



# *Living in Grace: Loving God & Serving Others*

## FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

24 December 2023, 10:15 am

### **AS WE GATHER**

Although we are ending Advent, when today's Psalm orders, "Be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in," we might think of Palm Sunday. But when it says only those with "clean hands and a pure heart" can follow, perhaps it is singing of our Lord's ascension back up through heaven's gates. How can we possibly follow Him there? We can't as we are, without clean hands and pure hearts. But today's Gospel quotes the prophecy that "they shall call His name Immanuel (which means, God with us)." Because of God's gracious presence now and our Savior's sacrifice for us already accomplished, Paul can write that the believers in Rome (and Christians everywhere) "are loved by God and called to be saints." Jesus' birth marks the day when He set in motion the cleansing we all need, of our hands, our hearts, and our minds. Lift up your heads, O gates. We are following our King!

### **PRE-SERVICE MUSIC and CANDLE LIGHTING**

### **WELCOME and INVITATION**

*Please stand as you are able.*

### **GATHERING SONGS**

#### ***Gentle Mary Laid Her Child***

***LSB 374***

- 1 Gentle Mary laid her child  
Lowly in a manger;  
There He lay, the Undefined,  
To the world a stranger.  
Such a babe in such a place,  
Can He be the Savior?  
Ask the saved of all the race  
Who have found His favor.

- 2 Angels sang about His birth,  
Wise Men sought and found Him;  
Heaven's star shone brightly forth  
Glory all around Him.  
Shepherds saw the wondrous sight,  
Heard the angels singing;  
All the plains were lit that night,  
All the hills were ringing.
- 3 Gentle Mary laid her child  
Lowly in a manger;  
He is still the Undefined  
But no more a stranger.  
Son of God of humble birth,  
Beautiful the story;  
Praise His name in all the earth;  
Hail the King of glory!

### ***We Three Kings of Orient Are***

*John H Hopkins, Jr.*

We three kings of Orient are;  
bearing gifts, we traverse afar,  
Field and fountain, moor and mountain,  
following yonder star.

### ***Chorus***

O star of wonder, star of night,  
star with royal beauty bright,  
Westward leading, still proceeding,  
guide us to Thy perfect light.

Born a King on Bethlehem's plain,  
gold I bring to crown Him again.  
King forever, ceasing never,  
over us all to reign. ***Chorus***

Frankincense to offer have I,  
incense owns a Deity nigh  
Pray'r and praising all us raising,  
worship Him God on high. ***Chorus***

Myrrh is mine its bitter perfume  
breathes a life of gathering gloom.  
Sorr'wing, sighing, bleeding, dying,  
sealed in the stone-cold tomb. **Chorus**

Glorious now behold him arise,  
King and God and sacrifice  
Al - le - lu - - ia, al - le - lu - - ia!  
Earth to the heav'ns replies. **Chorus**

## INVOCATION

*In the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit.*  
**Amen.**

## REPENTANCE and RESTORATION

*Let us now make confession of our sins to God, our gracious heavenly Father.*

*A moment of silence to reflect on our sin and our need for the Lord's mercy and forgiveness.*

**Eternal God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and that sin is ever-present in our lives. O God, in Your mercy, forgive our sin. Redirect and renew us, that we may joyfully follow Your will and gladly obey Your commandments. Graciously forgive our sins and, by the leading of the Holy Spirit, guide us in ways of compassion and love.**

*In the stead and by the command of my Lord Jesus Christ, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✝ Son and of the Holy Spirit. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it. Go in ✝ peace.*  
**Amen.**

## LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT WREATH

*Isaiah 40:10; Psalm 22:19*

*Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,  
and shall call His name Immanuel.*  
*She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus,  
for He will save His people from their sins.*  
*Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?*  
**He who has clean hands and a pure heart.**

*Christ Jesus was descended from David according to the flesh*  
**and declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit  
of holiness by His resurrection from the dead.**

*David wrote, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and  
those who dwell therein."*

*Therefore, we pray: O Wisdom, proceeding from the mouth of the Most  
High, pervading and permeating all creation, mightily ordering all things:*  
**Come and teach us the way of prudence.**

*All four candles are lit on the Advent wreath as a hymn is sung.*

## **ADVENT HYMN**

**O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

**LSB 357**

- 1 O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
And ransom captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here  
Until the Son of God appear.

### **Refrain**

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
Shall come to thee, O Israel!

- 2 O come, Thou Wisdom from on high,  
Who ord'rest all things mightily;  
To us the path of knowledge show,  
And teach us in her ways to go. **Refrain**

## **PRAYER OF THE DAY**

*We pray:*

*Stir up Your power, O Lord, and come among us with Your abiding presence.  
By the power of Your Spirit, direct our lives to expressions of repentant joy.  
Bless our devotion and our prayers and lead us in ways of faithfulness as we  
await Your final coming in glory; for You live and reign with the Father and the  
Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.*

**Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

# READINGS FROM HOLY SCRIPTURE

*[Please refer to the back of your service folder or to the screens overhead.]*

**OLD TESTAMENT READING: 2 Samuel 7:1-11,16**

Steve Yearout

**RESPONSIVE READING: Psalm 89:1-5; antiphon: v. 8**

Abbie Crist

**Come, Thou long expected Jesus,  
Born to set Thy people free**

*I will sing of the steadfast love of the LORD, forever;  
with my mouth I will make known Your faithfulness to all generations.*

**For I said, “Steadfast love will be built up forever;  
in the heavens you will establish Your | faithfulness.”**

*You have said, “I have made a covenant with My chosen one;  
I have sworn to David My servant:*

**‘I will establish your offspring forever,  
and build your throne for all generations.’”**

*Let the heavens praise Your wonders, O LORD,  
Your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones!*

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning,  
is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

*Come, Thou long expected Jesus,  
Born to set Thy people free*

**EPISTLE READING: Romans 16:25-27**

Abbie Crist

*Please stand.*

**GOSPEL READING: Luke 1:26-38**

**WHAT WE BELIEVE ~ Apostles' Creed**

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died and was buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day He rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven  
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence He will come 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.**

\*Christian: the ancient text reads "catholic", meaning the whole Church as it confesses the wholeness of Christian Doctrine.

## **CHILDREN'S CHURCH**

*Grace Havens*

*(Kindergarten – 5th grade students are excused to attend Children's Church in the ANNEX)*

## **SONG OF THE DAY**

***Away in a Manger***

***LSB 364***

Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the sky looked down where He lay,  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.

The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes,  
But little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes.  
I love Thee, Lord Jesus! Look down from the sky,  
And stay by my cradle till morning is nigh.

Be near me, Lord Jesus; I ask Thee to stay  
Close by me forever and love me, I pray.  
Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care,  
And take us to heaven to live with Thee there.

## **MESSAGE**

*"God Had Other Plans"*

*Pastor Marty Tyler*

Luke 1:26-38

# *Sermon Notes*

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*Focus Scripture Verse(s)*

*The Law (Shows Our Sin)*

*The Gospel (Shows Our Salvation)*

## **Main Point:**

*What Does This Mean for Me?*

## **Application:**

*How does what I learned help me share God's Good News?*



## THANKFUL GIVING OF TITHES AND OFFERINGS

### **Thank you for your faithful prayers and financial support of Grace Ministries.**

Our ability to continue to serve you, the Church, and our community is greatly dependent upon the willingness of God's people to give of their time, talents and treasures. Please remember to support the LORD'S Church by regularly sending in your tithes and offerings; by mail, online at [www.GraceLutheranCC.com/Giving](http://www.GraceLutheranCC.com/Giving), or download the *GivePlus* Mobile App. As the Apostle Paul writes, "Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7). If you brought your tithe or offering with you today, you may place them in the box marked "I Bring An Offering To The Lord" sitting on the table next to the usher's station at the entrance to the sanctuary.

*Please stand.*

### OFFERTORY SONG

***Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus***

**LSB 338**

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.  
Israel's strength and consolation,  
Hope of all the earth Thou art,  
Dear desire of ev'ry nation,  
Joy of ev'ry longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver;  
Born a child and yet a king!  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all-sufficient merit  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

### PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

*Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs:*

*We pray for the Church as it awaits the final Advent of our Lord, that through it, the message of salvation be proclaimed, and the gifts of God be shared. And we pray for the nations of the world, that we may know times of peace and may with thankful hearts enjoy the blessings we receive.*

## LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

*Matthew 6:9-13*

## CLOSING RESPONSE

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion.*

**Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem.**

*Behold, your king is coming to you;*

**righteous and having salvation.**

*Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.*

**From the house of the Lord we bless You.**

*Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, who in giving Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to accomplish our salvation has fulfilled the hope of the prophets and of Your people for countless generations. We thank You for calling us to be Your people in this time. Joined together in the name of our Lord and in the communion of saints, we pray You to send Your Holy Spirit upon us to sanctify and renew us in body and soul for the sake of Your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **Amen.***

## BLESSING TO DEPART

*May our gracious God strengthen your hearts, for His plan of salvation has been revealed to us in the coming of His Son, our Savior and King.*

**To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ!**

*The Lord bless you and keep you.*

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

*The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.*

**Amen.**

*Please be seated.*

## **DEPARTING SONG**

### **Mary's Boy Child**

*Jester Hairston*

Long time ago in Bethlehem  
So the Holy Bible say  
Mary's boy child, Jesus Christ  
Was born on Christmas Day.

### **Chorus**

Hark, now hear the angels sing  
New King is born today  
And man will live for evermore  
Because of Christmas Day.

Shepherds watched their flock by night,  
They saw a bright new shining star,  
And heard a choir from heaven sing  
The music came from afar. **Chorus**

Joseph and his wife, Mary,  
Came to Bethlehem that night,  
They found no place to bear her child,  
Not a single room was in sight. **Chorus**

By and by they find a little nook  
In a stable all forlorn,  
And in a manger cold and dark,  
Mary's little boy was born.

### **Final Chorus**

Trumpets sound and angels sing,  
Listen to what they say,  
That Man will live forevermore,  
Because of Christmas Day.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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