make firm the feeble knees.

Say to the anxious, "Be strong, do not fear! *

Here is your God, coming with judgment to save you."

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, * and the ears of the deaf be unstopped.

Then shall the lame leap like a deer, * and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

For waters shall break forth in the wilderness * and streams in the desert;

The burning sand shall become a pool * and the thirsty ground, springs of water.

The ransomed of God shall return with singing, * with everlasting joy upon their heads.

Joy and gladness shall be theirs, * and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

A Reading from the Gospel of Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. 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 ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The 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. And 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. For nothing will be impossible with God." Then 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 Song of Mary *Magnificat* Luke 1:46-55

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;*

for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed: *

the Almighty has done great things for me, and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him * in every generation.

He has shown the strength of his arm,* he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *and has lifted up the lowly.

He has filled the hungry with good things,* and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *

for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, * to Abraham and his children forever.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *

Musical Meditation

The 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 to the dead. 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 catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Prayers

Hear our cry, O God. **And listen to our prayer.**

Let us pray.

Help us, O God our Savior; **deliver us and forgive us our sins.**

Look upon your congregation; **give to your people the blessing of peace.**

Declare your glory among the nations; **and your wonders among all peoples.**

Do not let the oppressed be shamed and turned away; **never forget the lives of your poor.**

Continue your loving-kindness to those who know you;

and your favor to those who are true of heart.

Satisfy us by your loving-kindness in the morning;

so shall we rejoice and be glad all the days of our life.

The Lord's Prayer

Collect of the Day

Purify our conscience, Almighty God, by your daily visitation, that your Son Jesus Christ, at his coming, may find in us a mansion prepared for himself; who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Prayers of the People

Let us pray for the church and the world as we wait with hope and longing for signs of the God of Peace in our world.

We give thanks for gathering us together in this community; show your church how to make good use of this holy time so that we may see your Spirit in one another.

O Come, Emmanuel, **Your people await your coming**

We give thanks for the freedom you have given our nation. Grant that our leaders and the leaders of all nations use their power for peace and justice.

O Come, Emmanuel, **Your people await your coming.**

Watch over all those who must spend this holiday season apart from the people they love. Grant us the grace to trust the love that grows stronger with distance and to see your purpose in all that we long for. Watch over our children, that they may know the peace, as well as the excitement, of your presence.

O Come, Emmanuel **Your people await your coming**

Embrace with your healing love those who are suffering from weakness in body and spirit, their family members and the people who resent the burdens of this time. *Pause . . .* Gather into your joyful presence those who have died, especially those we now name, silently or aloud . . . *Pause*

O Come, Emmanuel **Your people await your coming.**

Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new. Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

A Stewardship Prayer

Blessed be God who calls us together **Praise to God who makes us one people.**
Blessed be God who has forgiven our sin. **Praise to God who gives hope and freedom**
Blessed be God whose Word is proclaimed. **Praise to God who is revealed as love.**
Blessed be God who alone has called us.

Therefore we offer all that we are and all that we shall become.

Accept, O God, our sacrifice of praise.

Accept our thanks for all you have done.

Our hands were empty, and you filled them. Amen.

Musical Meditation *Come, thou long-expected Jesus*

Hymnal 66

*Come, thou long-expected Jesus, born to set thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in thee.*

*By thine own eternal Spirit rule in all our hearts alone;
By thine all sufficient merit raise us to thy glorious throne.*

A Prayer in Time of Transition

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a rector for this parish, that we may receive a faithful pastor who will care for your people and for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Open our hearts to possibilities we have not yet imagined, through Jesus Christ, our Light, our Center, our Hope. **Amen.**

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. **Amen.**

Blessing

May the Sun of Righteousness shine upon you and scatter the darkness from before your path; and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Dismissal: Let us bless the Lord.